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MEDITATION

SALVATION THRU CRIME

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." — Gen. 50:20

God's Book is unique.

Here is a Book that tells of the people of God, but it tells all! Do you know of any book written by men that does not gloss over the faults of its heroes, and paints in dark colors the evil of villains?

And the answer is: No! There is no such book.

No, not even in the church of God.

The plainest example I can think of is the memoriams of departed ministers. How faithful and zealous, how industrious and saintly are all those men! What wonderful testimonies we read of our dead ministers!

But God is different.

Yes, He tells us that the names of the twelve patriarchs are written on the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. But He also tells us some pretty evil things about those men. He tells of their envy, wrath, fornication, hatred and murder.

They thought evil against (of all persons) Joseph!

I like to talk of that a little.

And also of the wonder of God's salvation, indeed: they thought evil, but, with respect to the same matter, God meant it unto good.

Salvation thru crime!

* * * *

What an unsavoury picture we receive of the household of Jacob!

I hesitated when I wrote *household of Jacob*. You note that I wrote in the singular: household. Perhaps I should have said: households, that is, the plural. And if I did that,

the mess we find in Canaan does not deserve the name household. Such are the evils of polygamy: that is the evil of having many wives.

Jacob had really only one legitimate wife: Leah. And I receive the impression that she was also the best of the four. And Jacob seems to have realized it. Although he loved Rachel more than any of the other women, he buries Leah in the cave of Machpelah, while Rachel is buried, so to speak by the roadside.

At any rate, this polygamy was the source of many of Jacob's troubles and Joseph's sufferings.

There were really four households. Each set of children was partial to their own mother. This polygamy set up families within the family. And it made enemies of brothers.

And what shall I say of the suffering of the women? Jealousy and envy was the order of the day and night.

Then there was the partiality of Jacob, both as to his wives and children. He was partial to Rachel, and to her son Joseph.

One of my sources puts it this way: His partiality wrought like yeast upon the passions of the wild sons of the handmaidens, and his polygamy fostered the sour hatred among his generations.

Therefore, when you read of the hatred, jealousy and envy of the patriarchs be sure and blame much of it on Jacob's sins.

But again, God works out His glorious purposes, even through the crimes and the sins of His own children.

* * * *

The brethren of Joseph become conspirators. They hate him. And much of their hatred is also because of Joseph's piety. I do not know of a more attractive figure among the youths of Scripture.

And when they see the partiality of Jacob for this despised lad they hate him the more.

At last their opportunity arrives. They are far from home in Dothan. And Joseph is sent after them to inquire after their estate.

He is still a long way off, but they recognize him, perhaps, by the many coloured coat.

And to show how much they hated him, we read that as soon as they saw him they conspired to slay him. "We will slay him; we will cast him in some pit; we will say to his father: 'some evil beast has devoured him.'"

They also are envious.

"Behold, this dreamer cometh."

As though Joseph could help it when God chose him to become an agent of revelation. They really accuse God who gave the dreams. And I think that they realized that he was worthy, sharpening their envy and jealousy.

They also are mockers.

"And we will see what will become of his dreams!"

Dangerous talk! They really talk about, and mock the Word of God in dreams.

They become also murderers.

First in conspiracy.

Then in word: let us slay him!

Third in their counsel: let us cast him in a pit, and then he will starve.

Finally, in that they sentence him to a slow death of slavery.

They also are cruel.

They strip him of the hated coat, and Joseph is the object of shame. Then they cast him in a pit. And although he cries pitifully from out of the pit: (see Gen. 42:21) "they sat down to eat bread." What refined cruelty!

But God had in mind some good thing: be patient!

* * * *

Look a little while at the innocent object of all this crime, will you?

Yes, he is the innocent object.

Jacob was partial: Joseph could not help that.

Jacob gave him that dreadful coat, the visible token of his foolish love for Joseph.

God gave Joseph the dreams: he could not help it that God chose him and not Reuben or Simeon.

Jacob sent him north from the valley of Hebron to Shechem.

In all his life he was a very obedient son. Oh, for more Joseph's!

He was in this last case very anxious to discharge a duty. When Jacob called him he said: Here! (That is the rendering in the Hebrew).

Inquires when he cannot find his brethren in Shechem. And when he receives the information he plods on to Dothan.

Moreover, he is on a journey of benevolence. He is the spokesman of an anxious father. And we may believe that he shared the anxiety for their welfare.

And so we find the lad far from home.

And because of that he begins his long, long trail of suffering.

Ridicule is the first thing he receives: here we have the master of dreams!

Shame is next: they strip him.

Pain and anguish, and in such degree that many years later Reuben recalls it: "we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." Gen. 42:21.

In the Dutch we read: when he begged us for mercy.

Can you not see the scene? It is heart rending. And I think he suffered more just because he was such a good, tender, God-fearing lad. The more tender-hearted you are, the more you suffer when you are maltreated.

Watch the patriarchs! They sat down to eat bread. But the muffled cries of Joseph reach them at their banquet: Dear brethren, dear brethren, Judah, Reuben, oh help me, help me!

Finally, he suffers the worst of all: he is sold to the Ishmaelites. And soon he will be on the way to Egypt, wicked Egypt.

Judah is going to make money of a bad thing. After all, business is business. Judah sounds merciful: What profit is it if we slay our brother . . . , but wait, he continues: Come, let us sell him!

Do not slay him . . . let us sell him.

Don't you see that instead of mercy, you find greater cruelty? Slavery is worse than death.

There goes Joseph: every step brings him closer to the hateful, wicked, filthy Egyptians and farther away from father's embrace at home.

Oh, I must not think of the tears and heart rending suffering of the lad. At the mercy of the wicked. And a great and a long silence as far as beautiful speech is concerned. That you find only in the church. But he became the great exile. And for many, many years.

At home we see the hypocrites. Joseph is dead as far as his home and father is concerned.

Look, there is another colour added to the many in his coat. The red of the blood of the goat. But Joseph is dead.

His brothers continue on their crooked pathway. They lie and deceive. They feign and dissimulate: they mourned with Jacob!

* * * *

What picture of crime and wickedness!

But wait! God will speak and clarify everything.

On the one hand we see Joseph in agony and fetters, Jacob in tears and disconsolate, the brethren in murderous guilt. A sorry spectacle indeed.

But in heaven there is peace, And heaven's God is Sovereign over all.

God is working out His purposes, even suing the crimes of men, both the elect and the reprobates.

And how Joseph knew this; how Joseph understood the counsel and the works of God! Later, much later, when the patriarchs bow before him in Egypt, and when they are afraid of him, thinking that he will avenge himself on them, he says: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Two things are outstanding in this little speech, and a third must be added as a warning.

First, how gracious is Joseph! How sweet is his regenerated soul and heart. Imagine: he says that to Judah who had held the 20 pieces of silver and divided them among the brethren. He makes light of their sin: do not be angry with yourselves! Forsooth! What would you have done if you had this chance?

Second, he exalts God! This is the greatest thing. Through it all God had in mind to benefit Jacob and the patriarchs. And it is God's wondrous irony, born of everlasting love, that he brings untold and everlasting salvation through our sinning. (The Cross!)

And here is the warning: do not say now: let us sin so that God's salvation be enhanced!

For that is of the devil.

No, but here is the lesson of this beautiful and touching story: live, suffer, weep, and confess and sing like Joseph.

Oh, for more Josephs!

G.V.

CALL TO SYNOD

According to the decision of the last Synod, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, notifies the churches that the 1957 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene on Wednesday, June 5, D. V., at 9:00 A. M. in the above mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, June 4, at 8:00 P. M. at First Church. The Rev. John A. Heys, president of the previous synod, is scheduled to preach at this service.

Synodical delegates are requested to gather with the Consistory before the service.

Those requesting lodging, are to contact P. Decker, 108 Mayfield Ave., N. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Consistory of the First
Protestant Reformed Church.

Rev. C. Hanko, President.
P. Decker, Secretary.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

Salvation Thru Crime385
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

The Free Offer388
Election and Reprobation389
Question Box391
No Good392
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation393
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS —

The Prophecy of Zechariah395
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

IN HIS FEAR —

Trained for What and by Whom?398
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments400
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht402
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

Matters to be Treated404
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

Prof. Louis Berkhof Passes406
Review of the "Perfect Prayer"406
Graham and the New York City Campaign406
Rev. M. Schipper

REPORTS OF THE WEST AND EAST LADIES' LEAGUES408

EDITORIALS

The Free Offer

The conclusion to which the authors of "The Free Offer" come in their study of the passages from Matthew 5 and Luke 6 read as follows:

"The sum of this study of these passages in Matthew and Luke is simply this, that presupposed in God's gifts bestowed upon the ungodly there is in God a disposition of love, kindness, mercifulness, and that the actual gifts and blessing accruing therefrom for the ungodly must not be abstracted from the lovingkindness of which they are the expression. And, of course, we must not think of this lovingkindness as conditioned upon a penitent attitude in the recipients. The lovingkindness rather is exercised toward them in their ungodly state and is expressed in the favors they enjoy. What bearing this may have upon the grace of God manifested in the free offer of the gospel to all without distinction remains to be seen. But we are hereby given a disclosure of goodness in the heart of God and of the relation there is between gifts bestowed and the lovingkindness from which they flow. And there is indicated to us something respecting God's love or benevolence that we might not or could not entertain if we concentrated our thought simply on the divine decree of reprobation." p. 7.

I suppose that the authors have in mind that there are some that do exactly that which is expressed in the last sentence, they "concentrate their thought simply in the divine decree of reprobation." If there are such, I do not know them. I do know, however, that God's attitude to those that are wicked and ungodly and continue to be such without receiving the grace of repentance, is rooted in His decree of reprobation. Just as He loves the elect righteous and godly, even while they are yet sinners, with an eternal and unchangeable love, so He hates the reprobate wicked with a sovereign hatred from before the foundations of the world.

Such is the truth of Scripture.

But in my opposition to the theory of the authors of "The Free Offer" that God is filled with lovingkindness and mercy toward the wicked as such, and that this is manifest in the gifts bestowed on them in this present time, I will not even mention reprobation. I maintain that professors Murray and Stonehouse, with their conception of God's love for the wicked, stand opposed to the current teaching of Scripture.

This I will prove.

In Psalm 1, which, by the way strikes the keynote of all the psalms in the Word of God, David first describes the godly and righteous. He is the one that "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." This, of course, is negative. Positively expressed, the righteous is he that has

his delight in the law of the Lord and meditates on that law day and night. He is compared to a tree near the riverside, that brings forth fruit in due season: all that he does shall prosper. In contrast to this righteous man stands the ungodly. He is like the chaff driven away by the wind. He cannot stand in judgment nor in the congregation of the righteous. And the psalm closes with the antithetical statement: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

I challenge the authors of "The Free Offer" so to explain this psalm and the perishing way of the ungodly that it is in harmony with the theory that God is motivated by love in guiding the ungodly on his perishing way.

Or consider Psalm 5:4-6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." Or again in vss. 9, 10: "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. Destroy them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee." Let Murray and Stonehouse explain these passages in the light of their theory that God loves, instead of hating, all the workers of iniquity, and shows His love to them in the things they receive in this present time. And let them attempt to take the prayer of the psalmist on their own lips. It is, for them, simply impossible. Notice, too, that the psalmist does not speak of the reprobate in the abstract but of the ungodly, the workers of iniquity as they concretely exist and live in this world. Them the Lord does not love but hate.

The same is emphatically expressed in Psalm 7:11-16: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He hath made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." Again, let the authors of "The Free Offer" so explain this passage that, instead of teaching that God is angry with the wicked that does not repent every day, it means that God loves the wicked irrespective of the question whether or not he turns from his wicked way, as they have it, and manifests His love to him in rain and sunshine and in all the things he receives in this present time. They can never do it.

The same note is sounded in Psalm 11:2-6: "For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in

heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Also in this passage the question does not concern the reprobate in the abstract but the wicked and ungodly man in his concrete existence in the world. He is the one that, in this world, loveth violence and persecutes the righteous. Does God love him, as Murray and Stonehouse would have it? Does He manifest His love to them in rain and sunshine and in all the things of this present time? On the contrary, His soul hates them, and the portion of their cup shall be fire and brimstone.

Also in Psalm 37 throughout the subject is the antithesis between the righteous and the wicked and the attitude of the Lord to them both. Always He loves the righteous only and hates the wicked. Just let me quote a few instances. "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in anywise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and they shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken." vss. 8-15.

Surely, Murray and Stonehouse must admit that the psalm here does not speak of the reprobate in the abstract, as he appears in the decree of God, but of the wicked as he lives and exists and acts in the present world. And they also will have to admit that, in the passage quoted above as well as in the entire psalm, God's attitude is that He loves the righteous and hates the wicked. Just let me quote a few more verses from the same psalm:

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: into smoke shall they consume away."

Thus the church of the old dispensation was taught to sing, and thus the church of the new dispensation still sings. Surely, there is not even a semblance of love for the wicked in the passages. The contrary is true.

And this is the current teaching of Holy Writ, not only

in the Old, but also in the New Testament.

This we still hope to prove.

H.H.

Election and Reprobation

We have not finished our discussion and criticism of Berkouwer's book "God's Election."

An important element we must still discuss more broadly and thoroughly, an element that stands in immediate connection with his criticism of my view, to which he devotes several pages of his book. I refer to his estimation of the relation between the preaching of the gospel and God's election.

It stands to reason, in view of the fact that Berkouwer is very weak to express it mildly, on the truth of reprobation, that he emphasizes rather strongly that the preaching of the gospel is an offer, an invitation, well-meaning on the part of God, to all that hear the gospel, to come to Christ and be saved. He fully agrees with the First Point of the three that were adopted by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924.

In this connection he refers, of course, to Canons II, 5 and III, IV, 8, and also to certain texts as I Tim. 2:4 and II Peter 3:9. To his discussion of the latter we will now call attention, first of all.

Intentionally I say "discussion" and not exegesis. Exegesis of these passages he does not offer. He introduces the discussion of the verses with some paragraphs in which he emphasizes the universality of the gospel. We must, because of fear for universalism, not close our eyes for this universality of the gospel. This is done, according to Berkouwer, when we try to explain texts like Ez. 18:23 and 11:33 in the light of election and reprobation. We must not "as does Hoeksema, make a distinction between the ungodly that do turn and those that do not turn from their evil way, and then eliminate the latter from the first part of these texts of Ezekiel." One certainly explains these texts erroneously as soon as the attempt is made to introduce the scheme of election and reprobation into them, according to Berkouwer. Of course, you understand, that I do not agree with this fundamental principle of Berkouwer. It is my conviction that we may never explain any particular passage of the Word of God without taking into account the whole of the Bible, and all Scripture teaches the doctrine of election and reprobation and emphasizes that God's grace is not general but particular.

But let this be for the moment.

As I said, this first paragraph on the universality of the gospel must serve as an introduction to the discussion of I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9.

In this connection, Berkouwer, first of all, presents various interpretations. There is the interpretation that speaks of an antecedent or preceding will of God, which is general and according to which God actually wills that everybody

shall be saved, and a consequent or superceding or following will of God, according to which God wills that some, those that believe shall be saved, which latter will is limited by the free choice and will of man. Then he mentions the interpretation of Augustine, who at first interpreted all men as referring only to the elect, but later referred the term to the human race in general without having reference to individuals. In connection with the phrase in II Peter 3:9: Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, he refers to the commentary of Greydanus, who first refutes the universalism of the Remonstrants, "but then speaks of 'all the elect' although the text does not mention the elect." Then, too, there is the view that seeks refuge in the theory of a "secret" and "revealed" will of God. The former, then, refers, of course, to the will of predestination, according to which God wills that only the elect shall be saved, while the latter, the so-called revealed will of God seeks the salvation of all without distinction.

But we are interested in Berkhouwer's own interpretation. And in this we are disappointed, for he does not give an explanation of these passages of Scripture. Nevertheless, he *talks about* these texts and leaves the impression of an interpretation. In this connection, I better quote him literally, lest I be accused of misrepresenting his would-be interpretation. I quote from pp. 288-290:

"It is, however, in our opinion, neither possible to penetrate the meaning of these universal-sounding words of Scripture with the help of the distinction between the revealed and secret will of God. For exactly in what is called the revealed will of God the good pleasure of God in Jesus Christ is concerned, the one Mediator of God and man . . . This kerugma (preaching, H.H.) has, as the message of God's saving dealings, a universal direction, which alone can explain the universality of the N. T. . . . This need not be denied over against various forms of absolute or relative universalism . . . For this direction of the gospel is aimed as the arrow to its mark, and here no one is excluded, not even the greatest of the sinners.

"Behind this message — in all these universal words — it is not necessary to fear for the real or secret will, which, after all, still manifests itself as a dark shadow will, and can still leave room for the limited will of consequence instead of the antecedent will. In the message of salvation, we are much rather — according to the will of God made known to all nations — shown the way of conversion and of the knowledge of the truth. That is the appeal and the invitation, the calling and the admonition in this Will of God. The universality of the gospel-call does not exclude but include the calling to faith and repentance. Apart from this faith and repentance one cannot speak about this universality and surely cannot be confident on its basis. The epistles of the apostles and their missionary activity are one in this respect."

Briefly, therefore, Berkhouwer teaches here that the preaching of the gospel is universal in its effect for all that by faith accept the invitation.

There is nothing specifically or definitely Reformed in this teaching. As long as no more is said, any Arminian can subscribe to it.

But my question is: what does all this have to do with an interpretation of I Tim. 2:4 and II Pe. 3:9?

In I Tim. 2:4 we read: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." For Reformed people the question that concerns them in connection with this text is, and always has been: how can this text, which speaks of the will of God to save all men, be harmonized with the truth of election and reprobation. Either the text means that it is the will of God to save all men without exception, head for head; or it means that God will have all men to be saved, not in the sense of every individual, but in the sense of all kinds and classes of men, which still includes the elect only though they are not mentioned. The universalist, the Remonstrants c.s., prefer the former interpretation. This implies, of course, that the will of God to save all men is limited by the freewill of the sinner. But Reformed theologians usually reject this interpretation and explain the text in the latter sense. Berkouwer offers no explanation, though he talks about the text rather elaborately.

We prefer the Reformed interpretation because:

1. Negatively, the universalist explanation is impossible as must be evident:

a. From the fact that God does not even have the gospel preached to all men. In the old dispensation salvation was, for a long time, limited to Israel; in the new dispensation the gospel is preached only to those to whom God, in his good pleasure, sends it. In the course of the history of the new dispensation it reached comparatively few.

b. From the fact that many to whom the gospel is preached do not receive but reject it. They do not believe. And, according to all Scripture, no man is able to believe unless faith is given him from God. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Hence, it is not true that God will have all men, head for head, to be saved.

2. Positively, the text in its context teaches this rather plainly and, in the light of all Scripture, can be interpreted in no other way:

a. As far as the context is concerned:

(1) Already in the first verse the apostle employs the same phrase "all men" as in vs. 4. He exhorts the congregation that prayers and giving of thanks be made for all men.

(2) What he means, however, is expressed in vs. 2: "for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

b. It is plain, then, that according to the context, "all men" in vs. 4 does not mean every individual but all kinds and classes of men. The believers in Paul's time, perhaps, had an idea that salvation was not for kings and those that were in authority. They were usually worldly and, besides, often persecuted them. Hence, the apostle corrects them and writes that God will have all classes of men to be saved. And this is not in conflict but harmonizes with the truth of election.

The same truth though in a different way, is expressed in II Pe. 3:9.

But about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

QUESTION BOX

Oak Lawn, in their Men's Society, their wives being also present, discussed the question of polygamy and not being able to come to what they considered to be a satisfactory conclusion, asks *The Standard Bearer* to shed some additional light on the question.

They write:

"The subject we discussed was: Polygamy in Old Testament Times. In general, we may say that it was agreed that polygamy is sin, a violation of the marriage ordinance instituted by God from the beginning. Our question then is: 'Why did God tolerate it?' Since adultery, according to Leviticus 20:10, was punishable by death and since polygamy is a form of adultery, why was not the same punishment administered when it was committed? Or, must we say that polygamy is not adultery?"

And a little farther they write:

"We are wondering whether it is correct to say that God had a positive purpose with the evil of polygamy? Can it be said that God, even as He used the sin of Esther, also used the sin of polygamy to serve the bringing forth of the covenant seed, etc.? We understand that this would not justify the sin and we also understand that God punished the polygamous marriages with many afflictions, but can this be a positive explanation as to why He tolerated it? Your view on the matter will be appreciated."

My answer is as follows:

1. Undoubtedly, polygamy is adultery. All adultery is not polygamy, but all polygamy is adultery. If adultery may be defined as unfaithfulness of a married man to his legal wife by sexual intercourse with another woman, and if it be true, as it is, that a man can have only one legal wife, in the sight of God, then polygamy is nothing less than adultery on a large scale.

2. The question of the society, however, is: why did God tolerate polygamy? It seems to me that the crux of the question must be found in the term "tolerate." This term is rather ambiguous. If the meaning is that God permitted polygamy, then my answer is: He did not permit it. As the men's society of Oak Lawn themselves point out, Leviticus

20:10 demands that a man that commits adultery with another man's wife shall be put to death. This surely implies that God looks with displeasure and wrath upon all adultery, even also on polygamy. That polygamy was not so punished but was, evidently, as in the case of David and Solomon, winked at and even approved and justified, was simply another sin added to the first. It is evident that, during a certain period in the history of Israel in the old dispensation, having more than one wife was not considered a great sin or even a sin at all, but this does not remove the fact that God considered it a sin which He will punish in time or eternity or both. And to my mind, God clearly revealed His wrath and displeasure on, for instance, the polygamy of David, by all the troubles he experienced.

3. If, however, instead of using the term "toleration" you employ the Scriptural terms "forbearance" and "longsuffering," I would answer that this may be applied to the sin of polygamy, but at the same time to all sin. God is long-suffering with regard to the sin as well as to the suffering of His people as well as forbearing with respect to the sin of the reprobate. It is also true, of course, that God reached His own purpose with the sin of both, the elect and the reprobate. Whether we dare say that His purpose or one of His purposes with the sin of polygamy was the bringing forth of the seed of the covenant, is another question. We know, of course, that, in some cases (Samuel, Solomon) this was true, but I would not subscribe to the general proposition that God's purpose with polygamy in general was the bringing forth of the seed of the covenant.

Well, I made an attempt. If Oak Lawn is not satisfied, they better call again.

H.H.

From the same source comes the following question, although not from the Men's Society:

"Another question which is hypothetical I would like to present for consideration. I shall use a hypothetical case. Suppose there are parents who with a baptized child belong to the Christian Reformed Church. This child reaches, let us say, the age of 16 to 18 and, still being a baptized member, arrives at the conviction that he should leave the Christian Reformed Church and become a member in the Protestant Reformed Church. Consequently, he desires to make confession of faith in the latter church. The parents, however, refuse to allow the baptism papers of the child to be given and insist that they remain in the Christian Reformed Church. The child in good conscience cannot make confession of faith in that church. The question now is: (1) Must the consistory grant the child's request or must it grant the parents' request? (2) If the latter, what must the child do? (3) Who is responsible for the baptism papers, the individual or the parents?"

Answer:

1. First of all, I wish to state that, in my answer, I will

attempt to place myself, in my imagination, in the position of that Christian Reformed consistory and, of course, also of the parents.

2. To begin with the latter, it is their calling as members of the Christian Reformed Church carefully to instruct their child and to make plain to him the difference in doctrine between the Christian Reformed and the Protestant Reformed Churches. In other words, they must explain to him and try to defend the Three Points. If the child is convinced that the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church is the truth, they have gained him, and he can make confession of faith in his own church. He will, of course, no longer ask that his papers will be transferred to the Protestant Reformed Church. The matter is settled.

3. If, however, after all this instruction by the parents and also by the independent investigation of the child, the latter is still convinced that the Christian Reformed Church, in 1924, has departed from the truth and that the true doctrine is maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches, it stands to reason that he, in that state, cannot make confession of faith in the Christian Reformed Church. For in that confession he promises to abide by the doctrine that "is taught here in this Christian church." What, now, must the parents do? If they are wise parents, they will ask the child, to give the matter some time and prayerful consideration and seek contact with and advice from his minister.

4. If, however, after all this, the child still insists that he must become a member of the Protestant Reformed Church, and that he must make confession of faith there, what then must the parents do? Must they refuse that the child's papers be transferred? This would, in the first place, be very foolish. It is, by this time, very evident that the child can never make confession in the Christian Reformed Church. Is it not spiritually foolish to attempt to force him to do so? But, in the second place, this is also impossible, for the papers belong to the child and not the parents, even though the child is still a minor. Ultimately, the child will surely have his papers transferred and make confession of faith in the church of his choice. You cannot force spiritual matters. Hence, my advice to those parents would be that they let the child join the Protestant Reformed Church and that they have his baptismal certificate transferred.

5. But how about the consistory? Must, if the parents refuse to have the child's papers transferred, and the child comes to the consistory to ask for them, the consistory take the side of the parents or of the child. My advice would be as follows:

a. Let the consistory labor with the child for some time. Let them attempt to convince him of the error of his way in asking for his papers to what, in their conviction, is a heretical church. They can do so by a committee or even by asking him to appear before the consistory. If they gain him, the matter is settled.

b. But if the child is still convinced, and, besides, attends

the Protestant Reformed Church in the place where he lives, the consistory can still follow two lines of action. They can put him under discipline and ultimately excommunicate him, if they have the courage of their conviction. Or they can simply send him his papers, regardless of the attitude of the parents. If they do the former, the child can still demand a copy of his baptismal certificate, for his papers are not the property of the parents, nor of the consistory, but his own.

I hope that I have answered your questions.

H.H.

No Good!

The Standard Bearer is no good!

Such is virtually the sweeping judgment of a certain party whose name I will not mention because the opinion was expressed in a private letter. The letter was addressed, not to me, but the Board of the R.F.P.A. and the board evidently thought I might be interested to learn to know what some think of our magazine.

And, of course, I am. One should always be willing to profit by the positive criticism of others. Besides, it stands to reason that our magazine is not perfect: there is always room for improvement.

But a sweeping judgment as expressed by this particular party I cannot swallow. I rather am of the opinion that it reflects upon the writer of the letter. I receive the impression from the letter that he is not and never was Reformed. He certainly does not love the Reformed truth.

Let me acquaint you with the contents of the letter which are entirely negative.

He begins by writing that he can still call the board members brethren even though they hold unbiblical opinions and call them biblical. Then he states that "The Standard Bearer" lacks emphasis on human responsibility which he calls a "most grievous biblical deficiency." Next he writes that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not hold the whole counsel of God because they do not beseech men to be reconciled to God. He could not possibly be edified and blessed through the medium of the "Standard Bearer" and would not subscribe to it. And he ends with the prayer that God may deliver the Protestant Reformed Churches from the error of their ways.

Such are the contents of the letter. It is entirely lacking in positive contents. It is wholly negative. In one word "The Standard Bearer" is no good!

What can you say to a man like that? Must we defend our paper over against these charges?

I will never deign to do this.

All I will say is that all the issues of the paper we published ever since 1923 prove that the letter written by this party is one big lie.

This I am prepared to prove if the party has the courage to come out into open and asks me to sustain this contention.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER XII

THE VISION OF THE SEALED BOOK

Revelation 5

1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?
3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.
4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.
5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.
6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.
8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.
9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;
10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.
11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;
12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Even the casual reader will notice immediately that this grand vision is a continuation of the vision that was begun to be revealed to John in chapter 4. Chapters 4 and 5 belong together. They are one whole. They constitute one vision. What is told us in chapter 5 simply adds a few new elements to the vision that was begun in chapter 4. It reveals to us above all Him Who is next to the One that sitteth upon the throne, the most important figure of the entire scene, the Lamb that standeth as though it hath been slain, the Lion of Juda's tribe, the Root of David, Who has overcome to open the book and to loose its seven seals. Jesus Christ is here shown as receiving the power from God to do what no one in all creation was worthy and able to do namely, to bring and complete the glorious kingdom of God in all creation. Hence, the chief thought of the chapter is that the Lamb is found worthy to open the book.

We must, for a correct understanding of this entire passage, bear continually in mind that in it we have no revelation as yet of the things that must come to pass hereafter. It pictures rather the new order of things, the order of the new kingdom, as it exists perfectly in God's counsel, and as it was in principle realized in the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as it will give battle in the new dispensation to the still existing power of the prince of darkness on earth, and as also it shall finally have the complete victory and be the realization and manifestation of the kingdom in all the glory of its ultimate perfection in the new heavens and the new earth. It is, from a certain point of view, a picture of the battle-force on the side of God opposing the serpent and his armies. Now in our chapter we receive a vision of the general of this battle-force of the Almighty, of Him that will lead the armies of God on to victory and that will finally gain complete victory at the time of His second coming. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb that standeth as though it had been slain, is the chief figure of this entire chapter. Let us then from this central point of view consider the new elements John introduces into the vision.

It is plain that if the apostle did not notice any definite figure on the central throne before, he now does. For he speaks of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. The right hand in general is the symbol of power and sovereign authority. And therefore we have here mention made of the power and sovereign authority of the Most High. On that right hand John perceived a book. For literally we read in the original that the book is *on* the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. That it is *on* the right hand of God in-

dicates evidently that the book is safely kept by the power of the Most High and rests on His own authority. The fact that it is presented as being *on* the hand calls to mind the picture of one that offers something to another. God, therefore, is ready to present, to give, this book to someone else. The book itself is described to us in detail. Many interpreters have attempted to give a graphic and definite description of this book. They have tried to visualize it. Especially have they discussed the question whether here we must picture to ourselves a book as we know it, a number of separate pages bound up in two covers, or whether it was the ancient roll of a book, which John saw in the vision. To us this question appears to be of little importance. In our discussion of the Book of Revelation in the future we shall often meet with visions that cannot be visualized concretely whatsoever, of which we cannot draw a graphic picture before our minds. Neither is this necessary. What we must attempt is to ascertain the central significance of each vision, and explain the details of each scene in the light of this central idea more or less as a parable is explained. Thus also with this book. It is, in the first place, a book. And this causes us to think of the thought that is expressed in its contents, — in this case the thought and plan of Him that sitteth upon the throne, the eternal thought of the living God. This book, so we are told, was written within and on the back, that is, it was completely covered. This symbolizes the fact that the thoughts of God in this book are complete, and constitute one whole. Nothing can be added to this book, and nothing may be subtracted from it. Just as the two stone tables of the Decalogue were covered on both sides, symbolizing the completeness of the law of God, so this book is complete in itself. Further, we notice that the book is sealed. A seal serves to safeguard the contents of any manuscript or book against a possible intruder, for whom the contents of a certain letter or book were not intended. Thus, the fact that the book on the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne is sealed and that its seals have never been broken signifies that the contents are as yet secret. They are not known to anyone outside of Him that sitteth upon the throne and that is its author. Yet the manner in which it is sealed causes us to surmise something in regard to the nature of its contents. It is, namely, sealed with seven seals. And seven is a symbolic number. Seven is the symbol of completion, and as such it indicates in this instance that the book is completely and safely sealed. But in distinction from the number ten, which also denotes completion, seven has generally to do with the kingdom of God. And thus, the number seven, often indicating the completion of God's work in the coming of His kingdom, makes us immediately conjecture that this book is somehow connected with the perfecting of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The question that is of supreme importance in this instance is: what is the significance of this book? This must be answered. And in connection with this first question there

is another: what is the meaning of the opening of the book and the breaking of its seals? On this question hinges more or less our entire view of the chapter. And then we remark that there can be little doubt about the fact that this book is symbol of the living and powerful decree of God with regard to the things that must shortly come to pass. Let us clearly understand the implication of this statement. We do not mean to assert that this book is a copy, a dead copy, of that decree, or the symbol of such a copy. In that case the opening of the book would imply nothing more than that the hidden things of God's counsel were prophetically revealed to us. But that is not so. The book is the symbol of the decree itself, of the living, irresistible, powerful decree of God, Whose chief purpose it is to realize the kingdom of God, which He planned from before the foundation of the world. The breaking of the seals does not simply open the hidden things of God's counsel. Its idea is not simply that of revelation. But the opening of the book signifies the realization of that powerful, all-comprehensive decree of God. It signifies, therefore, the very realization of the kingdom. He that receives the book and may open the seals receives the living decree of God itself and the power to realize it. He that is honored with the distinction of breaking the seals receives therefore the power to establish and to complete the kingdom, actually to bring to pass all that is written in the book. That the book signifies the plan of the Almighty is evident, first of all, from the fact that it is found on His right hand, — indicating undoubtedly too that He alone is its Author. That is shown, in the second place, by the fact that it is sealed with seven seals. The seal is symbol of its secrecy; and seven is connected with the kingdom of God. When all of these seals shall have been loosed, the counsel of God shall have been realized and the kingdom shall have been established in glory. This is evident, in the third place, from Revelation 4:1 in connection with this book. There John was called to heaven to see the things that must shortly come to pass hereafter. It is plain from all that follows in the Book of Revelation that these things are contained in the book on the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. And that this book is not a mere dead copy of the decree of God, but symbol of the living decree itself, so that the breaking of its seals involves the realization of God's counsel, is plain from all that follows. For when seal after seal is broken, we are not simply served with some information read from the book in regard to the things that must come to pass hereafter; but we see these very things being realized before our eyes. Therefore, we conclude that the book is symbol of the irresistible decree of God with regard to the things that must come to pass in this dispensation, and that the opening of the book, the loosing of the seals, implies the power to realize that decree and bring the eternal kingdom to perfection.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

Chapter IX.

The final triumph of the covenant people, 9:1 - 14:21.

With 9:1 begins the second part of the book of Zechariah. It consists of various prophecies dealing with events that are climaxed by the ultimate triumphs of the kingdom of Christ. It opens with a prediction of the overthrow of the nations surrounding Palestine (9:1-8). Then Jerusalem is exhorted to rejoice in the coming unto her of her king. As his reign will be one of peace, all use of war implements will cease, hence they will be destroyed, and the dominion of this king, who will speak peace unto the heathen, will be to the ends of the earth (9-10). The prisoners of hope will be sent forth from the pit with the prospect of victory in their conflict with the world-power, for the Lord will defend and save them (12-17). God will be sought unto. He will purge and mightily quicken His flock, and in their resultant warfare with the heathen His people will have the victory, for He will be with them (10:1-9). The flock marked for slaughter expresses their contempt for the good shepherd, and for punishment will be given over into the power of an evil shepherd, who will neglect and destroy the flock. This shepherd will be punished (10-17). Beleaguered and assailed on every hand by the nations, Jerusalem will be wonderfully delivered (12:1-9). With the Spirit of grace poured upon them, the penitent inhabitants will mourn for the good shepherd, whom they have pierced (10-14). There will be opened for Jerusalem a fountain of purgation, and the whole land will be cleansed from idols and false prophets (13:1-6). The Lord bids the sword to awaken and slay the good shepherd. The scattered sheep, the little ones, the refined and tried remnant, to whom the Lord will stretch out His hand again, will call upon His name, and in reply to His answer, It is my people, will say, Jehovah is my God (7-9). Chapter 14 describes a new conflict between Jerusalem and the heathen. By the Lord all the nations will be gathered together to Jerusalem for battle, and will make a great and at first successful assault upon the holy city (14:1, 2). Then the Lord will fight against the nations. He will provide a way of escape for His people, set up His kingdom on earth, and dispense blessings and prosperity from out of Jerusalem (3-11). The hostile nations will be destroyed, and their treasures given to the covenant people. Those of the nations that escaped will worship the Lord in Jerusalem. The heathen that come not up will be smitten with drought (12-19). Jerusalem will be thoroughly consecrated unto the Lord (20-21).

Such in substance are the promises of the Gospel that

form the last part of our book. Let us now enter into some detail.

Judgment upon the surrounding nations; Jerusalem preserved, 9:1-8.

The burden of the word of the Lord upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place; for the Lord has an eye upon man, and upon all the tribes of Israel, 2 and Hamath also (which) borders thereon, Tyre and Sidon, because it is very wise. 3 And Tyre built for herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as dust, and gold as dirt of the streets. 4 Behold the Lord will conquer her and smite her bulwark in the sea, and she herself shall be consumed by fire. 5 Ashkelon sees it and is afraid, Gaza also, and trembles exceedingly, and Ekron, for her hope is put to shame, and the king perishes from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. 6 And a bastard dwells in Ashdod, and I will cut off the haughtiness of the Philistines. 7 And I will take away the blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; and even he will remain to our God, and become like a prince in Judah, and Ekron like the Jebusite, 8 And I will encamp about my house because of the army, because of him that passes by and returns, and no oppressor shall pass through them anymore, for now I see with mine eyes.

1. *Burden* — In the Hebrew Bible this word occupies a place above the discourse of our prophet. But in the versions this word forms the first sentence-element of the statement introductory to the first eight verses of his prophecy. In either position the term denotes, according to the context, the word of God in its heavy prophecies of the overthrow of the enemies of Jerusalem, of the covenant people.

The land of Hadrach — Several different interpretations have been given of Hadrach. According to the conclusions of some it was the name of an otherwise unknown Syrian king. Others took it as the name of an ancient city, the historical identity of which can no longer be established, or as the name of a Syrian god, or even of the Messiah. A corruption of the text has also been assumed. According to a recent archeological finding, we are told, it is the name of a city called Hatarika in the Assyrian inscriptions, mentioned in connection with Damascus and other cities of Syria. But whereas, according to our prophet, Hadrach was a land, it cannot be Hatarika, which was a city. Then there is the view that the word is a compound term meaning *strong-weak*, which the prophet employed as a designation of the Persian empire, seeing that he knew that this kingdom, then still strong and mighty, and to which the covenant people were subject, would soon be made low.

Certain it is that Hadrach was a land, country, and not a city. This is clear from the expression "land of Hadrach." But what land? In all likelihood Syria. For Damascus was the capital of Syria, and Hadrach is mentioned by the prophet in the same breath with Damascus.

It really makes no essential difference whether Hadrach as a name signifies Syria or also the Persian empire. But what is essential is that Hadrach was an enemy of the covenant people, that this being true, the burden of the word of the Lord was upon this land, its people, its city states, and that, therefore, they will be crushed, destroyed. For the word of God is efficacious, it always accomplishes what it says. And it is under the burden of this word that this land finds itself. This alone has real significance here. What significance? This is clear from the succeeding clause, "*And Damascus is its resting place.*" In years gone by, when it was still an independent city-state, Damascus, Syria, had been the scourge of Israel. Elisha had burst into tears at the thought of what Hazael, whom he had just anointed king over Syria, was to do to the covenant people, namely set on fire their strongholds, slay their young men with the sword, dash their children and rip up their women with child (II Kings 9:2). And, therefore, the burden of the Lord's word will rest upon Damascus. Upon Damascus it will abide, and not only upon Damascus but upon every city, land, people, kingdom, world-power hostile to the covenant people will abide the burden of the Lord's word — abide until the last of these evil powers, kingdoms, to make its appearance, be crushed, utterly destroyed, and the whole earth cleansed from the race of men that now pollute it. This is here the Gospel.

1b — This last part of verse 1 states the reason why the burden of the Lord's word is upon Hadrach and Damascus. Jehovah has an eye upon man, mankind, and upon all the tribes of Israel; that is, not alone upon Israel His people is His eye but upon all mankind as well, which is equivalent to saying that his interests are universal, that He knows what each and every nation does and deserves, and rewards every one according to his works. The same idea is expressed by Jeremiah in the following words, "Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 32:19). This spells out the destruction also of the false church, the reprobated and disobedient seed among the covenant people.

Some, including Calvin, read verse 1b as follows, "When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the Lord." This is the rendering found also in the versions. Although the Hebrew text allows this translation, it is not so good. It makes verse 1 say that the burden of the Lord's word is upon Damascus, Syria, the nations, mankind, because or when their eyes are turned upon Him, when, in other words, they seek Him, which, of course, cannot be. Second, this other reading does not allow a proper flow of thought between verses 1 and 2. Adopting this other translation we have this, "When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the Lord. And Hamath also shall border thereby, Tyre and Zidon, because (not:

though) it is very wise." How much better to read here, "Because the eye of the Lord is upon man and upon all the tribes of Israel, and (upon) Hamath (which) borders thereby, (and upon) Tyre, and Zidon, because it is very wise." This reading has the firm support also of the thought of verse 8b, "And no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now I (Jehovah) have seen with my eyes." The idea is that the Lord sees, observes the nations, knows how they oppress His people. In the language of 1b, He has an eye upon mankind.

Also Hamath was located in Syria. In ancient times it was a city of great prominence. When Toi, king of Hamath, heard that David had smitten all the hosts of Hadadezer, he sent him present of gold, silver and brass (II Sam. 8:9). Solomon built store cities in the land of Hamath (II Chron. 8:4). It lay to the north of Dan, bordering on the territory of this tribe. But the burden of the Lord's word was also upon Hamath, so that its glory departed. Long before the time of our prophet it ceased to be an independent city-state. In the centuries that followed it gradually sank into decay.

3. Tyre and Sidon were the two chief cities of Phoenicia. These cities also had grievously trespassed against Israel and Judah. They had stolen gold and silver from the temple and the homes of the rich Jews and had carried these treasures into the temple of their own gods. Invading Judah, they had led away captive Judah's children and sold them to the Grecians (Joel 3:4), and to the Edomites (Amos 1:9). As a people they were endowed with a large measure of natural wisdom and understanding by which Tyre built herself a stronghold and heaped up immense treasures (Ezek. 28:4, 5). Originally built on the mainland, Tyre was later removed to a neighboring rocky island, where it was so strongly fortified as to have become almost impregnable. But her power and wealth will cease. For the Lord lays the burden of His word also upon these cities, upon Tyre. And this burden is that the Lord will seize her and smite her stronghold in the sea, and devour her with fire. The city herself, her palaces, storehouses and magnificent buildings will go up in flames. And so it has come to pass. At the time that this prophecy was uttered, the city had already lost her independence. But no conqueror had been able to breach her walls. This was first done by Alexander the great. Forcing his way into the city, he laid her in ruins.

5-6a. The prophet turns to Philistia, a small country in Southwestern Palestine from only 25 to 30 miles long, with an average width of 15 miles. It contained several towns and villages, the most important of which were the five so often mentioned in the Scriptures, namely Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. In this land dwelt the Philistines, a people of great antiquity. From the beginning of Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan, the Philistines were actively and bitterly hostile to the covenant people. The Lord complains about this in the following revealing

language, "The Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart to destroy for the old hatred" (Ezek. 25:15). Our prophet describes the effect of the fall of Tyre upon four of their five chief cities. Ashkelon will see it and be afraid. Gaza will also see it and tremble exceedingly in terror. And Ekron, for her confidence and expectation is put to shame. This last statement explains the terror of these cities. The fall of Tyre, the invincible city, completely shatters the confidence of the Philistines in their own strongholds. If Tyre was unable to withstand the enemy, how will their own cities, however well-fortified, be able to hold out against him, when he will have come upon them? And come he will. This explains the terror. What is said of Ekron is just as true of the other Philistine cities. How the enemy will deal with these cities, what is to be the extent of the calamity to befall them, the depth of the misery into which they will be plunged, is foretold. The king shall perish from Gaza. Ashkelon shall not be inhabited, and a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod. As what is asserted of each of these cities must be equally true of them all, the overall prediction is this: The enemy will come. He will force his way into the fortified cities, and their inhabitants shall be put to the sword. The depopulated cities will be inhabited by a bastard race. What is to be understood by this word bastard? Who is this bastard? Are we to think here, as some do, of a foreign or mixed race by which the depopulated cities of Philistia will be colonized? This would imply that the Philistines will be deported to some strange land, which is not so, as this was not the policy of the conqueror (Alexander the Great). The Hebrew word in question is found also in Deut. 23:2, where it is stated that a bastard shall not enter the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation. Here the word must signify an illegitimate son in the natural sense. Is this the signification of the word also in the verse under consideration? This cannot be. Is then the reference to bastards in the spiritual sense? This view can best be harmonized with surrounding statements.

6b. The Lord will cut off the pride of the Philistines. With the judgments of God implied in verse 6 upon them, they will be deeply humiliated. For they were a powerful people. At the time of the Hebrew conquest none of their towns were taken (Josh. 13:3). In the past they had always been able to withstand the enemy, or, if defeated, to rehabilitate themselves.

7. The Lord will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations between his teeth. If these pronouns look back to the Philistines of the preceding verse, the *bastard* that will dwell in Ekron of verse 6b must be Philistines. The blood of which mention is here made is that of the sacrifice. The word abomination signifies idol worship. The statement as a whole brands the Philistines worshippers of strange gods, spiritual bastards. To these gods they

brought sacrifices, the blood of which they were in the habit of drinking, and the flesh of which they ate. But the Lord will convert them, so that by His mercy they will spew these abominations out of their mouths and turn to Him, the living God, to worship Him only. And even he will remain to Israel's God, or, better, a remnant also he will be to the Lord. He, the Philistine people, the Lord will turn, not head for head, but this people according to the election of grace, thus the remnant. The bastards, the children of satan, will become the sons of God, and enter the congregation of the Lord. And he will become like a prince in Judah. The Hebrew word here translated *prince* means *governor*, and is used as the head of a thousand. Here it denotes not the leader but the division over which he rules, so that the thought is that Philistia will become like one of the divisions in Judah. The remnant of the Philistines will be incorporated into the church of God, become a living member of Christ's body. And Ekron will become like the Jebusite. Ekron, like Ashdod in verse 6, represents all Philistia. The Jebusites were the Canaanitish inhabitants of Jebus, thus also bastards originally. But after the conquest of their stronghold by David, they were incorporated into the Jewish nation and the remnant saved.

8. And the Lord will encamp about his house against an army, better, And the Lord will encamp for His house, that is, for its protection, without an army, against him that goeth hither and thither. *House* denotes His chosen people, the church, in the first instance the remnant of our prophet's day. While judgments fall upon the nations, Jerusalem, the true believers, will enjoy the protecting care of the Lord. The phrase, "him that goeth hither and thither," denotes in the first place, Alexander the Great and his army, passing and repassing Jerusalem but doing her no injury. For Jehovah was encamped about His house. And no oppressor shall come over them any more. No oppressor such as Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, the world, the world powers and their prince, the devil, sin, death. For now the Lord sees with His eyes, — sees the afflictions of His people and the cruelties perpetrated by the enemy. Of them all He will make an end.

G.M.O.

NOTICE!

The Editorial Staff of the *Standard Bearer* will meet, the Lord willing, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the home of Rev. H. Hoeksema, on Thursday evening, June 6, 1957. The members of the staff will please view this announcement as an official notice.

Rev. H. Veldman, Secretary

IN HIS FEAR

Trained for What and by Whom?

For hundreds and thousands in our land the month of June will have special significance.

It is frequently referred to as the month for brides, and it will, perhaps be chosen by many, many brides-to-be as the proper month for their wedding.

But June is also, and consistently so, the month that sees commencement exercises across the land in which we live.

Universities, colleges, high schools and schools of elementary education celebrate in June the fact that among the number of their pupils there are those who have finished the prescribed course of study.

Diplomas are handed out; and it is a happy time and a significant milestone in the lives of the youth of our land.

Even for those who graduate from the schools for elementary education it is a significant milestone. For some of these it marks eight years of formal education being brought to its successful end. For others it may signify nine years of such education. But for well nigh all it means that at least half of the time they are to spend in receiving a formal education is a matter of history. Eight or nine years of elementary education, three or four years of high school and then four years of college. Few go beyond that. And the eighth or ninth grade graduate can look back and say this June that as far as the time element is concerned he is at least half way through his formal education. For those who intend to seek no further education than that to be obtained in the high school it is a matter of being two thirds of the way through this period of receiving a formal education.

June will, therefore, mark a very significant milestone in the lives of many thousands of the youth of our land.

Are your children among them?

And if they are, for what were they trained and by whom?

We will gather with them and celebrate with them this achievement. We will, perhaps, reward them with a watch or some other gift; and congratulations will be the order of the day.

But is there really anything to celebrate?

Is it really an occasion that calls for rejoicing?

Have we sent them to school merely for the sake of wisdom? Did they attend their schools in order to be prepared to be mighty, influential men and women, men and women who will command respect and hold important positions in the world as doctors, lawyers, governors, senators,

business executives or the like? Did we have our eye on wealth and send our children to school because we wanted to see them make a pile of money for themselves and to get hold of a sizeable portion of this world's goods?

There is nothing to celebrate then!

And it is a time for us to sit down and weep rather than to rejoice. If we have sought to have them trained with these things as the goal, we may with a sinful pride gather with them at commencement exercises, thrust out our chests and boast that this or that is my boy or my girl. But we ought rather to weep and humble ourselves before God in prayer and penitence. For then we have not trained them in His fear.

Listen once to the word of God!

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord," Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

No, wisdom in regard to natural things is not to be condemned. And such wisdom may be sought. All the wisdom and skill of the surgeon and physician may be appreciated and sought in our afflictions and woes. A place of power and honor over men need not be refused as an evil in itself. We must not discourage our children, who at an early age have ambitions for an executive position, as though all might and power in themselves are evil. Gold and silver must not be avoided as poison; our children must not be discouraged from seeking to be trained to make a living and are not to be taught that it is a great wickedness before God to make more money than a bare living.

But do not train or let your children be trained to think that in these he is to glory. Do not let him be trained into seeking these things as an end in themselves, as the goal of his life.

Glory not in the achievements of your son and/or daughter who has such natural wisdom and a promising future of might and wealth, if they do not understand and know God that He is "the Lord which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth."

"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," Matthew 4:4. O, it is to be understood that the unbeliever will live by bread alone. It is to be expected that he sends his children to school to be trained to live for bread alone and to try to live by bread alone. He must, indeed, set before his child no other goal than earthly wisdom, might, and wealth among men. He hates God and rules Him entirely out of his life. He does not want to be bothered with the idea of living in

His fear. He knows nothing besides this present life and this present world. He knows that he is here for a very short time; and he is intent on getting as much out of it as he possibly can. He will eat, drink and be merry, for he knows that tomorrow he dies. He must needs have his child trained also to begin as early in life as possible to seek the things of this world. He either refuses to believe that there is anything for him after this life or else he lives in the awful awareness that his lot after this life will have no joy but instead everlasting agony and woe in the just judgment of God. Therefore he and his children must seek honor and wealth of this world and seek wisdom to obtain all these. Therefore he will gather with his children when they graduate and glory in their wisdom because it gives him hope of might and wealth.

But you, Christian reader of these lines, for what and by whom was this child of yours trained that receives his diploma this month from a university, a college, a high school, or from a school for elementary education?

If you sent them to the world for their training, can you expect anything else than that they are trained to glory in wisdom, might and earthly riches? Can you expect that those who themselves do not know and understand that God is "the Lord Who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth" will teach your child to understand and know Him as such?

What does the unbeliever know about the priesthood of man before God? What does the world, that denies that God is the Lord, know and understand about the creation of man in the image of God as a thinking, willing creature through whose mind and will all of creation could and should return to God? The unbeliever (and the schools supervised and founded by the unbelievers) denies that God is the Creator of all things. He wants to teach your child all things in such a way that God is ruled out of His Own creation. He does not know and understand that He is the Lord of all creation. Creation is here for man. Higher than man and his lusts, his ambitions and his physical and psychical wellbeing he does not want to go. He worships the creature rather than the creator, Romans 1:25. He worships wisdom, might and riches. These are his god. And he can train your child only to glory in these gods of wisdom, might and riches. To understand and know that God is the Lord, Who exercises loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness he has no desire himself; and rather than to desire to have your child whom you place under his "care" know and understand God in that way, he will plan and conduct all his teaching in such a way that he will deliberately oppose the very idea.

Wisdom, might and riches are the end which he seeks.

He will train your child to seek them and to glory in them.

Tell me who trains your child. I will tell you for what he trains them!

And now *your* child graduates from such a training?

Does his diploma state that he has successfully finished the course of study in the glory of man's earthly wisdom, of carnal might and worldly riches? Do the unbelievers sign their names to his diploma as a witness and seal that your child has learned well that wherein God does not delight?

Who gives your child his diploma this month?

Who is proud of your child and rejoices that he has absorbed his teachings and responded to his training?

Is it believer or unbeliever?

Is it those who understand and know God as the Lord who exercises loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness? Is it one who knows God in Jesus Christ, in whom that loving-kindness alone is to be seen, in Whose cross the judgment of our sins and of the wicked world is displayed, in Whom the righteousness of God is prepared for His people? Is it one who loves your child for God's sake or one who loves your child for the sake of the gods of wisdom, might and earthly riches?

Can you meet with the saints and sing with them when your child receives his diploma? Will you sing the songs of Zion, the songs of God the Lord, the songs of His loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness, when your child graduates this month? Or will you sing to the gods of wisdom, might and riches?

O, if you are a child of God and you love your children as covenant children of God, you will weep rather than sing to see your child trained *with* the world and *by* the world *for* the world.

Remember that you send them to the world, to the unbeliever for only one reason. There is only ONE thing for which you can send them to the world: to understand and know wisdom, might and riches and to glory in these!

There is no Christian school where you may send them?

That is a tragic situation. And you ought to seek to realize one in your community. But the fact remains. Whether you do it deliberately or out of necessity, when you send them to the world, to the unbeliever, you do it that they may glory in wisdom, might and riches as an end in themselves. Never do you send them there that they may understand and know that God is the Lord.

O, reconsider for the other children!

Train them and have them trained in His fear.

Then you can rejoice with them at their commencement exercises and sing with them of God's loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness and glory in these.

J.A.H.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

GREGORY VII AND THE PAPACY (continued).

In his war on Nicolaitism, Gregory was sustained by ancient laws of the Roman Church, but not by the genuine spirit of Christianity. Enforced clerical celibacy has no foundation in the Bible, and is apt to defeat the sacerdotal ideal which it was intended to promote. The real power and usefulness of the clergy depend upon its moral purity, which is protected and promoted by lawful matrimony, the oldest institution of God, dating from the paradise of innocence.

The motives of Gregory in his zeal for sacerdotal celibacy were partly monkish and partly hierachical. Celibacy was an essential part of his ascetic ideal of a priest of God, who must be superior to carnal passions and frailties, wholly devoted to the interests of the Church distracted by no earthly cares, separated from his fellow-men, and commanding their reverence by angelic purity. Celibacy, moreover, was an indispensable condition of the freedom of the hierarchy. He declared that he could not free the Church from the rule of the laity unless the priests were freed from their wives. A married clergy is connected with the world by social ties, and concerned for the support of the family; an unmarried clergy is independent, has no home and aim but the Church, and protects the pope like a standing army.

Another motive for opposing clerical marriage was to prevent the danger of a hereditary caste which might appropriate ecclesiastical property to private uses and impoverish the Church. The ranks of the hierarchy, even the chair of St. Peter, were to be kept open to self-made men of the humblest class, but closed against hereditary claimants. This was a practical recognition of the democratic principle in contrast with the aristocratic feudalism of the Middle Ages. Hildebrand himself, who rose from the lowest rank without patronage to the papal throne, was the best illustration of this clerical democracy.

The power of the confessional, which is one of the pillars of the priesthood, came to the aid of celibacy. Women are reluctant to intrust their secrets to a priest who is a husband and father of a family.

The married priests brought forward the example of the priests of the Old Testament. This argument Damiani answered by saying that the Hebrew priest was forbidden to eat before offering sacrifices at the altar. How much more unseemly it would be for a priest of the new order to soil

himself carnally before offering the sacraments to God! The new order owed its whole time to the office and had none left for marriage and the family life (I Cor. 7:32). Only an unmarried man who refuses to gratify carnal lusts can fulfil the injunction to be a temple of God and avoid quenching the Spirit (Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19).

These motives controlled also the followers of Gregory and the whole hierarchy, and secured the ultimate triumph of sacerdotal celibacy. The question of abolishing it has from time to time been agitated, and in the exceptional cases of the Maronites and United Greeks the popes have allowed single marriage in deference to old custom and for prudential reasons. Pope Pius II, before he ascended the papal chair (1458-1464), said that good reasons required the prohibition of clerical marriage, but better reasons required its restoration. The hierarchical interest, however, has always overruled these better reasons. Whatever may have been the advantages of clerical celibacy, its evils were much greater. The sexual immorality of the clergy, more than anything else, undermined the respect of the people for their spiritual guides, and was one of the chief causes of the Reformation, which restored honorable clerical marriage, created a pastoral home with its blessings, and established the supremacy of conscience over hierarchical ambition.

From the standpoint of a zealous reformer, like Gregory, the morals of the clergy were certainly in a low condition. No practice did he condemn with such burning words as the open marriage of priests or their secret cohabitation with women who were to all intents and purposes their wives. Contemporary writers like Damiani, died 1072, in his *Gomorrhionus*, give dark pictures of the lives of the priests. While descriptions of rigid ascetics are to be accepted with caution, the evidence abounds that in all parts of Latin Christendom the law of priestly celibacy was ignored. Modern Catholic historians, like Hefele and Funk, do not hesitate to adduce the proofs of this state of affairs. The pope Benedict IX, according to friendly testimony, was thinking of taking a wife openly. The legislation, opening with the canons of the Roman synod of 1049 held by Leo IX, and emphasized at the Roman synod of 1059 held under Nicholas II, was given by Gregory VII such a prominence that one might have supposed the very existence of the Church depended upon the enforcement of clerical celibacy. There were bishops even in Italy who openly permitted the marriage of priests, as was the case with Kunibert of Turin. In Germany, Bishop Poppo of Toul did not conceal his quasi-marital relations which Gregory denounced as fornication, and the bishops of Spire and Lausanne had hard work clearing themselves in public synods from a like charge. Married priests were denominated by synods and by Gregory VIII as "incontinent" or "concubinary priests." Gregory spoke of Germany as afflicted with the "inveterate disease of clerical fornication." And what was true of Italy and Germany was true of England.

The Enforcement of Sacerdotal Celibacy.

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 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 subdeacons 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 Rudolf of Swabia and Duke Betroff 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 step 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 Spires 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 of the laity.

But the princes who were opposed to Henry IV and deposed 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 1090, expressed with almost Hildebrandian severity his detestation of clerical concubinate, 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

(Continued on page 403)

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

OF THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD, AND THE MANNER THEREOF

Article 11. But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.

A few minor corrections in the translation are in order, first of all.

1. The first clause should read: "Moreover, when God accomplishes this his good pleasure in the elect . . ." This expresses the connection with the preceding article correctly, and is plainly the meaning of the original, "*Caeterum, quando Deus hoc suum beneplacitum in electis exequitur . . .*"

2. The description of the work of God's grace upon the will, found in the last part of this article, though correct as far as the meaning is concerned, might better maintain the sharp emphasis of the article by following the word order of the original more closely, as does the Dutch translation. It would then read somewhat as follows: ". . . he infuses new qualities into the will, and changes it from being dead unto being alive; from being evil, good; from being unwilling, willing; from being refractory, obedient, and actuates and strengthens it, so that, like a good tree, it is able to bring forth the fruits of good actions."

This paragraph stands in close connection with Article 10, as is plain from its opening clause, "Moreover, when God accomplishes this his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion . . ." In it we have a further delineation of the work of the efficacious calling. In the preceding paragraph the fathers have insisted that when others, called by the gospel, obey the call and are converted, this is not to be ascribed to man, but to God, Who, according to the standard of election in Christ, efficaciously calls His own in time, confers upon them faith and repentance, rescuing them from the power of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of His own Son, that they may show forth the praises of Him Who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light, and may glory not in themselves, but in the

Lord. It is to this that the fathers refer when they say, "When God accomplishes *this his good pleasure* in the elect, or works in them true conversion." Just as we remarked in the previous chapter, the fathers maintain not only that God sovereignly chose His own from eternity in Christ, but they also insist that God Himself realizes His counsel of election in time. The fathers saw that the former could not be maintained without the latter, and that if we are to maintain that salvation is the work of God at all, we must maintain that it is the work of God from beginning to end, and not at all the work of man. And therefore they refer to the efficacious calling as the accomplishing by God of His own good pleasure in the elect. But now they want to be very sure that this efficacious calling is indeed understood as efficacious. And they therefore leave no stone unturned to make this plain. They want it plainly understood that God, and God alone, is the author of this work, and that He is the sovereign author. Hence, they set out in this article carefully to circumscribe this wonder of the efficacious calling, and to make it plain that, as a divine work exclusively, it is complete. When they are finished with this description, there is simply nothing left to be ascribed to man.

We must remember, of course, that they are opposing and exposing the Arminian error. This explains their great care in carefully delineating this doctrine. For, first of all, the Arminians were crafty and deceitful. If you insisted that salvation is of the Lord, that man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, that it is needful that he be born again of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and if you insist that the grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, the Arminian will say, "Amen. I surely agree with you." You cannot talk generalities when you deal with an Arminian; you must be specific. And if you fail in this, the Arminian will leave the field of battle for the truth victorious. This is indeed still true today. Any Arminian will maintain what I have just described above. You can hear it in many an Arminian sermon. But in the meantime, you must not forget that the same Arminian will maintain either literally or by implication that "as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible." And therefore you cannot afford, when dealing with Arminians, not to dot your i's and cross your t's. The Arminian teaches, III, IV, B, 6, that in the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers or gifts can be infused by God into the will, and that therefore faith through which we are first converted, and because of which we are called believers, is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man (sic!). The Arminian conceives of the grace whereby we are converted to God (III, IV, B, 7), as being only a gentle advising, or (as others explain it), that this is the noblest manner of working in the conversion of man, and that this manner of working, which consists in advising, is most in harmony with man's nature. And it is this fundamentally divergent view of grace, — the

term itself being no longer applicable, — which characterizes the Arminian view of the call of the gospel, and therefore, of the preaching of the gospel, throughout. The Arminian preacher urges, and persuades, and begs men to accept Christ. He presses for a decision. There must be an act of faith. And the sad spectacle is that in our day many so-called Reformed people have either so completely lost sight of the truth or else are become ashamed of the heritage of Dordt, that they follow the same Arminian tactics, and “press for a decision.” It is these errors that the fathers had in mind when they composed this and other connected articles, and composed them in such a way that they left no room for these Arminianizing tactics on the part of one who truly means to live by the Reformed confessions.

In the second place, we may note that here we deal with a subject which receives but scant attention in either our *Heidelberg Catechism* or our *Netherland Confession*. Although it is undoubtedly true that the Arminian view was contrary to the whole tenor of our other confessions, it nevertheless remains true that these confessions are not very explicit and concise on the subject of the efficacious calling. And from that point of view, they did not leave room for the Arminian error, but, to use a figure, the door was not slammed very tightly against Remonstrants’ false doctrine. On the other hand, we may be forever thankful that the God of His church used the rise of the Arminian errors in order to stir our fathers to state this truth concerning our calling out of darkness into His light with great care. We have a plain example here of the fact that the Lord often uses the rise of controversy and opposition as a means to accomplish the further delineation of His truth by the church.

As far as the positive meaning of this article is concerned, we may observe, first of all, that here for the first time the fathers speak of regeneration, and that too, only indirectly: “. . . . but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man.” It is evident here that the article speaks, therefore, of regeneration in the broader sense of the word. We may and do distinguish, of course, between the very first infusion of the new life in an elect sinner and the so-called internal calling. And when we speak of the order in which the blessings of salvation are bestowed upon God’s people, we say: regeneration, calling, faith, etc. The two, regeneration and the calling, are to be sure, very closely allied. And the apostle Paul includes the two frequently under the one term, *the calling*. Then the calling is to be understood as the entire work of God’s almighty grace whereby He quickens the dead. And it is in this last sense that the fathers speak of the work of regeneration. They do not distinguish between the very first beginning of regeneration and that work of God’s grace whereby He brings the new life of regeneration to conscious activity and expressions. But they include the entire work in the one term.

In this work they include:

1. The preaching of the gospel to the elect. Notice, however, that even as regards the external preaching of the gospel, the fathers use careful language: God causes the gospel to be externally preached to His elect.

2. The powerful illumination of their minds by the Holy Spirit, so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God. Without this work of the Holy Spirit accompanying the external preaching of the gospel, the elect would never *see* the kingdom of heaven.

3. However, the foregoing are not first, and are not sufficient. By the efficacy of the Spirit of regeneration, God penetrates into the inmost recesses of the elect man. There, first of all, He belabors man’s heart. How contrary to the current presentation of this matter in our day! Not man, but God opens the closed heart. That work of God is prerequisite to any receptivity for the gospel of salvation. Not man, but God softens and mollifies the hard heart. Unless God does this, the seed of the Word will never fall therein, take root, and bring forth fruit. And God circumcises the uncircumcised heart. This is, of course, figurative language. It means that God cuts away from the heart the dominion of sin, of the old man.

4. Furthermore, this accomplishing of God’s good pleasure in the elect concerns the will. God infuses into that will new spiritual qualities, — qualities that it has never known before. It is naturally dead; God makes it alive unto Him. It is naturally evil; God makes it ethically good. It is naturally unwilling; God makes it willing. It is naturally refractory, rebellious; God makes it obedient. Where now is there any room for the false notion that man’s “free will” is the determining factor, — or any factor at all, — in the work of salvation?

5. But this is not enough. We now arrive at the matter of activity. And what is the fathers’ view of this? Does God’s work cease at this juncture, and man’s work begin? Not at all: God also *actuates* and *strengthens* that will in such a way that it becomes a real possibility to bring forth the fruits of good actions, — actions of faith and repentance.

H.C.H.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

(Continued from page 401)

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.

H.V.

DECENCY and ORDER

Matters to be Treated

Article 30 D. K. O. (Continued)

"In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be treated." Such is the wording of Article 30. It would seem that further comment on the above statement is altogether unnecessary since the fact stated follows from the very nature of things. It is obvious that a farmer shall concern himself with things pertaining to agriculture, a doctor with medicine, a teacher with pedagogy, etc. Isn't it then rather redundant to say that the church shall treat only those matters that pertain to and concern the church?

Although this would appear to be the case, we must, nevertheless, insist that the above rule is fundamental and it is certainly not redundant to express it. It is very important that this rule be retained and enforced with rigor. Such is for the good of the church and if the necessity of this is to be really felt, it may be imperative to further clarify the rule which, in its present form, is broad and undefined. Especially two factors contribute toward the mandatory enforcement and clarification of this rule. Firstly, there is that reality that may never be overlooked, that the church always has a natural tendency and is constantly confronted with the temptation to enter into spheres and operations which are really of no concern to her. Among other things, the vain desire to acquire recognition and honor in the present world is a strong contributing force which urges her in this wrong direction. Many churches today, forgetting or ignoring their rightful limitations, have followed this urge and degraded into mere secular institutions. It is pathetic that such institutions continue to wear the insignia "church." Now the rule of Article 30 safeguards the church from following this dangerous inclination which leads to spiritual jeopardy.

In the second place, the fact that there is even within the church itself a wide difference of opinion with respect to what actually constitutes "ecclesiastical matters" necessitates some further and more definite clarification of the rule. A matter that to one is very ecclesiastical may, in the opinion of another, have nothing to do with the church. Especially this problem is accentuated by the fact that the spiritual, confessional influence of the church through the Gospel which she preaches permeates every sphere and relationship of human life. This fact easily leads to a wrong conclusion. When all the things of life are viewed from this broad vantage point one is more than apt to conclude that everything in life is "ecclesiastical" and, in a certain sense, this may even be said to be true. However, obviously this conflicts with that other more limited viewpoint, apparently that of the church order, that sharply distinguishes between "ecclesiastical" and "non-ecclesiastical" matters. It places the

latter outside of the periphery of the church's concern and seriously enjoins her to keep her hands off. This, we believe, is also the Scriptural viewpoint for the church in the world is the earthly, visible manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ and that Kingdom, as Jesus Himself said, "Is not of this world." Thus, there are "matters of this world" and "matters of the Kingdom" and the latter alone are and must be treated by the church in her proper assemblies.

This distinction certainly does not conflict with the accepted truth that the treatment by the church of those things that are strictly "ecclesiastical" affects the relationship of her members to the things of the present world. Her members are indeed *in the world* although they are not *of the world* and their position in the world unavoidably places them daily in certain relationships to the things of the present world. By virtue of this these "worldly things" do not become "ecclesiastical" but rather the relation of the believer to these mundane matters is to be determined by those things that are properly treated by the church. The latter's determination of "ecclesiastical matters" certainly affects her members in their business relations, society, recreation, relation to government, education, etc. A classic example of this is the decree of the church relative to the matter of so-called common grace. In dealing with this question as such, the church is properly treating an ecclesiastical matter,—a matter of faith and doctrine. When, however, she decides favorably toward the damnable heresy of common grace, as the Christian Reformed Church did in 1924, she cannot escape the practical consequences nor is she able to impede the mighty influx of worldliness into her midst. She cannot avoid, while pretending to maintain her Reformed Standards, to be plagued by the embarrassing impossibility of solving her problems of "unionism, worldly amalgamation, divorce, re-marriage, worldly amusements, the movie, card-playing, etc. etc." She has in her treatment of the "ecclesiastical matter" opened her door to worldly modernism and she, therefore, in her members, ought not to complain when the expected fruits of such action by the church are reaped. When "ecclesiastical matters" are *mis-treated* by the church, the results are often far more damaging yet than when the church reaches outside of her rightful sphere to treat matters that are "non-ecclesiastical."

We mention all of this here for two reasons. Firstly, we want to emphasize that ecclesiastical matters are not abstract, academic questions of interest to theologians but they are living issues that vitally concern our whole life. Since we are directly affected by the things that take place in our ecclesiastical assemblies, these things ought always to be of highest interest and deepest concern to us. And, secondly, we must emphasize the significance of the words, "shall be treated" in Article 30 as well as the words, "only ecclesiastical matters." Let us then comment further on these two points.

Concerning the first, it may be said that the reason this

is true lies in the fact that "ecclesiastical matters" are those things that relate to the means of grace and the exercise of christian discipline. Ecclesiastical matters are inseparable from the marks of the true church. These marks concern principally the preaching of the Word, the main function and calling of the church. Related to this is the task of the church to formulate the truth of the Word and express that truth in her Confessions so that in concise and definite form she may have before her an excellent standard by which the walk of her members is to be gauged and, on the other hand, a mighty weapon with which to combat the sinister forces of deception and evil. With these things she ought to concern herself for her battle is strictly a spiritual one. The rule we are discussing then prescribes that the church shall treat only those matters that concern her spiritual warfare with the powers of darkness and that relate to the upright walk and conversation of the soldiers within her ranks. Thus characterized the scope of "matters to be treated" is still somewhat broad but is also so limited that there should be no real difficulty in ascertaining whether or not certain questions and subjects which from time to time arise for consideration properly belong or do not belong within this scope.

Concerning the second matter mentioned above we should like to emphasize first of all the verb, "Shall Be." Ecclesiastical matters "shall be" treated. This "shall be" in our opinion assumes the proportion of a "must" in this connection. It is imperative. It is not a matter of voluntary choice but rather the duty, obligation, calling, responsibility of the church to treat matters that belong to her character. She may not ignore those matters or attempt to find ways to evade deciding them. This is especially important when the church is confronted by weighty matters, — matters that have far reaching and serious consequences for her position and continuous functioning as church in the world, — matters which in themselves are difficult and involved and concerning which there is considerable dispute and contention within her ranks. Always there is a natural tendency to avoid the real treatment of such matters. This is not right. Oh, yes, they are considered and discussed but not *treated*. A decision may ultimately be reached by the church "about" the matter but the matter itself is left undecided. What is decided frequently relates to various subordinate and really irrelevant matters that are somehow attached to the main question. This main question is then circumvented by a decision that is neither positive nor negative, often self-contradictory, a sort of in-between-compromise that is supposed to pacify both sides of the dispute. Such treatment(?) is more harmful than any thing else. The assemblies must remain conscious of their calling and duty to *treat* all matters properly before them.

In other instances we have witnessed major assemblies of the church evade the duty of *treating* ecclesiastical matters of this nature by conveniently deciding to "leave the matter to the discretion and judgment of the various individual churches." You, no doubt, also know of such cases.

One may admit that such maneuvering is indeed clever but it must be also noted that it is subtil and evil. It is a shirking of responsibility. Yes, it is known that such actions claim an apparant justification on the alleged basis that the matter really belongs with the local church but honesty would dictate the admission that the whole thing is really a bit to "consequential" and the major assembly ran "stuck with it." When the matter is simply passed on, it can by no stretch of the imagination be said that it was "treated" by the assembly. This involves "arriving at a definite conclusion, disposing of a matter by decision, making a final determination with respect to a given question." This is not done when the so-called "hot-potatoe" is conveniently passed on to someone else to avoid having one's own hand's burned. Nor can that be the end of the matter. The fire continues to burn and the heat grows increasingly intense.

Likewise minor assemblies sometimes imprecate themselves in the same manner when a difficult decision concerning a local circumstance confronts them and, without taking a definite position on the matter, they attempt to have the major assemblies decide it for them. The "ecclesiastical assemblies" then become "Question boxes." This, too, may not be for the expressed mandate of Article 30 is that all ecclesiastical matters *shall be treated* first in the minor assemblies before they can be treated in the major assemblies. To this there is one exception to which we shall presently return. Our space, however, for this issue is filled and so we shall wait, D.V., till next time.

G.V.D.B.

IN MEMORIAM

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Charles Pastoor, and her family, in the loss of their son and brother,

ROBERT W. PASTOOR

on May 16, 1957.

II Timothy 4:8 — "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Mrs. G. Bol, President

Mrs. C. Prince, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society and the Ladies' Aid Society extend their sincere sympathy to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Justin H. Kortering in the home-going of a beloved father and grandfather,

MR. BENJAMIN KORTERING

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. 12:22, 23.

The Ladies' Aid Society of Holland
The Men's Society of Holland

ALL AROUND US

Prof. Louis Berkhof Passes.

The Grand Rapids Press of May 18 reported the unexpected death of Prof. Emeritus Louis Berkhof at the age of 83 years. According to the news item, he died unexpectedly at Blodgett Memorial hospital Saturday morning about two hours after he was taken there with an apparent heart condition.

The Press further reports that he entered into the ministry in the year 1900 and served two churches in the Christian Reformed denomination for brief periods of two years each, and then was given the chair of New Testament and later dogmatics at Calvin Seminary in which he served until the time of his retirement in 1945.

Prof. Berkhof was the first president of Calvin Seminary, the department editor of the church periodicals *The Banner* and *De Wachter* many years. In fact, an article of his appears in the latest issue of *The Banner* of May 17, 1957. He was also the author of many books, the most popular of which was his "Systematic Theology," which the article states was translated into several other languages. If our memory serves correctly, he was also one of chief authors, if not the father, of the now famous "Three Points of Common Grace" adopted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1924, which became the occasion for the split in the Christian Reformed Church and the beginning of our Protestant Reformed Churches.

The Christian Reformed Church will no doubt consider his passing a severe loss; and no doubt, too, cognizance of his passing will be noted in many church periodicals outside of this denomination, since he was well-known on the church scene both in this country and abroad. When we consider all that we have read that flowed from his pen, it is our judgment that the late professor was not a genius for being original, but he did have the ability to amass and restate what others before him have stated.

Review of "The Perfect Prayer."

The Banner of May 17, 1957, contains a brief book-review written by the Rev. Alexander C. De Jong relative to the latest and last book in the series on the Heidelberg Catechism, written by the Rev. Herman Hoeksema. The book was titled: *The Perfect Prayer*. Rev. De Jong writes as follows:

"With this work on the Lord's Prayer Rev. Hoeksema completes his series of ten volumes dealing with the Heidelberg Catechism. The studies in this volume are not materially different from those found in an earlier work by the same author entitled 'In the Sanctuary.' There are, however, important additions such as his treatment of the necessity of prayer, the perfection of the Lord's prayer, the problem of healing in connection with prayer — which incidentally contains a unique exegesis of the James passage — and a valu-

able section dealing with the Kingdom of God.

"We are grateful that the Rev. Mr. Hoeksema was able to finish his exposition of the Catechism. With the complete set of ten volumes in hand the interested student can clearly see the important differences which Hoeksema's vigorous denial of common grace make at crucial points in the whole of Reformed faith and practise. These divergencies ought to challenge the thinking of those who are concerned about the lasting influence of the issues of the controversy of 1924. This latest book of Hoeksema combines in a fine manner the author's unique gift of fusing theological insight with devotional warmth, and his treatment opens up new and fresh perspectives in understanding the Lord's Prayer."

We are rather pleased with this factual and pointed survey which honors this servant of God who was granted the wisdom, strength and time to produce this series which has been, and we trust, will be, so much help to the minister who preaches on the Heidelberg Catechism or who studies this Standard of our Reformed faith for his own spiritual profit.

The Rev. Mr. De Jong gives evidence in this review of having read more than Hoeksema's series on the Catechism. Perhaps he is one of many ministers who has in his library all of Hoeksema's books and prizes them as most valuable implements in his studies. And though the Rev. De Jong cannot be in agreement with the views of Rev. Hoeksema set forth in his books where common grace is concerned, he nevertheless gives a surprisingly fair appraisal and acceptable evaluation of them. For this we are deeply grateful.

Graham and the New York City Campaign.

Most of the recent church and independent religious periodicals we have read carry articles relative to the Billy Graham New York Crusade. Last week as we passed through New York City huge bill-board signs portraying the bust photo of Billy Graham and an accompanying advertisement informing the passers-by of the meetings he would be conducting in Madison Square Gardens effectively caught our eye. Characteristically one of these signs was placed along side of a huge whiskey advertisement, attractively set high above the buildings to our left, as we traveled south on the New Jersey Thru-Way to Philadelphia. Evidently months of planning and ground work was expended by his Evangelistic Association to prepare for this biggest of them all campaigns to gain "decisions for Christ."

The Banner of May 17, 1957, reports that "Three weeks before the opening date, the Graham organization had secured the cooperation of 1,500 churches in the city, and had enrolled a total of 4,500 individuals in the counsellor training program. Two thousand ushers had been secured to direct the seating in the 19,000 seat Madison Square Garden, where the evangelistic meetings are to be held. Two choirs of 1,500 voices each were rehearsing with a view to providing music nightly, each choir on alternate evenings.

"The well-organized crusade had also secured and ac-

cepted an offer of a nation wide T.V. network for an hour telecast time each Saturday night during the crusade . . ."

Christianity Today devotes no less than two rather lengthy articles in its May 13th issue to this campaign. In the first of these written by Edward John Carnell, who titled his article with the question "Can Billy Graham Slay the Giant?", the writer compares the city of New York to Goliath and Billy to David with his sling and five smooth stones.

Very interestingly the writer tells of his concern whether Billy Graham will be able to succeed to bring the giant to the ground whereas Reinhold Niebuhr, the realistic theologian of repute residing for sometime in the giant city has failed miserably "to stir the city for Christ." Carnell is deeply interested in the outcome of the campaign that it may be determined whether the traditions of orthodoxy defended by Graham, who "preaches Christ in such clear and forceful language that even a bartender can find his way to the mercy seat," will succeed in penetrating the granite towers of Manhattan.

In this same issue of *Christianity Today*, George Burnham, writing under the title "This Can Happen in New York," begins his article thus: "If you care enough to pray, a number of incredible things will happen during Billy Graham's New York Crusade, beginning May 15. Here are a number of predictions, based on taking God at his word and what he has done in the past — not with an idea of trying to go before him:

1. Billy Graham will tell more people about Jesus Christ during the next six weeks than he has during all of his phenomenal ministry, with the exception of the world wide radio program, 'Hour of Decision.' . . .

2. The number of inquirers who respond to the invitation at the close of each message, by the grace of God, will surpass any campaign to date . . .

3. Ministers and church members will be revived. Unity and love will spread as they place Christ first and denomination second, endeavor to help instead of hinder, offer comfort instead of criticism . . .

4. The name of Jesus Christ will be for many the biggest topic of conversation on the streets, in factories and offices and on the dimly lit night circuit of such spots as the Stork Club and Toots Shor's . . .

5. The effect of the campaign will be felt in many parts of the world . . .

6. Communists in New York will face the rising threat to their godless way of life by smearing Mr. Graham in any way possible . . .

7. Opposition will continue to come from small extreme groups within the Church . . .

8. Most important of all, Jesus Christ will be glorified . . ."

Burnham closes his article with the assertions that Mr. Graham and his team are going into this campaign "totally dependent upon God." "Mr. Graham will give all the praise

and honor and glory, without hesitation and before any group, to Jesus Christ. Better than anyone else, he knows that the organization and publicity will amount to nothing unless the power of God falls. A warning ever before him will be, 'It is not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord,' and, 'My glory I will not share with another.'

"Greater things than the few listed here can happen in New York. They will happen . . . if you care enough to pray — without ceasing."

Reader's Digest, May 1957 issue, also presents a condensation of the book written by Stanley High entitled: "Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man." The Digest introduces the article with the following paragraph: "A sensitive, probing study of the man whose career as a spokesman for the Christian faith is unique in our times, and who, in the massive crusade beginning in New York's City's Madison Square Garden on May 15, has found the courage to undertake the most challenging revival meeting in Protestant history."

These are only a few examples, which could probably be multiplied a hundredfold, demonstrating the effort of the Billy Graham supporters to set before the eyes of the reading public the greatness of the now famous North Carolinian.

We have before expressed our judgment on the effort of this man and his association to gain "decisions for Christ." We need not repeat now what we said then. This only would we say, that it becomes increasingly evident that through this approach religion and the "preaching of the gospel," are becoming increasingly popular. It is our candid opinion that the Holy Scriptures nowhere predict this popularity for the true preaching of the gospel. Rather, the converse is true in this latter age. The truth has never been popular, and I cannot find one passage in Scripture where the Word of God says that it ever will be. Arminianism and, for that matter, many other false isms, can be and evidently are now popular, and will be for some time to come. But the truth which presents the gospel that God is sovereign in our salvation, and that He saves His elect without any contingent work of man, will never be acceptable to the masses. Billy Graham is a thorough-bred Arminian, and the efforts of his association do not proceed from the church of Jesus Christ who, Spirit led, fulfils her mandate to preach the gospel to all peoples, but from an independent organization through whom it does not please God to disseminate His truth. M.S

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 30, 1957, our dear parents and grandparents,
MR. and MRS. RALPH DE YOUNG, Sr.
hope to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Father in heaven for sustaining them in there thirty years together and pray that He will sustain and bless them in the years he has yet set before them if they be many or few. And we thank Him that it has been His will that they have raised us in the ways of his kingdom.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph De Young, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. John De Young
and 4 Grandchildren

Report of Western Ladies' League

The spring meeting of the Western Ladies' League of the Protestant Reformed Churches was held at Doon, Iowa, on the afternoon of April 26, 1957.

The meeting was opened by singing our theme song, Psalter number 298 and also Psalter number 82. Our president, Mrs. E. Van Egdom, read Psalm 31, after which Rev. Van Baren opened with prayer. A word of welcome was extended by our president to all the ladies present. Our secretary, Mrs. C. Klein, read the minutes and our treasurer, Mrs. T. Kooima, gave a report. Mrs. G. Van Baren was voted as our new vice president and Mrs. S. Broekhouse as our new treasurer. Our president extended a word of thanks to the retiring officers. Psalter numbers 221 and 112 were sung while the offering was taken for *The Standard Bearer*. The president then introduced our speaker, Rev. Van Baren, who spoke on the topic, "Lead Thou Us On."

Rev. Van Baren said this is a prayer addressed to God arising from the heart of the child of God and God answers this prayer according to His grace.

What does it mean? It means that we have no trust in ourselves but in God. The child of God realizes a complete need for reliance on Him. We are dependent on Him for both our material needs and our spiritual needs. God must lead us in the truth. That is His promise and that is our prayer. God only is true so we must depend on Him for the truth. The child of God prays for leadership confident that God will lead him in the way—the way of life. It implies a certain goal which is the glory of God. It is the purpose of the child of God to glorify God.

Who are so led? The child of God and the church of Christ are led to eternal glory. The world is also led although they don't want to be led. The world is led into eternal damnation. The child of God prays that he may be led. This prayer does not originate in us but is worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Why is this prayer necessary? We live in a world of sin and iniquity and we have our own sinful flesh. We must ask God to guide us for His own name's sake.

How does God lead us? Christ speaks to us and leads us through Christ through the Word—through the proclamation of His Word. It is the work of the Spirit whereby God implants in us the new life. God leads us and also supplies us the means to follow.

As Christian mothers we must pray that God will lead us in such a way that we can instruct, guide, point our children to the truth. We must see to it that they receive proper catechetical instruction and that they come to catechism prepared.

After this instructive speech, a ladies' duet from Edgerton sang for us. Rev. Veldman answered the questions previously sent to him by each society. A double duet from Hull then

sang for us. Psalter numbers 71 and 197 were sung, our president thanked the hostesses, the Doon society, and Rev. Heys closed with prayer.

We are thankful to God for revealing these precious truths to us and pray for grace that we may be faithful to Him and that all things may be done to glorify His Holy Name.

Mrs. T. Jansma, Reporter

Report of Eastern Ladies' League

The Ladies' League meeting was held April 25, 1957, at our Fourth Prot. Ref. Church. The meeting was opened by singing Psalter No. 14 and Psalm 105:5, after which our president Mrs. L. Jonker read from Scripture Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25, 7:6-11, and led us in prayer. She extended a word of welcome to all the ladies present. A ladies' Quartet from the Priscilla Society of First Church favored us with a number entitled, "Search Me O Lord."

The president then introduced the speaker for the evening, Rev. G. Lanting, who spoke to us on the topic, "The Duty of Covenant Mothers with respect to the Teen-Ager's Problems."

1. Problem—Teen-Agers are neither children or adults and therefore are in a peculiar position. They are beginning to take their own place in church, home, school, etc. They criticize the teachings of the parents and teachers, attempting to stand on their own feet. What must we do with the Teen-Agers? They are covenant children and have certain obligations to the covenant, therefore they must be taught.

2. Answer or Solution. Training and Instruction. We believe and teach that the covenant is established in the line of continued generations, therefore as mothers we have a special duty in respect to our Teen-Agers. Our manifestation must be all things to God's glory. We must teach them not to walk in the ways of temptation but to walk according to the glory of God. This takes wisdom and knowledge of God.

3. Our duty with respect to that problem. God must be the object of all our love. We must live as a good example before our children always being faithful to God. As covenant mothers our main object must be to know and serve God, then and then only can we instruct and train our covenant teen-agers to know God and what their obligations are to him in all their activities. Bring to maturity in the fear of the Lord to live to his honor and glory.

While singing Psalter No. 322, a collection was taken for *The Standard Bearer*, and our Hope and Adams Street Schools. The business of the evening was taken care of after which Mrs. J. Kuiper from our Hope Church gave a report on the activities of their Society. The ladies' quartet sang another selection entitled, "All that thrills my soul is Jesus." We sang Psalter No. 344 and Rev. Lanting closed our meeting with prayer.

Refreshments were served in the basement.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, Reporter