

# THE STANDARD

*Bearers*

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## MEDITATION

### THE BLESSED KNOWLEDGE OF THE PATH OF LIFE

*"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." PSALM 16:11*

The sixteenth Psalm is highly Messianic.

It is quoted in Acts 2, where Peter preaches to the Jews and the Gentiles following the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. See verses 25-28.

It amazes us whenever we read such exegesis of the Old Testament by the inspired writers of the New. When you read David in Psalm 16 you hear of *his* experiences. But when you read Peter you hear that the real Subject is the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is so, not only here in Psalm 16, but it is true in many other parts of Holy Scripture. If we did not have this exegesis of Peter, we would never have thought that the Lord Jesus Christ was involved at all. In fact, we read much more of the sufferings of the Lamb of God in the Old Testament than we read of the same in the New. See, e.g., Psalm 22.

My text is closely related the very heart of the Gospel, such as it was lived before by David, and fulfilled in Christ.

It comes down to this: the path of Christ is the path of Life. And this Life consists of, first, joy in God's presence; and, second, sweetnesses are found at God's right hand. The original Hebrew word which is translated in our English Bible by *pleasures* comes from a word which means *sweetness*. The name of Naomi comes from the same root, and means really *My Sweetness*.

\* \* \* \*

The path of Life.

Now, Life is a virtue of God. We read of the *living* God, or of the God of Life.

It is a holy relationship in God's Own economy. God always seeks God. That is life. You also may say it this way: Life is the utterance of Holy Self-Love.

God walks on that pathway of Life from everlasting to everlasting. You sing: "To live apart from God is death, 'Tis good His face to seek." Well, this last sentence would be a very good definition of Life. For that is exactly what God does. He ever seeks His Face, and that is the Son. God seeks God.

Relatively, life is in God's creature: man, beast and plant.

And in the creature it is that urge whereby all things continually move toward God: the very fountain of Life. They do so consciously or unconsciously, formally, materially or spiritually.

A path comprises three things: process, direction and destination. And when you connect the path with Life it is directly a matter of the heart. That is, when man is concerned. From out of the heart, through the mind and will and all his functions, man moves toward God. That is life for man.

Such it was at the morrow of creation in Paradise.

And the fruit of life for him was knowledge of God, of the Triune God.

But man fell away from God, and died.

And death is the very opposite of life. Death is departure from God. "To live apart from God is death!" You sing that.

And death is also a pathway. You go from death to more death. Paul is our teacher here. The Gospel preachers are death unto death to the wicked. That is, they are dead when Paul began to preach to them, and they are more dead when Paul finished his sermon.

And so it goes in our churches: the wicked are dead when they depart than when they entered the house of God.

Because the pathway of death has in it a process: you advance in death. Until you arrive in that awful place which is called the second death.

And at the East of the garden of Eden there were set

Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

That's the way it is when we are born here on this sorry earth.

\* \* \* \*

If no more was said or done by God, we would be born of dead parents, we would be dead at our birth, we would proceed upon our pathway of death, growing deader every second, and arrive finally at the place that is called second death.

But, thanks be to God, He revealed life again.

In Paradise was the Tree of Life.

And that Tree of Life is shown again. But what a difference!

It is Jesus Christ our Lord.

His Person, His work, His life and His death, and His resurrection and ascension at the Right Hand of God are the Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

And there stands that Tree.

Oh yes, the form is somewhat different. It is in the shape of a Cross.

But there He stands!

In the midst of the dead. Here is a description of you and of me as we are by nature. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death!" Prov. 14:12.

And in the midst of all this death the Tree of Life is God's revelation.

What good will it do?

Listen to Isaiah's cry: "Who hath believed our report?"

Who is going to listen to the preaching of this Tree of Life? Preaching the whole way of life is telling of the story of Jesus as He walked right through the flaming sword that kept the way. For Him to walk the pathway of life was to walk through all the wrath of God which is over the sin of mankind.

That flaming sword meant for Jesus that He had to die the eternal death.

But He did. And therefore Jesus said of Himself: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life!

God showed first of all the way of life to Jesus, and God showed Him the way through hell to heaven.

And, God be thanked, then God shows the way of life to all His people. And God shows this way of life through Jesus Himself. Christ is the great Preacher. He does that preaching through His Almighty Spirit and the Word Divine.

All that are given to Jesus by the Father are taught by Him and they begin to walk on the pathway of life.

A prophecy fulfilled: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," Isa. 54:13.

You know, the pathway of life is a matter of vision. Where there is no vision, the people perish. And it is not a natural vision, it is a spiritual vision; you see God or you do not see Him. You see sin or you do not. You see the Redeemer of sin or you do not. It's that simple (or terrible).

\* \* \* \*

And the fruit of that pathway of life is wonderful.

You could also call it *the end* of that pathway of life.

I call it a fruit, and I have my reasons. If it were only of the end, the conclusion of the journey of life, I would have no room for the sweetness of the present. Oh, I know, I know, that we are not in heaven. I am perfectly aware of the fact that we have our journey among the serpents and the lions. But there is something sweet now already.

Attend to this: In Thy Presence is fulness of joy!

You ought to sing the following sentence: The flaming sword is out of the way!

Eternal death, which is the reward of the wicked, is gone.

Jesus swallowed it all up. He has destroyed that sword.

What is the meaning of joy?

It is this: Joy is your state and condition when all your needs are fulfilled.

Watch a little bird in its cage: when it has eaten a few seeds, and drunk a little water: it sings! It is contented. It joys.

Many years ago I heard a program, and their theme song was: I sing, for I'm contented!

That was right. Oh I do know that they did not speak of the things of God, but in a formal sense they were right nevertheless. They were Divinely right. When your needs are fulfilled you feel like singing. You taste *joy*.

So also here. When you live, when you walk on the pathway of life to the heart of God, you feel like singing.

God knows that, and He prepared a book of songs for you: the 150 Psalms of David. Do not dilute the heavenly quality of such singing with your hymns, will you?

\* \* \* \*

And: At Thy Right Hand are sweetnesses for evermore.

Note that those sweetnesses are only at the Right Hand of God. That has to do with God's Righteousness. They are the enjoyments of the righteousness of Christ. And righteousness means that you are good. To be good is to be righteous.

The goodness of Christ whose name is The Lord our Righteousness, is given unto us. It envelops us as a cloak. When we walk with the Lord as the justified saints of God,

He treats us as though we had never sinned, yea, as though we had personally fulfilled all His righteous demands.

And this righteousness is also given to us as a small principle in our walk of sanctification.

It is sweet to walk with the Lord.

It is like unto the honey and the honeycomb of which the Bible speaks. It is the meeting and the tasting of God.

The text tells us that at His right hand these sweetnesses are for evermore.

Well, you do not have to wait to taste this sweetness, for they are yours even now while we walk in the valley of the shadow of death.

However, they are not tasted *unmixed*.

Here on earth they are mixed with the bitter taste of sin.

But when our weary journey to heaven is finished you will taste them unmixed. "There's a land that is fairer than day!"

And you will taste them for evermore.

G.V.

### Deacons' Conference

All present and former deacons are invited to the Deacons' Conference,

NOVEMBER 20, at 8:00 P. M.  
at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

Topic:

*"What are the Fundamental Requirements of a Deacon."*

Speaker: REV. H. C. HOEKSEMA

The Diaconate of the Hudsonville  
Prot. Ref. Church  
H. Boer, Secretary

### IN MEMORIAM

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids extends our sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. T. Van Eenenaam and Mrs. C. Emaus, in the loss of their husband and brother

TOM VAN EENENAAM

May the God of all grace comfort them in the hope of eternal blessedness in the life to come.

Mrs. E. Kooienga, President  
Mrs. C. Pastoor, Secretary

### IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies wishes hereby to express its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family of its former secretary

THOMAS VAN EENENAAM

whom the Lord took out of our midst so suddenly.

May the Lord comfort the family through His Word and Spirit.

Ps. 73:26: "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

H. Meulenberg, President  
J. Prince, Vice Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### Union?

The Synod of the Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken) that gathered this year in Utrecht, made an important decision regarding union with the Liberated (Gereformeerde Kerken, Art. 31).

We quote and translate from the "Rijnlandsche Kerkbode":

"Regarding the doctrinal expression of 1946, the so-called replacement formula (Vervangingsformule), the Synod decided 'to put her aside, without putting another in her place, but adhere, for the rule of faith in regard to the doctrine of the church concerning the covenant and baptism, to that which is expressed in the Three Forms of Unity.'"

According to the same Synod, as quoted in the paper mentioned above, this decision does not mean that the Synod would regard the objections brought in against the doctrinal expression of 1946 to be correct. The contrary is true. The Synod even expressed that she cannot accept those objections and still considers that the so-called replacement-formula is in harmony with the Word of God and the Confessions.

This is, to my mind, a strange, ambiguous and also contradictory decision.

First of all, I ask the question: what does it mean "to set aside" the replacement-formula (haar terzijde te stellen)? Evidently, it does not mean the same as to retract, for the Synod at the same time expressed that this formula is in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions. "To set aside" must mean that it is still on the table of Synod and that it can be taken off at any time. It also means, and this is, no doubt, the chief purpose of this decision, that it is no longer of force, that no one has to subscribe to it and that no one can be disciplined for teaching anything contrary to it.

But how is this possible?

The Synod itself, and to this I mean to call attention in the second place, expressed once more that the replacement-formula is in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions; and, personally, I believe it is. But, at the same time, and this is the ambiguous and contradictory element in the decision, it also virtually declares that it is not binding and that it sets it aside, so that anyone may teach anything contrary to it with impunity. How is this possible? Does it not amount to the same thing as to set aside Scripture and the Confessions? To my mind it does.

Besides, if the Synod now wants to declare, as it does, that the decision of 1946 is not of binding force, should it not do more?

Were not officebearers disciplined (I write from memory)

and deposed at the time because they would not subscribe to the decision of 1946? I am thinking now, e.g. of Prof. K. Schilder. And if the decision of 1946 is not of binding force today was it not a grievous error that it was made of binding force in 1946, and that thus the split was caused at that time in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands? Should then not the Synod of 1959 also have apologized for what was done by the Synod of 1946? It is very good, indeed, to seek union, but this must be done in the right way.

Suppose that the Christian Reformed Church would seek reunion with the Protestant Reformed Churches, which means, of course, not the schismatics, for they never were and are not now Protestant Reformed as becomes more and more evident; but which refers to the churches that are faithful to the "Declaration of Principles." Suppose, moreover, that they decided to set aside the "Three Points" so that they would not be of binding force anymore, but at the same time declare that these points were Scriptural and Confessional.

Could we, on that basis, reunite with the Christian Reformed Church?

We could not.

I could mention several reasons for this negative statement, but I will mention only two.

The first is that according to our deepest conviction the "Three Points" are neither Scripturally nor confessionally Reformed. They are false doctrine and can never be accepted by us. And to reunite with the Christian Reformed Church on that basis would mean that we admitted that those three points are Scriptural and Confessional. The only basis on which we could possibly reunite with that Church is that the Synod of that Church would loyally retract all the decisions of 1924 concerning "common grace."

But the second reason why we could not possibly reunite with the Christian Reformed Church on the basis above mentioned is that their Synod would not only have to retract but would also have to confess that in 1924 they had sinned. We did not leave the Christian Reformed Church. They cast us out. They deposed officebearers. Now either that deposition was valid and just, and then those officebearers could not be received without apology in the Christian Reformed Church. Or that deposition was unjust and corrupt, as I believe it was, and then the Christian Reformed Church has to admit that they sinned in 1924.

This is the only possible and right way.

If this way is not pursued we have to remain separate and we will have to appeal to Christ who will presently judge all history, also the history of 1924.

But we will wait for the reaction of the Liberated to this decision of Utrecht 1959.

H.H.

### Explanation

More than one have asked me a question or questions about an article I wrote in the July issue of *The Standard Bearer*, an article about the book of Revelation. The questions concerned especially what I wrote about the two witnesses mentioned in Rev. 11 and more particularly about the fact that, before the time of the end, they are taken to heaven. I even heard rumors that in this article I was teaching the premillennial view. A word of explanation, therefore, may not be out of order. Let me, first of all, state I studied that particular passage once more and that, on the basis of the text, I must conclude that my interpretation must stand. Strange I think it is that, while I preached on the entire book of Revelation three times and the third time I gave printed outlines of my sermons to all that heard me, I never heard a remark on my interpretation of chapter 11 before. Nevertheless, I am glad that the remark is made now, for in the first place it shows that *The Standard Bearer* is read, and, secondly, the young people asked me for the outlines above mentioned to be printed in *Beacon Lights* and to be used as a basis for discussion in their Bible study. And I surely would not like to lead them astray in the paths of premillennialism.

Let me first of all quote the passages from *The Standard Bearer* about which the questions were raised. I quote from pp. 414, 415:

"The first part of that week is the time of the great tribulation. But after the time of the great tribulation, after the church has been dead and her testimony has ceased for some time, Christ shall cause a certain revival. A spirit of life entered into them from God and they stood upon their feet once more. A voice comes from heaven, and calls them up thither, and they ascend into heaven in a cloud . . . In other words, before the time of the end, while Antichrist and Gog and Magog are still on the earth, the church shall be taken away from her shame and persecution and terrible suffering. The living saints shall be changed. Those that have died shall be raised. And the church of Christ shall be glorified. The days have been shortened for the elects' sake."

And again:

"... When the testimony is finished, the Antichrist will be allowed to develop and to persecute the church. The time of the great tribulation shall follow, of which Scripture has warned us so frequently. But that time of the great tribulation is to be cut short. At the darkest hour Christ shall deliver His church. History shall be continued for a while, with Antichrist and Gog and Magog as the inhabitants of the earth, till Christ shall come with His church and shall establish His glorious kingdom forevermore" . . .

And once more:

"Finally, we found in this chapter a general indication of the final rise of the Antichrist, the beast that comes up

out of the abyss. He oppresses the church. He persecutes the believers that witness against him and that perform these wonders. He kills some of them undoubtedly and succeeds in declaring the entire church of Christ dead so that their testimony is silenced and they are objects of greatest scorn and contempt as is expressed in the figure of their bodies lying unburied in the streets of Jerusalem for three days and a half. But we also find a general picture of the final victory, or rather of the ultimate deliverance of the church. The days are shortened for their sake. They are raised, changed, and taken to heaven even before the time of the end." . . .

This, to my mind, is the only correct and possible explanation of Ch. 11 of the book of Revelation. The only question that remains is whether this refers only to the church that is on earth at the time of the great tribulation or to the church in general. There are passages in Scripture that would seem to indicate that all the dead, wicked and righteous, shall rise at the same time. But we must never forget that when Scripture speaks of "the day of the Lord" and even of "the hour" it does not refer to a common day of twenty-four hours or to an hour of sixty minutes, nor does Scripture always speak in detail of the events and of the order of the events that shall take place in that day or in that hour. Nevertheless, I am strongly inclined to believe that Rev. 11 does not speak of the whole church, or of the resurrection of all the saints and their change to glory, but only of those that live and died at the time of the great tribulation, very shortly before the end, and before the rise of Gog and Magog which also shall take only a very short time.

But my explanation of Rev. 11 has nothing to do with premillennialism or with the rapture.

Premillennialism believes in two peoples, Israel and the Church. These two peoples are essentially different and shall forever remain separate. Christ is King of Israel, not of the Church. In eternity the Church shall go to heaven, the Jews shall forever remain on earth. We believe, on the clear testimony of Scripture, that there is only one people of God from the beginning to the end of the world and unto all eternity, that Christ is both the Head and the King of that one Church, and that this one Church shall forever reign with Christ in the new heavens and earth.

Premillennialists believe in the rapture. They conceive of the order of "the day of the Lord" as follows: 1. The rapture in which only those saints that live in the expectation of the coming of the Lord at any time shall have a part. And these saints shall not go to heaven but into the air. 2. Then follows the great tribulation which shall be especially for the Jews but which shall also concern the saints that remained on earth because they did live in the expectation of the coming Lord. 3. Next is the resurrection of the righteous with the first coming of the Lord. 4. Then follows that strange mixture which is called the millennium. At the close of the mil-

lennium there shall arise Gog and Magog which the Lord shall destroy by fire from heaven. 5. Finally, comes the second resurrection, the judgment and the eternal state when the Church will go to heaven and the Jews will occupy the earth or the land of Canaan forever.

We must have nothing of all this.

On the contrary, we believe that, towards the end there will be great tribulation such as never was before, caused by Antichrist. We believe that for the sake of the elect that pass through that tribulation the days will be shortened. Those saints of the tribulation will rise from the dead while the living shall be changed. Do not say that this is impossible. Enoch, Elijah and Moses were changed to glory, and there were saints that arose and were glorified at the time of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. But this has nothing to do with the rapture which is supposed to be before the great tribulation and which is supposed to take the saints in the air. There will be a short time, therefore, when the living saints will be no more on the earth but the Church is only in heaven. During that short period there will be the brief battle between Antichrist and Gog and Magog. Then follows the end, the general resurrection, the judgment and the eternal state.

That, on the basis of Scripture is my conception of the end of all things and also my explanation of Rev. 11.

That interpretation, therefore, still stands.

H.H.

#### VERSIFICATION OF PSALM 65

The goodness of thy house, O Lord,  
The joys thy holy courts afford,  
Our souls shall satisfy.  
By fearful deeds in justice wrought,  
The Lord will grant us what we sought,  
Our Saviour, God Most High.

On whose sustaining are depend  
To earth's and sea's remotest end,  
All men, in every age.  
Who girt with strength, sets fast the hills  
Who roaring seas and billows stills  
Who calms the nations' rage.

The tribes of earth's remotest lands  
Behold the tokens of thy hands,  
And fear the earth throughout.  
The east, where beams the morning light  
The west, in evening glories bright  
By thee in gladness shout.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER TEN

#### Revelation 12:7-12

For their sins have been atoned by Him. Your defeat is accomplished. The accuser of the brethren in that sense of the word is cast down. For the shout of victory which the apostle uses in this same connection may now be heard: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" The result of the war therefore is that Michael and his angels have the spiritual victory in this battle for the saints of the Old Testament.

There is, however, a second result. And that is that the devil will now direct all his efforts toward the persecution of the church militant. He has been cast down, and he cannot fight the battle for the church triumphant any more. And therefore that same voice shouts: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." What he does in this short time against the church militant we must see in the future. There is, however, one comforting thought with which I may close this discussion. It is this, that in the fight against the devil we have the company of Michael and his mighty angels. Not only in the old dispensation, but also in the new, and especially at the time of the end and in great trouble, he is the prince that standeth for the children of God's people. The Lord is our King. Directly He fights for us. And millions of his angels, with mighty Michael at the head, He sends to our protection. To be sure, the defeat, the final defeat, of the devil is certain. Stand therefore, and overcome through the Lamb and the word of the testimony.

#### *The Conflict Between The Woman And The Dragon*

#### Revelation 12:13-17

13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.



17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The beginning of this passage calls to our mind what immediately precedes: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth . . ." We will remember that these words refer back to the battle that was fought in heaven, as pictured in the words that immediately precede those of the present passage. We found that this war was a battle between spirits. And for that very reason we also drew the conclusion that it was indeed a very real war, but nevertheless one that must not in all respects be compared to the battles fought among men. It was not fought with sword and cannon, and it did not leave the battlefield strewn with wounded and killed. But it was a spiritual battle, fought with spiritual weapons of intellect and argumentation, of righteousness and law, a war that could only end in the casting away from the battlefield of one of the opposing parties. Michael, so we found, was the general on one side. He is not to be identified, so we found, with the Christ; but Scripture pictures him to us as an angel that is a prince over other angels, and whose special task it is to fight the battles against Satan in behalf of the people of God. This is also true of the passage we studied last time. In this instance he was fighting against the devil, the old serpent, the great red dragon and opponent of God. As to the time of this battle, we concluded that it would not have been the time before the entrance of sin into paradise, and therefore could not refer to the first rebellion of Satan and his angels in heaven, for the simple reason that the text calls him the accuser of the brethren and that also in other ways it indicates that already during the time of this battle there were people of God, saved in Christ Jesus, upon the earth, saints that loved not their lives even unto death. Nor is it the time of the end in the strictest sense of the word that is referred to in the preceding passage. For even after this war has been fought, there are still saved of God that have the testimony of Jesus and keep the commandments of God on earth, which certainly could not be the case were the war that is here fought one that must be placed after the glorification of the saints in Christ. We concluded, therefore, that it is a war that is fought all during the time of the old dispensation. Only in the old dispensation there are brethren on earth that love not their lives even unto death, as is so beautifully recorded in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is a war fought between Michael and his angels and the devil and his angels all during the time of the old dispensation, and that too, for the prize of the saints that had died and had been glorified in heaven in the days of the old dispensation. Thus understood, all is clear. Then we understand that the devil had to fight this war just as well as the battle to prevent the coming of the great seed was fought by him on earth. For Christ had not yet come. And the devil, on the one hand trying to prevent His first coming, on

the other hand claimed that the dead that died before He had come and before their sins were atoned belonged to him and had no right to glory. Then we could also understand why the devil is called the deceiver and the accuser of the brethren, the slanderer of God's people. For all during this period he must have slandered the people of God that had died in the days of the Old Testament and accused them of their sins before the countenance of God. And then we finally also understand that when the man child is brought forth and caught up to God's throne in glory, the battle between the spirits in heaven must come to an end, and the devil must be defeated. For it was exactly through the suffering and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the man child, that Michael and his angels were placed in the right as they defended the right of the Old Testament saints to their glory in heaven. And the result was, on the one hand, that the devil and his angels were cast out from heaven, so that he can no more carry on this war there; but at the same time the result is that he is cast down to the earth, so that he will pay all his evil attention to the church in the world. Here our text begins, and it speaks of the tremendous conflict between the woman and the dragon.

We must call attention, in the first place, to the fact that in the words of this passage we have a continuation of the symbolism which we met with in verses 1 to 6. Here we have no plain reality, but a symbolical representation of the things that are mentioned here. That was not the case in verses 7 to 12. In that passage there was nothing to indicate symbolism, and therefore without any difficulty we took it as plain reality, as a real war fought between real beings with a real purpose and with real results. Literally we explain that portion. But that is not the case here. There is no one that takes this woman for a real woman. Nor are there any interpreters that understand the dragon as a real animal, or the stream which he casts out of his mouth as a real stream, or the wings which the woman receives as real wings. In so far there is no difficulty. But in spite of this all it is necessary that we remind you of the fact that here we have no literal presentation of facts, but rather an allegory, which does not allow of literal interpretation. For although all agree that this is not a real woman with real eagle's wings, and that the dragon mentioned here is not a real dragon, and that the stream of water he casts out after the woman is not a real stream of water, yet there are interpreters that make the mistake of singling out that wilderness and of maintaining that it, at all events, must be taken in a literal sense of the word. The woman, so they say, is at this time evidently in Jerusalem, the Old Testament holy city. And as she is attacked by the enemy, she flees into a literal wilderness somewhere in the vicinity, where she is hidden twelve hundred sixty days, even as at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the disciples fled to Pella. Now this is violating one of the most fundamental rules of interpretation, and especially of the Apocalypse. And we must guard against it. There is no right to single out one element in an allegorical

representation of things and to take it in the literal sense. And therefore it is well that we remember from the outset and bear it in mind throughout our interpretation of this passage, that here we have a continuation of the symbolism we met with in the first portion of this chapter.

In the second place, it may also be said that the symbolical representation as such is very clear. There is no difficulty in obtaining a picture of it in our minds. The woman that has brought forth the man child, — of whom we have lost sight for a moment because of the record of the war in heaven that intervened, — is still on earth. And as is plain from the seventeenth verse of this chapter, she brings forth still other children. For that verse speaks of the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. The dragon now comes down to the earth. He has failed in every respect thus far. He failed to prevent the birth of the man child, and he failed to devour it when once it was born. And he also failed to gain his point in the war which he fought with Michael and his angels in heaven for the possession of the saints of the old dispensation. And because of this absolute failure, on the one hand, and because of the fact that he also realizes that he cannot continue to fight indefinitely and that his time henceforth is short, he is filled with raging fury. And thus he comes down to the earth for the purpose of persecuting the woman that brought forth the man child. But the woman receives wings of a great eagle. Already in the sixth verse we read that the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God. But now we are told once more, and definitely, that she received wings of a great eagle and that with them she flees into the wilderness. The idea is clear. She cannot outrun the dragon. If she comes in contact with him, she cannot stand the battle. And therefore there is but one place of escape, and that is the wilderness. There the dragon cannot live, for there is nothing for him to feed on. There the woman is nourished in a miraculous way, and there she is hid from the face of the serpent. And at the same time, there is but one way of escape, and that is through the air. And therefore it is in perfect harmony with the symbolism of the entire passage that the woman received wings, and that she flees away from the face of the serpent into the wilderness. The serpent pursues her up to the very edge of the desert, but cannot follow farther. And therefore in his rage he casts a stream after her, not to drown her exactly, but evidently to carry her away and out of the wilderness, so that he may be able to approach her. But the earth opens her mouth and swallows up the stream, which again is in perfect harmony with the idea of the arid desert, where the water easily disappears. And finally, the dragon, seeing that also now his efforts are vain and that all his attempts to destroy the woman meet with failure, turns to her individual children, in order that at any rate he may destroy them. Thus is the symbolism.

In the third place, there are also some elements in the symbolism which we understand immediately and with which

we have met before and which we do not have to interpret again. The woman, so we have learned, is the church. In the first part of the chapter we have become acquainted with her. But there is a little difference between the woman as she appeared in the first part of this chapter and as she appears in the present passage. In the first passage she was still travailing to bring forth the man child; and therefore she represented the church of the old dispensation. There she was the symbol of the people of God, of the church, as the mother of Christ. But here she appears after she has brought forth the Christ, and therefore in the new dispensation, as the mother of the New Testament believers, the rest of her seed. In parentheses we may notice that also here the Word of God teaches us the essential unity of the church of all ages. It is the same woman all the time, representing the same church, only in different dispensations. And therefore it will not harmonize with Scripture to maintain that there was an essential difference between the church of the Old and of the New Testament days. But this in passing. The second element in the symbolism with which we are acquainted is that of the dragon. He is the devil. He is the great opponent of God. And we must remember that as the opponent of God his great and only purpose is to prevent the establishment of the kingdom of God and to maintain his own sovereignty. It is for that purpose that he battled against the woman in the Old Testament, to prevent the birth of her man child. It is for that same purpose that he went to heaven to question the right of the Old Testament saints to enter into glory. And it is again for that same purpose that he now attacks the woman as we meet her in our present passage. The devil does not care for the woman as such. He does not care for her seed as such. But he knows that she must be instrumental in the completion of the kingdom of God and in the realization of God's counsel, and therefore fights her to the last ditch.

This last thought brings us to the next question: why does the devil persecute the woman after she has brought forth the man child? Why does the devil still persecute the church after she has given birth to the Christ? Was it merely a streak of vengeance that led him to do so? That is sometimes the impression that is received from the symbolism in the text. The dragon, so the idea often is, has failed twice in his attempts to thwart the plan of God. He failed to devour the man child, and he also failed in his war in heaven to bring down the saints of the old dispensation to hell. And now he is just raving mad. The woman really has served her purpose, and she is of no account to him any more. But in spite of that fact, and in spite of the fact that the dragon well knows that he is defeated and that his attack upon the woman will not help him even if he should succeed to destroy her, he just means to wreak vengeance and to empty his raving madness and fury upon the head of the poor woman. But we might know from the very outset that this is not the case.

H.H.



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Shechem

*And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.*

*And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her . . .*

*And it came to pass . . . that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.*

*And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.*

GENESIS 34:1, 2, 25, 26

A great change had taken place in the life of Jacob when he wrestled with the Lord at Penuel. There, at Penuel, he had learned the folly of his former, self-willed way of life. He learned in humility to subject his way unto the Lord. Not again do we meet with an arrogant Jacob cleverly vying for dominance in his own strength. Henceforth he is Israel conquering in the way of faith. But, nonetheless, although Jacob's life was converted, the fruits of his former evil walk still remained with him. As in the flesh he continued to halt upon his thigh, so in his heart he repeatedly had to suffer from the evils that he had brought upon himself. He had entered into bigamy, in fact actually polygamy, and he suffered from a division in his family until almost the end of his life. And even worse, in former days Jacob had been an example of deception and ambition; now he had repented from this sin, but the evil lived on in his children. Never was he to escape the shadow of that sin, multiplied many fold, which he himself had taught his children. So great did that sin become in Jacob's children that soon he was no longer able to control them. In their self-determined way the children of Jacob controlled the family instead of submitting to their father. He, swept along like a leaf in a wild, rushing stream, was almost helpless to restrain them. Sad and painful was the reaping of the fruits which he had planted.

After parting with Esau by Jabbok, Jacob went with his family to settle in a place called Succoth. There they dwelt together in comparative peace for several years at a distance from all of the wicked peoples that inhabited the land of Canaan. It would appear that, although few, these were some of the most quiet and pleasant years of Jacob's life, the only years which he spent free from all outside influence and interference. Soon, however, as the children grew older, pressures began to develop within the family to move to a more thickly populated portion of the land. There the pastures would be greener, the economic advantages would be greater,

and more social contacts would be possible. Unable to withstand the plea of his family, Jacob finally consented, and they moved to the vicinity of a city called Shechem, named such after its most prominent citizen. It meant that Jacob had to do what neither Isaac nor Abraham had been willing to do before him, buy a portion of land on which to dwell with his own money rather than waiting for the Lord to give him his inheritance. It was a faltering move and evil were its results.

Soon the children of Jacob began to circulate freely with the citizens of Shechem. It was an attractive city, small and prosperous; and the citizens, although very wicked, were quite willing to be friendly with a family as wealthy as Jacob's. As the attachments to this city grew, Jacob's influence over his children dwindled. Even Dinah, Jacob's young daughter, was going without the consent of her father to visit with the young women of Shechem. Free and unattended she soon attracted the attention of the city's most prominent citizen, Shechem, the son of the prince, after whom the city was named. Flattered by his attention, Dinah consented quite willingly. It was not long before she was led by the hand into his house, there to be seduced and defiled.

The alert citizens of the city were quick to note Shechem entering alone with Dinah into his house, and of the meaning of it there could be no doubt. Quickly the report was carried to Jacob. These people had little moral discernment and expected that Jacob would be flattered by the attention paid by the young prince to his daughter. Hardly able to believe it, Jacob listened to the report. He might have expected it from the course that his children had been following, but he had closed his eyes to the danger. Now he was shocked and bewildered; he knew not what to answer. Overcome by his grief, he just sat and waited for his sons to come in from the field; perhaps, they would know what to do. Nor did he have long to wait, for the report was also carried to the ears of Dinah's brothers in the field. Their moral senses had not yet become so dimmed that they did not feel the shame. Filled with rage they hurried together to their father's tent. Folly had been wrought upon Israel.

Meanwhile, Shechem, enamoured of Dinah and overwhelmed by his passions, determined that he should have her for his wife. He had won the girl and needed only the consent of her family. In fact, he did not even really need this consent for he had the girl in his home and had no intentions of letting her return to her family. However, it would be better if he could maintain peaceful relations with the family of Jacob. Thus he told his father to go to seek the consent of Dinah's father and brothers.

Hamor, Shechem's father, saw in this a wonderful opportunity. It would be all to their benefit if they could form a very close alliance with a family as strong and wealthy as Jacob's. By the time he arrived at Jacob's tent he knew exactly what to say. "The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. And make

ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you: dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein." It was a plan of the devil to destroy the identity of Israel. Moreover, Shechem followed close behind to add his part to the plea. "Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife."

We may suppose that at this time the family of Jacob withdrew from the presence of Hamor and Shechem to consult together concerning an answer. In fact Jacob himself, troubled and confused by the whole matter, withdrew himself completely leaving the answer to the discretion of his children. Neither was it an easy situation in which to know what to answer. On the one hand there was the danger of offending Hamor and Shechem. This would be bad because Dinah was in their power locked up in their house. Should Hamor or Shechem become angry there would be very little to defend her. On the other hand, however, to actually grant their request was impossible. The children of Jacob, in spite of their many weaknesses, were true children of God. They held within their hearts a principle of love for God's covenant. They could never allow the chosen people to lose their identity through intermarriage with the heathen.

This problem of what to answer was extremely difficult. Jacob's sons struggled with it not knowing what to do. Finally Simeon and Levi came up with a suggestion. The others did not especially like it; in fact they found it rather repulsive; but because they had nothing better to suggest, they allowed it to stand. "We cannot do this thing," they said to Hamor and Shechem, "to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will go." Once again we see the old deceptive nature of Jacob making its appearance; this time in his children. The trouble was not that they were angry with Hamor and Shechem. Surely it had been a great evil which had been done. However, they should have gone to their God confessing their guilt in the matter of bringing their sister into this place of temptation, and asking of Him guidance as to what they should answer. Instead they made use of an outright lie, for they had no intentions of intermarrying with the Shechemites. Even more, they introduced circumcision, the holy sign and seal of God's covenant, to be used as nothing more than a stratagem of war.

To Hamor and Shechem this suggestion seemed very agreeable. Especially Shechem was pleased by it for he desired to remain on good terms with Dinah's family and it did not seem that this plan would be too difficult to carry

out. He was held in greatest honor in his father's house and did not expect that it would be hard to convince the Shechemites to be circumcised. The reward which he could promise them would be very attractive. So also it came to pass. Upon returning to their city, they gathered the people together and spoke to them. "These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us." Thus, under the coercion of their leaders, and with the promises of much earthly gain, the men of Shechem all submitted to being circumcised.

Once this had been done, it was possible to bring the plan of Simeon and Levi to fulfillment. It was a dastardly plan, unworthy of the people of God. In fact, after thinking it over, the brothers of Simeon and Levi were too ashamed to cooperate with them in carrying it out. When the men of Shechem came to the most painful point of recovery from their operation, Simeon and Levi entered the city. One by one they went around to the men of the city, helpless and defenseless with pain, and slew them in cold blood. Thereupon Dinah was released from the house of Shechem, and the other brothers entered the city to aid in taking the spoils. The city was utterly spoiled. It was nothing less than a matter of mass murder. Had they thought only to punish Shechem for his defilement of Dinah, it could be understood. But now, incensed by their anger, they slew a whole city without command or authority of God. It was an atrocity of a most grievous sort.

When Jacob heard of what his sons had done in Shechem, it only served to bring him into deeper grief. This deed dishonored the name of Israel, and therefore also of his God, before all of the inhabitants of the earth. He saw it as a very threat to the continued existence of his family and of the covenant of God. In misery he exclaimed to Simeon, and Levi, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites, and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." It was the beginning of Jacob's suffering at the hands of his children. It left a mark upon his heart which he could never forget so that even upon his death bed he exclaimed, "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Romans 14, 15

X.

(Romans 15:12 — continued)

It should be remembered that we are still discussing the truth that Christ became a minister of the circumcision in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

Such is the glorious reality of the work of God, so that both Jew and Gentile are saved in Christ, constituted one new man in him.

There is a danger that this central theme be lost sight of in this rather elaborate discussion of what the Old Testament Scriptures teach concerning this coming of the Christ and the hope of the Gentiles. Yet, such is very really the theme here.

And it is wonderful to notice how the Spirit of Christ in Isaiah foretold of the sufferings to come upon Christ and the glory to follow. Rightly considered one sees the very outline of the twelve Articles of Faith already in these Old Testament Scriptures. It is what we have in "one sum" in these Articles called the "Apostolicum"!

But let us continue our discussion of the passage quoted in Romans 15:12: "And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

In our former essay we noticed that the Christ has a very lowly beginning. He is but a little shoot out of a cut-off tree. Yet, this little Branch grows into a great and fruitful tree, becomes the King of the Kingdom of David, to sit on his throne forever.

There are some very wonderful characteristics related us of this king here in Isaiah 11, the passage which is quoted by Paul in part in Romans 15:12.

What a contrast between this king and the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria boasts in himself, in his arm of flesh, in human might and force and destruction. And, even so, he belongs to the kings of the earth who call themselves "benefactors"! But this king of Zion is different. His is power and greatness because he is equipped and qualified from the LORD, that is from the Covenant God who is yesterday, today and forever the same! He is not simply a national hero. He is the Lord toward whom "all nations" shall look when the promise made to Abraham is fulfilled: "In thee and in thy Seed shall all nations be blessed."

We notice the following in the text:

1. That the Spirit of the LORD rests upon this *stem* of Jesse. He is the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. In the verses 2-5 we see the person and work of the Mediator

described. Here we have a very beautiful description of the person and office of Christ. And we find the exact counterpart of this description of the Christ in the New Testament Scriptures.

2. Concerning the Spirit *resting* upon the Christ we notice that the term "rest" in the Hebrew "nachah" means really *to descend upon!* It implies a descending upon which is of such a nature that the Spirit never more leaves the man, Christ Jesus, the person of the Son in our human nature. Once he has come he never departs from Christ, but dwells in him as in the Head of the Church and presently in the believers as members of Christ's body! This is corroborated by what we read in Matthew 3:16: "And behold the heavens were opened, and he saw the spirit of God *descend* upon him . . . and behold a voice out of heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." We notice that in the Greek the verb for "descend" is a participle which really means "*coming* upon him"! This present participle underscores the truth that this is an eternal, incessant coming upon Christ of the Holy Spirit in his human nature. Moreover this same truth of the constant coming and abiding of the Spirit upon Christ is literally stated thus in John 1:32 where we read: "And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit *descending* from heaven like a dove, and it *abode* upon him." Also here the term for "descending" is a present participle (*Katabainon*). That the term means to come to stay is evident from the addition "and it *abode* upon him." It remained (*emeinen*) upon him!

This unction of the Lord is the secret of the greatness of this King of peace, who comes in the strength of God!

3. Further it should be noticed that the Spirit as here spoken of is virtually the seven Spirits which are before the throne. We further read in three pairs of two a fuller description of the Spirit as he rests upon the Christ. Also here the Spirit gives as *he wills*. And here he gives to this Christ without measure in order, that he, in turn, may grant unto each member according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7, 8). Let us take more particular notice of the following from the pen of God, the Word of God concerning his Christ.

a. The Spirit is the "Spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding*." Now wisdom is that virtue of God whereby there is wisdom and purpose in all things, so that the best means are employed to attain to the highest end. Such wisdom is objective given us in the work of God in Christ through his death and resurrection. The Spirit of this wisdom is meant. He is also called the Spirit of *understanding*. The term employed in the Hebrew (*binah*) means to distinguish, to separate. This really means insight into the relationships and the power to judge intelligently of all things and all relationships. Now the Spirit is called the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, since he is the Author of the same. Does he not search out all things, yea, even the deep things of God? (I Cor. 2:10, 11).

b. He is also the "Spirit of *counsel* and *might*." The term

in the Hebrew for "counsel" is "eetsah." This is the power and might to make proper decisions, and that, too, subordinate to and in accordance with this wisdom and understanding. This is the more executive side of Christ's equipment from the Spirit. The term "might" is the actual power to execute what is decided. Nothing can stand in his way. With the breath of his mouth he destroys the wicked, and discomfits them by his very appearance!

c. Finally the Spirit is called "the Spirit of Knowledge and of the fear of God." The term knowledge (daah) does not simply refer to intellectual knowledge, the bare knowing of facts, but refers to that spiritual knowledge of God and of his will whereby he walks with God, always doing his will. He is the perfectly obedient viceroy of God. In close connection with the truth of the knowledge of God is the "fear" of the Lord. This fear is not a slavish wincing before the Lord God, but is a delight in the law of the Lord. That completes the description, the pleroma of the gifts of the Spirit to this "root" out of Jesse. But it also is the guarantee of the great fruitfulness of this "shoot" when it shall grow out in all his power, even at the right hand of God, Lord over all!

There is a very beautiful touch here in the text which we must yet underscore.

We refer, of course, to the somewhat difficult construction of the text in verse 3 where we read in the King James Version: "and he shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord." It is interesting to notice that in both the Staten Vertaling of the Dutch and in Luther's German translation we read, "And his fragrance shall be in the fear of the Lord." Literally the Dutch translation has: "En zijn rieken zal zijn in de vreeze des HEEREN." The idea is evidently, in this Hebraism, that the fear of the Lord is very delightful to Christ. It was a sweet savor in his nostrils. It was his *delight* to do the will of God. Does he not say: "my meat and drink is to do the will of God." He thrived on it! Beautiful touch!

Here is the ideal King out of David. He is David's Lord and Son. Of him the sacred chronicler will *not* relate, "and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," as is the constant refrain of all the Kings. And of him it will never be said what was said of David: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." Wherefore the kingdom shall prosper in his hand. He shall forever be busy in the things of his Father!

This one shall be a minister of the circumcision. Mercy will come through him to the Gentiles. And they shall glorify God for his mercy in Him. And this glorification is not simply a matter of the New Testament dispensation. It shall be forever, even in the ages to come! It shall be thus presently in the new heaven and new earth where righteousness shall dwell.

And what a description. Artists have outdone each other

to portray this picture. Since I believe that the picture is best drawn by the Holy Spirit himself I will quote it: "And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of the ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

It is especially the "poor," those who are weak and powerless whose cause he shall take up. They are the oppressed by injustice, such as is meant when Scripture speaks of the widow and the orphan. He will not be as are the cruel and oppressing kings of the earth which call themselves benefactors.

And since he is such a King, the time will come when the very creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The vanity of vanities of the preacher will be overcome. The "vicious circle" will be no more! And, therefore, the perspective of peace on earth good will among the men of his good pleasure is portrayed to us as the object of our hope and patience in the present night of sin, corruption, wars and rumors of wars.

What a beautiful picture. It is not "Paradise Lost" but it is "the former things shall be remembered no more."

I read: "And the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed: their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. And they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

In earthly terms, in beautiful contrasts, we have here described to us the eternal state in the new heavens and new earth, when the tabernacle of God shall be with man!

That is not a premillennial state in earthly Canaan, but it refers to the heavenly Canaan, the promised land, which Abraham too saw from afar and rejoiced to see Christ's day.

And in the hope of this Beulah land not only the Jew rejoices, but also the Gentiles have been received.

Let not then matters of "adiaphora" stand in the way of this hope of both, but rather let both Jew and Gentile in one mouth praise God for his mercy.

For upon this one do the Gentiles hope.

The very one of whom Isaiah spoke, preaching the eternal dawn in the darkest night of the church's life!

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Freedom of Speech

(2)

His name was Zacharias.

And he had a wonderful message to deliver. He knew something that no other man on earth knew. He had the "news scoop" of the day. He had knowledge of that for which man had waited throughout the ages. To him had been revealed that which should be cried out from the housetops.

Yet he was unable to utter one word, one syllable of it!

The story is well known to you without any doubt. But let us get it clearly before our minds. Zacharias was a priest to whom the privilege had been given to offer up incense on the golden altar in the Temple of God. Only once in a lifetime was a priest given this privilege. And in his old age the lot fell on Zacharias for this work before the face of God. He and his aged wife Elizabeth had entered the twilight of their earthly existence utterly childless. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him there in the Holy Place with the astounding message that even now, when humanly such things were without a shadow of doubt completely impossible, they were to have not only a child but a son!

That in itself was a matter that would be too good to keep to oneself. Would the man not rush home to tell his wife, Elizabeth about this wonderful message which he had received from God through His angel? Would he not hasten to her side? to cheer her yet in her old age with that promise which every woman in Israel longed to receive: the birth of a son. No, it was not that they desired no children. It was the will of God that they be kept from having children until this time that He might show forth His glory. And now when the two of them had both given up hope and saw the hopelessness of it all, the promise is given them of a son to be born within the year. Run home, Zacharias! Hasten and watch the sparkle of joy return to the eyes of your barren bride. Tell her the news as quickly as you can. Do not let the poor woman spend another day, another hour with that hopeless feeling and empty longing for that which now seems impossible.

But Zacharias returns home a deaf and dumb man, utterly unable to speak this joyful word unto his wife. (That he was both deaf as well as dumb is evident in that when the child was circumcised, "they made signs to his father, how he would have him called," Luke 1:62.)

Still more, this was no ordinary child that would be given unto them. "He would be great in the sight of the Lord. And he shall go before Him in the spirit of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the dis-

obedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Plainly this is also a message of the nearness of the day when the promised Messiah will appear. One does not appear to prepare the way for Him centuries and centuries before He comes. One does not prepare the meal for honored guests years and months before the arrival of the guests. The birth of this son to Zacharias — a son that would be great in the sight of the Lord — can only mean the nearness of the birth of that Son of God Who is the promised Messiah. Besides, does not the angel speak of this son coming in the spirit of Elias? And the last prophecy that God spoke through one of His servants, in fact the very last words which God spoke in the Old Testament dispensation in Malachi 4:5 were to the effect that Elijah would come — this John the Baptist — and that he would come shortly before the appearance of the Messiah. Indeed, Zacharias has a message for which the church was and had been waiting to these many years. Of all men on the face of this earth Zacharias alone had knowledge of the nearness of that day and of the coming of that Messiah.

Today men would call that a "news scoop." Today the newspapers and magazines would pay Zacharias a handsome price for an exclusive interview and for exclusive rights to his story. Special editions of the newspapers would be printed. Newspaper boys would cry out their "Extra! Extra!"

Cry it out then, Zacharias!

Outside in the Temple is a multitude of morning worshippers. How happy they will be to hear these words and this news. Send them home rejoicing, Zacharias! Do not keep such a glorious truth to yourself. Comfort God's people. You are a priest, Zacharias. You function in the office of the mercy of God. Reveal that mercy of God to His Church by transmitting to that Church what God in His mercy has revealed to you. When you go out to the congregation to pronounce the blessing of God upon those assembled, give content to that blessing and preface it with this message which shows that God is indeed blessing His people. Cry, Zacharias! Shout and sing!

But no, Zacharias cannot utter a word.

He beckons to them but remains silent. And they presuming — and that correctly — that he had seen a vision went home without the good news revealed in that vision. We can but wonder how Zacharias felt at his utter helplessness to speak one word of this glorious truth.

But we can explain it. He was speechless through unbelief. Unbelief always is speechless. The unbeliever can speak. In the natural, physical sense of the word, he finds no difficulty at all. He may be a silver-tongued orator. He stands up and shouts and cries out his unbelief. Freely and at length he can speak of things natural. And even though he may speak the Word of God from memory or read it with perfect diction, proper emphasis and with modulated voice, because of unbelief a man remains speechless. He is not free

to speak the things that count; is not free to confess God and his sins; is not free to praise, bless and thank God; is not free to instruct his children in the things that have everlasting value. Instead of having freedom of speech he is a slave of the father of lies.

Zacharias could not believe this good news of the angel and asked for a sign. And the angel gave him that very sign of being deaf and dumb exactly to illustrate that truth that through unbelief we are speechless. He who does not believe can have nothing to say concerning that matter. Still more, our everyday life will reveal that the child who is born deaf will never learn to speak. Not hearing the sounds of the words he is not able to sound them for you. Zacharias turned a deaf ear to the words of the angel when he said to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is well stricken in years." And if he did not receive this word of the angel, how can he speak about it and proclaim it to others? If we close our hearts and minds to the truth, how can our tongues, which express what is in our hearts and minds, speak that truth? How can the well give forth water which it has never received? By faith we receive the word into our souls; and then with our mouths we express that which we believe. Paul writes, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Romans 10:10.

Therefore freedom of speech is not something that men can give unto you. It is not something the government can guarantee you and promise you. It is something that God gives you through the Spirit of His Son. Listen to the words of Him Who created the tongue and had the true freedom of speech. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31, 32. The truth makes us free from fear, free from want and bestows upon us freedom of religion and therefore freedom of speech.

It all comes down exactly to that fact, even as we mentioned it in passing last time: Freedom of religion and freedom of speech are inseparable. You will never find the one where the other is lacking. Freedom of speech is impossible where there is not freedom of religion. And freedom of religion will always produce freedom of speech. We say again, that which men call freedom of religion really is no freedom of religion but rather freedom of irreligion, freedom to propagate all the false religions of the world unharmed and with equal—if not superior—right to the freedom of the true religion of Jehovah, the only true God. And herein also you see the close link between freedom of religion and freedom of speech. In our land freedom of religion means the right to speak out our beliefs and to teach them to our children, to express them without fear of penalty or persecution for them.

But this is true freedom of religion: The liberty and power to serve God according to His self-revelation in Jesus

Christ His only begotten Son. Paul, who had this true freedom of religion and also therefore was free to speak the truth says about this in Romans 8:2, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." There you have it! The man who is not free from that law of sin and death has no freedom of religion. He is still a slave to the law of sin and death; and a slave is not free by any stretch of the imagination, and knows himself every day that he has no freedom. Although in our land this freedom of religion is relegated to the background—though once our Pilgrim Fathers fled to this land to seek it—and freedom from want and fear are deemed more important, yet this freedom of religion is basic. He who is not freed from the law of sin and death must live in fear of our God Who is a consuming fire. He wants the thing that he needs above all and can never have the joy of the freedom from want. He wants (lacks) God's favour and blessing. He wants (lacks) Christ. He cannot say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I want nothing." And all his speech will only reveal that he is a slave under the law of sin and death.

Our Church Fathers spoke of this true freedom of religion with its freedom of speech—and we will not bother you with the Latin phrases—when they spoke of Adam in Paradise before the Fall as "able not to sin"; of man after the Fall as "not able not to sin"; and of man as he is freed from the law of sin and death and will be seen in the New Jerusalem as "not able to sin." There, indeed, is the highest freedom, to be free only to do good and to speak the truth. Righteous Adam, we may say, was free to speak the truth. That was his freedom of speech. Fallen Adam was freed (separated) from speaking the truth. And redeemed man walking upon the street of gold in the New Jerusalem will be free only to speak the truth.

Freedom of speech is only for those who fear God, for freedom of religion, upon which it is based, is freedom to live in the fear of the Lord. Walking after the Spirit is walking in His fear. And the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death. We are freed from not walking in His fear and made free to walk in His fear. Therefore it is the regenerated child of God alone who has the true freedom of speech. Walk in that freedom.

J.A.H.

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"It must be maintained . . . that we are not established in the belief of the doctrine till we are indubitably persuaded that God is its Author. The principal proof, therefore, of the Scriptures is every where derived from the character of the Divine Speaker. The prophets and the apostles boast not of their own genius, nor any of those talents which conciliate the faith of the hearers: nor do they insist from arguments of reason; but bring forward the sacred name of God, to compel the submission of the whole world."

Calvin's *Institutes*, Book I, Chapter VII



## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

#### THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

##### HOLY ORDERS

A sixth sacrament of Rome's seven sacraments, to which we must call attention, is known as: Holy Orders. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent has also expressed itself on this so-called sacrament in four chapters as follows.

##### CHAPTER I.

##### *On The Institution Of The Priesthood Of The New Law.*

Sacrifice and priesthood are, by the ordinance of God, in such wise conjoined, as that both have existed in every law. Whereas, therefore, in the New Testament, the Catholic Church has received, from the institution of Christ, the holy visible sacrifice of the Eucharist; it must needs also be confessed, that there is, in that Church, a new, visible, and external priesthood, into which the old has been *translated*. And the sacred Scriptures show, and the tradition of the Catholic Church has always taught, that this priesthood was instituted by the same Lord our Saviour, and that to the Apostles, and their successors in the priesthood, was the power delivered of consecrating, offering, and administering his body and blood, as also of forgiving and of retaining sins.

##### CHAPTER II.

##### *On The Seven Orders.*

And whereas the ministry of so holy a priesthood is a divine thing; to the end that it might be exercised in a more worthy manner, and with greater veneration, it was suitable that, in the most well-ordered settlement of the Church, there should be several and diverse orders of ministers to minister to the priesthood, by virtue of their office; orders so distributed as that those already marked with the clerical tonsure should ascend through the lesser to the greater orders. For the sacred Scriptures make open mention not only of priests, but also of deacons; and teach, in words the most weighty, what things are especially to be attended to in the Ordination thereof; and, from the very beginning of the Church, the names of the following orders, and the ministrations proper to each one of them, are known to have been in use; to wit, those of subdeacon, acolyth, exorcist, lector, and doorkeeper; though these were not of equal rank; for the subdeaconship is classed amongst the greater orders by the Fathers and sacred Councils, wherein also we very often read of the other inferior orders.

##### CHAPTER III.

##### *That Order Is Truly And Properly A Sacrament.*

Whereas, by the testimony of Scripture, by Apostolic tradition, and the unanimous consent of the Fathers, it is clear that grace is conferred by sacred ordination, which is performed by words and outward signs, no one ought to doubt that Order is truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of Holy Church. For the Apostle says: *I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sobriety.*

##### CHAPTER IV.

##### *On The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, And On Ordination.*

But, forasmuch as in the sacrament of Order, as also in Baptism and Confirmation, a character is imprinted which can neither be effaced nor taken away, the holy Synod with reason condemns the opinion of those who assert that the priests of the New Testament have only a temporary power; and that those who have once been rightly ordained can again become laymen, if they do not exercise the ministry of the Word of God. And if any one affirm, that all Christians indiscriminately are priests of the New Testament, or that they are all mutually endowed with an equal spiritual power, he clearly does nothing but confound the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is as an army set *in array*; as if, contrary to the doctrine of blessed Paul, *all were apostles, all prophets, all evangelists, all pastors, all doctors*. Wherefore, the holy Synod declares that, besides the other ecclesiastical degrees, bishops, who have succeeded to the place of the Apostles, principally belong to this hierarchical order; that they are *placed*, as the same apostle, *by the Holy Ghost, to rule the Church of God*; that they are superior to priests; administer the sacrament of Confirmation; ordain the ministers of the Church; and that they can perform very many other things; over which functions others of an inferior order have no power. Furthermore, the sacred and holy Synod teaches, that, in the ordination of bishops, priests, and of the other orders, neither the consent, nor vocation, nor authority, whether of the people, or of any civil power or magistrate whatsoever, is required in such wise as that, without this, the ordination is invalid: yea rather, doth it decree, that all those who, being only called and instituted by the people, or by the civil power and magistrate, ascend to the exercise of these ministrations, and those who of their own rashness assume them to themselves, are not ministers of the Church, but are to be looked upon as *thieves and robbers, who have not entered by the door*. These are the things which it hath seemed good to the sacred Synod to teach the faithful of Christ, in general terms, touching the sacrament of Order. But it hath resolved to condemn whatsoever things are contrary thereunto, in express and specific canons, in the manner following; in order that all men, with the help of Christ, using the rule of faith,

may, in the midst of the darkness of so many errors, more easily be able to recognize and to hold Catholic truth.

Having quoted the chapters of the Council of Trent which positively set forth the Romish doctrine of the sacrament of Holy Orders, we will quote the Canons of this Council in which this Council anathematizes all those who deny this sacrament.

Canon 1. — If any one saith, that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood; or, that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins, but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel; or, that those who do not preach are not priests at all: let him be anathema.

Canon II. — If any one saith, that, besides the priesthood, there are not in the Catholic Church other orders, both greater and minor, by which, as by certain steps, advance is made unto the priesthood: let him be anathema.

Canon III. — If any one saith, that order, or sacred ordination, is not truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ the Lord; or, that it is a kind of human figment devised by men unskilled in ecclesiastical matters; or, that it is only a kind of rite for choosing ministers of the Word of God and of the sacraments: let him be anathema.

Canon IV. — If any one saith, that, by sacred ordination, the Holy Ghost is not given; and that vainly therefore do the bishops say, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*; or, that a character is not imprinted by that ordination; or, that he who has once been a priest can again become a layman: let him be anathema.

Canon V. — If any one saith, that the sacred unction which the Church uses in holy ordination is not only not required, but is to be despised and is pernicious, as likewise are the other ceremonies of order: let him be anathema.

Canon VI. — If any one saith, that, in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy by divine ordination instituted, consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers: let him be anathema.

Canon VII. — If any one saith, that bishops are not superior to priests; or, that they have not the power of confirming and ordaining; or, that the power which they possess is common to them and to priests; or, that orders, conferred by them, without the consent or vocation of the people, or of the secular power, are invalid; or, that those who have neither been rightly ordained, nor sent, by ecclesiastical and canonical power, but come from elsewhere, are lawful ministers of the Word and of the sacraments: let him be anathema.

Canon VIII. — If any one saith, that the bishops, who are assumed by authority of the Roman Pontiff, are not legitimate and true bishops, but are a human figment: let him be anathema.

Before we make any remarks of criticism upon this Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of Holy Orders, it might be of interest to our readers to define some of the orders mentioned in Chapter II of the Council of Trent, namely: deacon, subdeacon, acolyth, exorcist, lector, and doorkeeper.

A deacon in the Roman Catholic Church is a church officer who ranks below the priest. He is also any cleric, as a bishop or priest, who acts as chief assistant at a high mass.

A subdeacon is a member of the order of the ministry, next below that of deacon, who assists at the Eucharist.

An acolyth is an attendant for subordinate duties on the ministers officiating at a sacred rite; especially, a member of the highest of the four minor orders of the Roman Catholic Church.

In connection with the Romish Order of Exorcist, we wish to quote from Vol. 4, page 250, of the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: "The expulsion of evil spirits by conjuration or magical or religious exercises. This article is confined to exorcism in connection with the rite of baptism.

It is easy to understand how the primitive Church came to use the rite of exorcism on its catechumens; it is also obvious that in so doing it departed from the Scriptural standpoint. Resting its practise on the healing of demoniacs by Christ, it undertook to heal by exorcism a large number of morbid conditions, which it considered of diabolical origin. It had a class of officials set apart for this function, though not originally by any form of ordination; according to the Apostolic Constitutions (viii. 26) they possessed a "gift of healing," and their work was thus the exercise of a gift rather than of an office. Their method of treatment included prayer and laying on of hands. In the third century this sort of exorcism was applied to catechumens coming from paganism, on the theory that the pagan world was the realm of evil spirits, and that those who came into the Church from it must thus be delivered from the power of evil. In thus deserting the original ground of exorcism, as an influence brought to bear in order to cure a morbid condition of the psychico-physical organism, for an attack upon the ethical power of the kingdom of darkness over souls, the practise entered upon a career which led toward fantastic magic. Satan was commanded to come forth from the catechumens; and the thought that the winning of each new convert from paganism to Christianity was a manifestation of the victory of Christ over the prince of this world finds dramatic expression in these exorcisms." The next time, the Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation.

H.V.

"... How will the impious ridicule our faith, and all men call it in question, if it be understood to possess only a precarious authority depending on the favour of men!"

Calvin's *Institutes*, Book I, Chapter VII

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

#### Article 13 (continued)

We must now consider the positive part of this article. The Arminians, as we have seen, bring against the truth of perseverance and the truth of the assurance of perseverance (both sovereignly wrought) the charge that it produces licentiousness and is injurious to true piety. They do this in order to attack and destroy these truths. The fathers flatly deny this, and then go on to state the truth of the matter. And the fathers maintain that the very opposite from what the Arminians say is true. In the backsliding but restored Christian the renewed confidence of perseverance produces a greater spiritual concern to walk diligently in the ways of the Lord. This renewed confidence of perseverance produces in the fallen and restored child of God a greater measure of holy fear for the snares of temptation, a holy fear of falling again into that bitter condition wherein he experienced that God's gracious countenance was turned away from him.

Now this is a remarkable statement of the fathers. It reveals, first of all, that they had a clear discernment of the experience of God's child in this process of fall and restoration. For any true child of God must admit that what the fathers state here is the true description of what takes place in the Christian's life in such a time of backsliding and restoration. But it reveals too that our fathers had a correct understanding of the matter of temptation and backsliding, and that too in relation to God's preserving grace. And to both of these remarkable features of this article we may profitably give our attention.

Beginning, then, with the last-mentioned feature of this thirteenth article, let us try to understand the fathers' viewpoint here. True, the fathers do not mention this matter in so many words, and do not expressly state what is the relationship between God's preserving grace and the backsliding and restoration of the Christian. But it is not difficult at all to see that there is a very definite viewpoint underlying the entire article. The fathers discuss the problem treated in this article solely from the point of view of the spiritual experience of the Christian. And in connection therewith, they speak of the fact that God at times turns away "his gracious countenance" from His children, and at other times causes them to behold that gracious countenance, "which is to the

godly dearer than life." This is as near as the fathers come to any discussion of God's activity as such during the Christian's times of backsliding and restoration. In fact, we may even say that the fathers nowhere discuss this relationship as such between God's preserving grace and His child's backsliding. But it is very plain nevertheless that they had some definite views on this matter. And those views we may distill from this article. After all, the Christian whose experiences are discussed and described in Article 13 is the Christian who is *the object of preserving grace*. He is *always* the object of preserving grace. And now the specific question is: what is the relation between preservation and backsliding? Is the backsliding an exception to the preservation? Is the relation such merely that preserving grace is ultimately victorious? Is it thus, that we can only say negatively that in our deepest falls God's preserving grace does not completely desert us? And is the only positive statement we may make this, that it is the power of God's preserving grace that eventually restores us and brings us out of our fallen condition, so that though we fall as children of God, we cannot permanently fall? The *Canons*, I believe, have already said a good deal about these questions: but in the present article there is a further implication, which is an advance upon all that the fathers stated earlier in this Fifth Head.

Article 4, as we have already seen, deals rather extensively with this same question. There one might almost get the impression that the Christian's falls are an *exception* to the Holy Spirit's preserving operation. But I say "almost" because even in that article the presupposition is that the Holy Spirit continues to influence and actuate believers. The article merely makes a negative statement concerning that influence and actuation: "converts are not always so influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God, as not in some particular instances sinfully to deviate from the guidance of divine grace . . ." This article also emphasizes even that "sometimes by the righteous permission of God (converts) actually fall into these evils." And thus it goes so far as not to exclude the temptations and falls from God's direction. Moreover, here too we must remember that this is the "righteous permission" of the very God that preserves His saints.

Moreover, other articles, especially 6 to 8, teach us that God never completely withdraws His grace from the elect, letting them plunge themselves into everlasting destruction. They teach us that God's preserving grace cannot be rendered ineffectual, that it cannot be frustrated. They emphasize the positive truth that the incorruptible seed of regeneration is preserved in the saints at all times. And they maintain that it is God's preserving grace that "certainly and effectually renews them to repentance, to a sincere and godly sorrow for their sins, that they may seek and obtain remission in the blood of the Mediator, may again experience the favor of a reconciled God, through faith adore his mercies, and henceforward more diligently work out their own

salvation with fear and trembling." And in Article 11, as we saw not long ago, the *Canons* even circumscribe the limits of temptation by placing these temptations within the scope of God's sovereign power and direction. God "does not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it, and by the Holy Spirit again inspires them with the comfortable assurance of persevering."

But nowhere is the specific question and problem now under discussion treated in all these statements. The question still remains: is this all that can be said? After all, does not the temptation and the fall and backsliding of the Christian, even though it is completely within the limits of preserving grace, and even though preserving grace is always ultimately victorious, even to the extent that the Christian obtains the renewed confidence of persevering, — does not the temptation and fall and backsliding of the Christian remain something bad, something bitter, something that he would better do without? True, as we shall see, if you look at this temptation and backsliding solely from the viewpoint of the spiritual experience of the Christian, the answer to this question would be in the affirmative. It is bad for the Christian to fall. It is wrong of him. And it is a very bitter experience for him. From a spiritual point of view, he could far better do without backslidings. He ought to stand and to persevere. But we are looking at the matter now from the viewpoint of preserving grace. And then the question remains, to be sure. Do not these falls somewhat dim the glory of that preserving grace? Is it not possible, to put the question very boldly, to conceive of a better method of preservation, a still better grace? Is it not possible to conceive of such a grace that would never for a moment let the Christian go, would preserve him so that he would not even fall temporarily, would preserve him so that it would not be necessary for him to be *restored* and to obtain a *renewed* confidence of persevering? To put it another way: is it true with respect to the temptations and backslidings of God's children that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose"? Or must these temptations and backslidings be excluded from the "all things" of Romans 8:28? Do these temptations and backslidings "work together for good"? Or can it only be said with respect to them that everything works out all right in the end?

This thirteenth article gives us the answer to these questions. The answer may only be implied here, but it is inherent in the position which the fathers take in this article, especially when considered in the context of the whole Fifth Head of Doctrine. Let us note this; it is inescapable. The article answers the question: when a Christian (that is, by the definition of the *Canons*: an elect, regenerated, believing, converted, preserved child of God) falls into sin and becomes guilty of backsliding, and when, moreover, that Christian is restored (by the influence and actuation of the Holy

Spirit's effectual grace) and recovers from that backsliding (so that he has a sincere and godly sorrow over his sin and seeks and obtains remission in the blood of Christ), and when, furthermore, that Christian consequently obtains the renewed confidence of persevering (the renewed assurance that he is and ever will continue a true and living member of the body of Christ), — what is the moral, spiritual result in the life of that Christian? And the fathers maintain that the moral, spiritual result is a good one. It is salutary. It causes the Christian to grow in sanctification. It renders him more careful diligently to keep the ways of the Lord. It makes him more careful and more fearful of abusing God's fatherly kindness. The result, not when you look merely at the temptation and backsliding, but when you look at the whole process of temptation and backsliding and restoration and renewed assurance, is a good one. It produces a better, a more sanctified Christian.

But then by definition that is the result of God's own preserving grace. It is no accident that the Christian emerges from this experience a stronger, a more sanctified Christian. There are no accidents. It is not the result of his own activity. No, it was God's sovereign direction that led him along this deep and devious path of temptation and backsliding. It was God's sovereign grace that led him back to the light. It was God's sovereign grace that gave him the renewed confidence of persevering. And while that Christian, on his part, sinfully deviated from the guidance of divine grace, while he on his part despised that grace temporarily, the operation of that grace was in no wise dependent on him. God, while He indeed turned away His gracious countenance from that Christian, so that he could not behold God's benign face, did not for a moment remove his favor from that elect child, did not for a moment swerve from His preserving purpose. Through it all God was indeed causing all things to work together for good for His child. Through it all God was achieving a good purpose, aiming at a good result, to be attained by His own good grace. Through it all God was intending, by teaching His child a spiritual lesson in the hard and bitter school of experience, to strengthen and sanctify him. And we may certainly say too that through it all God was achieving this good result *in the only way possible*, according to His own all-wise counsel.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

"The Canonicity of the Books of the Bible is rooted in their very existence. They possess authority in themselves, jure suo, simply from their very existence. It is the Spirit of the Lord which gave guidance in the writing, and which caused them to be acknowledged in the congregation."

*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, H. Bavinck,  
Vol. I, page 371

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Article 41

(Continued)

#### *Time and Place of Classical Meetings*

In the sixteenth century it was a custom in Reformed churches that the meetings of the Classis be held by rotation in all of the churches. Although this custom has been discarded, there are things that may be said in favor of it. The practice itself was enacted as a safeguard against the danger of certain churches lording it over other churches. Our fathers were very careful, and rightly so, to set up protectorates against any possible tendencies toward hierarchism and this was necessary too. Their close contact with the evils of the Roman Catholic Church necessitated this. They could not soon forget those evils that had so long plagued the church and they were extremely cautious to see that they were not easily ensnared in the same bondage of corruption again.

Although the churches today are not so directly confronted with the same dangers and, under the Presbyterian-Synodical form of church government, it is not likely that this evil will readily threaten, we feel that the custom of distributing the meetings of the Classis to all the churches merits some consideration. There is something commendable in this practice even apart from the threats of hierarchism. It is good for the Classis to meet in different churches and it is good for the churches individually to have the classis in their locality. It enables all the members of the church to observe the functioning of the broader ecclesiastical bodies. It stimulates interest and it tends to promote a feeling of equality and unity among the churches. All of these things are conducive toward strengthening the ties of denominational oneness.

Today each Classis decides the place of its next meeting. Consistories may and frequently do invite the classis to meet in its church and such invitations are generally honored. As a result of this there are some churches where the Classis has never met while others have been the site of Classical meetings many times. Of course, there are practical considerations which enter in here and that are without any question valid reasons why this situation prevails. Some churches are not geographically situated so that it would be advisable to hold meetings of the Classis in them. The expenses involved in bringing all the delegates to those places makes this prohibitive. Other churches are not equipped to entertain Classis and to schedule a meeting of this nature in those places would only be to impose a burden upon that church. This would not be advisable. All of these things must be taken into account in selecting the places where the Classis will periodically meet. We believe, however, that it

would be a good policy for the Classis to meet in as many of the churches as is *practically* possible and not to be satisfied to meet in just a few select places. For example, in Classis East there would seem to be no reason why each church could not have a turn, barring those churches which at present have been deprived of their properties. In the West the situation is quite different.

In connection with this it should be noted that Classis designates the place of its meetings but it does not appoint a calling church. This is different than the practice of convening a Synod. Synod does designate one of the churches as the calling church for the next Synod and that church in turn is charged with making all the necessary arrangements and providing the necessary facilities for such a meeting. This includes the arrangements for a worship service preceding the meeting of the Synod. This part of the Synodical meeting is often not given enough prominence. And in the case of the meetings of the Classis this is not even done. The latter merely expresses that its next meeting will be held in a certain church. It is taken for granted that the consistory of this church will provide the necessary facilities and it is left up to the Stated Clerk of the Classis to make an announcement at the proper time in which the attention of all the consistories is directed to the coming meeting of the Classis. Although this arrangement has worked out satisfactorily and has proven orderly, we do not believe it is the best. Certainly, no valid objection can be raised against the Classis following the same procedure as is followed in the convening of the Synod. Then, at the designated place, the meeting of the Classis would be preceded with a worship service under the supervision of the local consistory and at this service the president of the previous Classis would be asked to preach the Word. Such a service would be proper and it would have the added advantage of giving the Classis opportunity to hear all its ministers preach the Word over a given period of time. Then, too, at such time as there is to be a candidate for the ministry examined by the Classis, exception to the rule requesting the president of the previous Classis to preach could be made, and the candidate would then be called upon to preach the Word before the congregation instead of before the delegates of the Classis. In such cases far greater justice would be done to that part of the candidate's examination and an important part that is! However, such procedure is not required in the Church Order or in the regulations of our ecclesiastical assemblies, and, consequently, it is not practiced in our churches. Perhaps there are objections to such a custom but if so, we fail to see them at present. At least this practice will not be enacted unless and until some consistory overtures Classis to do so.

The time at which each Classis is to meet is also determined by the previous Classis prior to its adjournment. In our churches this is generally taken care of by a standing rule but whereas that rule is subject to change and may in some cases even necessitate a change because of certain circumstances arising that conflict with the usual time for the next

meeting, each Classis must specify when and where it shall meet again. Apart from this there are then also special provisions whereby an earlier meeting of the Classis may be called if that should prove necessary.

#### *Frequency of Classical Meetings*

Ideally the Classis should meet every three or four months. It is good that the churches have frequent official contact with each other. It is also good when circumstances and matters arise in a particular congregation that require Classical action, that these things are not permitted to linger. If the matter is of serious consequence and too long a time elapses before the Classis meets, irreparable damage may be done in the congregation which might conceivably have been avoided if the sessions of the Classis were held at more frequent intervals. And even if there is no pressing business or any matter that urgently requires attention, it is even beneficial to the denominational life of the churches for the Classis to meet in brotherly fellowship and that *officially*!

The Church Order stipulates that Classis shall meet at least four times a year or once in three months. This is the rule observed in our Classis East. The Church Order also allows exception to this rule when it adds the phrase, "*unless great distances render this rule inadvisable.*" This phrase fits the circumstances in our Classis West where, because of the great distances, the Classis meets only twice during the year. This arrangement has many disadvantages but until such time as circumstances warrant a change we shall have to cope with this situation. The distances by which the churches are separated simply do not permit more frequent meetings however desirable this may be.

#### *Presiding Officers of the Classis*

Ministers of the Word and elders constitute the proper delegation to the Classis. Yet, the Church Order assigns the role of the presiding officer of this ecclesiastical assembly to the ministers only. The reason for this is not to be found in the fact (which is not even true) that the office of the minister is a higher or more authoritative office than that of elder. If it were a question of "*office*" there could be no valid reason that an elder could not be president of the Classis. From a strictly legal point of view he has as much right to that position as a minister. His delegation is equal in every respect to that of the pastor's. It is rather then a matter of expediency and the rule of Article 41 is motivated by the fact that the minister is, or should be by virtue of his special training, better qualified to function in this capacity. This same is true of the rule of Article 37 which automatically makes the minister the presiding officer of the consistory.

The Church Order provides two ways in which a minister shall be selected to serve as the president of the Classis. He may be chosen by vote of the Classis. This practice was in vogue during the early history of the Reformed Churches when things were very unsettled and irregular. Those cir-

cumstances necessitated that the best qualified and most capable men be entrusted with this responsible position. Later circumstances changed and provision was made whereby all the ministers in the churches of the Classis were given opportunity to preside in rotation. This is the practice currently followed in our churches and, as a rule, it works out very satisfactorily. Its advantage is that it tends to stress equality among the ministers. This method, however, is not mandatory and if a circumstance should arise where very involved and weighty matters are to come before a Classis at which it happens to be the turn of an inexperienced minister to serve as president, a motion would be proper to the effect that Classis depart from this custom and elect a president for that particular session. This, of course, would be done only in extenuating circumstances, and for most weighty reasons.

Article 41 adds to the regulations concerning the presidency of the Classical meetings this limitation: "*however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.*" Although, strictly speaking, this limitation can apply and is, therefore, meant only when the practice of electing presidents is followed, the thought, nevertheless, that it expresses may well apply to the entire matter of choosing presidents, whether by rotation or election. The idea is that the fathers again wanted to avoid any possible hierarchical tendencies and, therefore, deemed it a matter of sound judgment to avoid having the same minister preside at two consecutive Classes. Again, strictly speaking, the article does not make this impossible but if the spirit of the Church Order is observed rather than the letter, this will be avoided regardless of what system is followed in selecting the presiding officer.

G.V.d.B.

### **Report of Eastern Ladies' League**

The Ladies' League meeting was held October 22 at our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. The meeting was opened by singing Psalter No. 30 and Psalm 42:1. Our president Mrs. M. Schipper read I Peter 3:1-17 and I Tim. 2:9-15 and offered prayer.

After being introduced our speaker, Rev. A. Mulder, spoke on the topic, "The Place of Christian Women in Christian Service."

Under the thought of the "Christian Woman and Her Position," we were told to first understand the home, the product of the union of male and female, which must be looked upon as a oneness. Here the children respect and give obedience to the parents and the wife to the husband. She helps and serves him and on her hinges the welfare of the home. In many respects she is superior to her husband by surpassing him in beauty, dedication, devotion, thoughtfulness, self-control and self-denial.

By reason of creation, the husband is primary, the woman secondary and her position is inferior to the man, being created for him. In the world she claims equality and some-



times becomes dictatorial. Even Christian women often try to rule the home and influence their husbands in the church.

Under the thought of "The Place of the Woman in Christian Service," we learned that her place is primarily in the home being a mother and instructing the children in God's Word. Not only bearing children, but rearing them also. Each child is a big responsibility and older children cannot be neglected.

In church we must be submissive to the men placed in the rule. In subjection and modesty we can teach Sunday school and in society may lead, pray and discuss freely. We must be modest in dress and adornment, wearing on the outside what we find inside.

If we live according to all this we are a picture of how the church stands in submission over against her head Jesus Christ.

Even though having a position of inferiority we bring forth the man-child and are the mothers of life and are saved in child bearing.

During the singing of Psalter No. 360 a collection was taken that was divided between Hope and Adams St. Prot. Ref. Christian Schools. A report on the activities of the Holland Ladies' Society was given by Mrs. J. Van Kampen and special numbers were given by a quartet from First Church Ladies' Aid. The business of the evening was taken care of and the new officers were introduced. After singing Psalter No. 374 our retiring vice-president, Mrs. Vander Wal, closed with prayer. Refreshments were served in the basement.

Mrs. R. Clawson, Reporter

### Report of Western Ladies' League

The Western Ladies' League met in Edgerton, Minnesota on Oct. 9, 1959, with the ladies of Edgerton as our hostesses.

The meeting was opened by singing Psalter numbers 15 and 72. Prayer was offered, and Psalm 71, our Scripture lesson, was read by our president Mrs. G. Broekhouse.

A short business meeting was held consisting of minutes being read by our secretary, Mrs. J. Brummel; and a financial report by our treasurer, Mrs. James Blankespoor. Psalter number 179 was then sung while the collection was taken for the Edgerton Free Christian School.

Our speaker for the day, Rev. G. Van Baren, was introduced. He spoke on the topic, "Lord, teach us to pray," taken from Luke 11:1. The speaker pointed out that the theme which was chosen indicates a wonderful thing. It means first of all that we, as Christians, have a strong desire to *pray*. That itself is an indication of the work of God's Spirit within our hearts. Secondly, it indicates that we desire to pray *aright*! That is a beautiful thing for the Christian. Thirdly, the theme reveals that we want to be taught to pray in the right way by Christ, and in the final analysis it is *only* Christ who can teach us to pray. The speaker divided his

topic into these three parts: the purpose, the principles, and the teaching of prayer.

Prayer is often for some thing that we want — a means of begging God for that which *we* want. Such is not the purpose of prayer to God. Nor does prayer "change things" as is often the conception in this day. Prayer does not change God. *He is unchangeable!!* God has determined all things in His counsel. Prayer really does not change us either. We are changed by the Spirit of God — the work of God. Rather the purpose of prayer is the means of thanksgiving of the child of God to his God. This is not a certain payment for what He has done, but it is a beautiful expression of thankfulness. It is a reflection of thanksgiving back to God Himself — a reflection of His work within us. Always keep that in mind when you pray. Also, prayer is the means whereby we experience His blessings upon us. He so works within our hearts that we see our own need in all things, that we realize that He is the fountain of all good things, and that we must be supplied always from Him. As He works prayer in us, so too He blesses us constantly with all spiritual blessings.

Next he explained the three principles of prayer:

a. The fact that God must be the center (the object) of all our prayers. God is God! The glory of our God is in all things! Christ instructs us thus in the Lord's Prayer. Prayer must always be God-centered — nor is it easy always so to pray because of our sinful flesh.

b. Prayer must be based upon the work of Christ. Never think that it is based upon our own value or worth. If it would not be based upon the work of Christ, we would not dare to come before the face of God.

c. Prayer is that which is based upon, or according to, Scripture. We must hear what His Word has to say about prayer. A prayer for what *we* want is no prayer, but we must always pray a spiritual prayer according to His will as revealed in the Word of God. God will most definitely answer and fulfill such a prayer. We must therefore seek to pray in our daily lives in harmony with His Word.

His final point was: instruction in prayer. How do we teach our covenant children to pray? Children ought to be taught from their infancy the habit of prayer. It is an important part of their lives. They should be made familiar with the art of prayer through hearing their parents pray daily. They should also be taught by leading them to pray. This way they should be taught while they are yet young, though this is not often done, so that they too may lead in prayer when it is required of them. Finally, they must be taught the *need* of prayer. Impress upon them the spiritual need of prayer. At the same time this means that we too should know how to pray, that we may be able to teach them.

After the speech, a special number was given by the Hull ladies: a round table discussion on "Reading." After this, Rev. J. Heys conducted the question hour in which he answered a question from each society. Questions that yet

(Continued on page 95)

## ALL AROUND US

### *Study Posits Hell On Way Out*

The October 26th issue of *Christianity Today* and the November issue of *Christian Herald* both contain articles reflecting on a statement produced by an official study committee of the United Church of Canada which "discards eternal punishment, revises the doctrine of hell, holds out hope for the ultimate salvation of all men, approves prayers for the dead, and teaches that Christ's second-coming need not occur in a 'physical manner'."

The Executive of the General Council of the above mentioned Church gave general approval and commends the 118-page statement as "worthy of study in the church."

The *Christian Herald* believes the statement "is enough to stoke up a substantial amount of discussion." While *Christianity Today* tells us "The report has provoked much criticism." The United Church of Canada is that country's largest Protestant body.

We quote from the report given in the *Christian Herald* the following:

"Admitting that the book contains 'beliefs that may seem new and dangerous to many people,' the authors go on to declare that hell need not last forever; that there is a second chance at salvation after death; that prayers of the living may help the dead. The next world is not two vastly different and wholly separated conditions or places called heaven and hell, but could be thought of 'as one world which is heaven and hell according to the soul's level of spiritual growth,' they suggest.

"'We have no right to interpret hell as the place of everlasting fiery torment. Hell is to be without God and without the fellowship of those who love Him. Hell is a state of infinite loneliness, desperate deprivation and final frustration. We cannot conceive at all of everlasting physical torment in fire. We can conceive of torment in the fires of shame and remorse — though we cannot see how the repentance that would be involved in this state of mind could fail to lead to salvation.' Doubting that the dead are so suddenly transformed at death as to put them beyond all need of grace or prayers, the authors say, 'We believe that serious and sympathetic consideration should be given to the point of view of those who believe in prayer for the dead.'"

The article in *Christianity Today* has seen, and correctly so, that "The study deprives Scripture of revelation-status." We agree also with the last paragraph in the above mentioned article where the author writes: "Instead of being sent to the churches, the study might better have been returned to committee for more searching of Scripture and less exchange of opinion." But, there again, even this would not help when God's Word is no longer divine revelation.

### *"Some Thoughts On Infant Baptism"*

Such is the title of a small pamphlet sent to us through the mail recently. The pamphlet's author is not mentioned by name. No particular church denomination is indicated on the cover as distributor of the pamphlet. All that is indicated is that it is distributed by the Publishers of Quotations and Reflections, Post Office Box 507, Grand Rapids 2, Michigan, and a postscriptum at the conclusion of the pamphlet is signed with the initials K.W.

The author informs us in the postscriptum that the occasion for the pamphlet was a friendly discussion on the subject of infant baptism. He claims that he was urged to set forth his views in writing for a more deliberate perusal.

As appears from the first part of the pamphlet, the views of especially the Baptists and the Christian Reformed Churches came into the discussion. The author insists that he does not agree with either of these churches.

The pamphlet is not so much concerned with the "mode" of baptism as it is with the "objects" of it. In respect to the latter we are told "Baptism is a sacrament of the Covenant of Grace, for the New Testament dispensation. Baptism does not convey grace, it is a sign and seal of it."

"A person may have grace, and not the sign of it, like the thief on the cross. A person may have the sign, and not the grace, like Simon Magus. A person may have neither sign nor grace, like Pilate. And a person may have both grace and the sign of it, like Lydia."

"The only baptism that conveys grace is administered by Christ Himself, who baptizes His people with the Holy Ghost and with fire . . . ."

"Baptism is a sacrament of the Covenant of Grace. The disagreement with the Baptists (and for that matter also with the Chr. Ref. people) flows from their conception of the covenant. They think and speak of the Covenant of Grace, only as it is in its essence, but they overlook the fact that the Covenant of Grace is not only essential, but also has a form in which it is ministered: they identify ministration and essence.

"To explain the difference between the covenant as essential and as a ministration it will be necessary to call attention to the fact that from the beginning the Lord has shown that He included many in the ministration of the covenant that did not belong to it, essentially considered. God has also revealed that in His dealings with mankind creature (not with angels) He had respect to family ties, both in His blessings and in His punishments; in other words, in His dealings with man God had regard to the solidarity of the family . . ."

At this point, the author to great lengths produces examples from Scripture, from both the Old and the New Testaments, to prove his point. And then he continues:

"After this lengthy introduction (necessary to give ample

proofs from Scripture of the solidarity of the family) I'll come to the point in question. I've remarked that both, Baptists and the Chr. Ref., disagree with us as a result of their conception of the Covenant of Grace. The Baptists go to one extreme, and the Chr. Ref. go to the opposite extreme.

"While the Chr. Ref. say that believers and their children *belong* to the Covenant of Grace, in other words, are *in* the covenant, essentially considered, the Baptists hold that only those who believe and are baptized are in the covenant and will be saved. — Campbellites with their baptismal regeneration, go a step farther than the Chr. Ref. with their presumptive regeneration, but both, Campbellites and Chr. Ref., consider the children of believers to be in the state of grace, while the Baptists believe that the children of believers are in the state of nature. And they are right: Paul says of the Jews, the covenant people, 'By nature ye are the children of wrath, even as others.' No one is *born* in a state of grace, or brought into it by baptism. These words of Christ to Nicodemus apply to all 'Ye must be born again.'

"Why do the Baptists refuse to baptize infants? They consider that the infants are not believers and consequently are not entitled to the sacrament.

"But what do Scripture events teach us regarding the ministration of the covenant of grace.(?)

"When the Lord established the covenant with Abraham, He gave him the sacrament of circumcision, called in Rom. 4:11, 'the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had.' Who received it? Abraham did. Was he entitled to it? Certainly, he was a believer, and as such he should receive the sacrament. But (and here is where the difficulty for the Chr. Ref. and for the Baptists comes in) God commanded that on the very same day that Abraham received the sacrament, it was also to be administered to Ishmael *and* to the 318 or more men of his house, born in his house, and bought with the money of the stranger. Ishmael and all these men received the 'seal of the righteousness of faith.' Were they all believers? Scripture does not say a word of the faith of any of these men other than Eliezer, the steward of Abraham's house. But suppose all these men believers, Ishmael was *not*, and God commanded him to be circumcised. Why? Because it pleased the Lord to include Ishmael and the men of Abraham's household *in the ministration* of the covenant. And if God wants the members of our household to be included in the ministration of the covenant, we have no right to exclude them . . .

"The Baptists and others will say, 'We are not living in the Old Testament days.' True, but is it, in the New Testament days different in regard to the solidarity of the family and the ministration of the covenant? I have quoted some portions of the New Testament, which instances prove that in baptism as well as in circumcision, the Lord deals with families, and includes in the ministration of the covenant all that belong to the household of a believer.

"If the question is asked, 'Are infants also to be baptized?' our answer is, Yes, they are, because:

1. they are with their parents included in the ministration of the Covenant of Grace;
2. by the sign of the covenant they must be included in the instruction and discipline of the Church;
3. they must be distinguished from the children of unbelievers, and be told that Christ is their Lord, but that in order to be saved and to be enabled to serve and to love Him, He must also become their Savior."

So far the pamphlet. There is more in the pamphlet which we do not have space to quote, nor is it important that we quote the rest. From what is quoted above, however, we make the following notations:

1. I am not so sure that all of the Christian Reformed people will agree with the author's presentation of their conception of the necessity of infant baptism. I have a feeling that if ministers in the Christian Reformed Church also received this pamphlet, there may also be some replies forthcoming. I know that there is also among the Christian Reformed considerable difference of opinion on the subject. and the author of the pamphlet surely expresses the view of many in that church.

2. It is clear from what is quoted above that the author of the pamphlet should also be set straight on a few things in connection with the sign of baptism and its application to infants, children of believers. We gather from his explanation that he would separate the sign from the thing that is signified and sealed. It also appears that he conceives of the ministration of the sacrament to infants conditional. Does he also believe that in the ministration of baptism to infants God promises salvation to them all and that this promise is realized in them when they come to years of discretion and accept the promise? He does not say this in so many words, but are we right in making this conclusion from the very last part of the quotation above?

3. We therefore are sending to the publisher of the pamphlet "The Biblical Ground for the Baptism of Infants" written by Reverend Herman Hoeksema for his perusal and instruction. Maybe he will have to write another pamphlet on the subject after he reads it.

M.S.

#### REPORT OF WESTERN LADIES' LEAGUE

(Continued from page 93)

remained in the minds of some were asked and Rev. Heys then answered them.

A musical number was given by a group of ladies from Doon — two Dutch Psalms.

Our president thanked our speakers and also those who took part in the program. We sang our theme song, Psalter 298, after which Rev. Van Baren closed with prayer.

Edgerton ladies, our hostesses, provided a wonderful lunch during which we had a social hour in which we enjoyed the communion of saints.

Mrs. Clarence Klein, Reporter.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

November 5, 1959

Rev. J. A. Heys announced his decision to heed the call from South Holland, thereby disappointing Edgerton which had also called him.

Rev. G. Lanting, also faced with calls from two congregations, chose to accept the call from Holland and declined the one from Randolph.

Rev. H. Hoeksema lectured to a very attentive audience, Oct. 28, in the Women's Literary Club at Holland, Michigan. The subject of the speech was, "The Infallibility of the Scriptures." The Reverend spoke of the Canon of the Scripture which is the rule of our faith and life, the Spirit testifying with our spirit that it is the truth. The speaker further treated the inspiration of the Bible, and stated that it was the revelation of Jesus Christ throughout. Those in attendance testified that it was truly an evening of edification and spiritual joy.

The Mr. and Mrs. Society League meeting was held in Southwest Church, Oct. 30. Rev. R. Veldman, of Southeast Church, was the speaker. He spoke on the great leader of the Reformation, Martin Luther, and his work in liberating the church from the robbery of the Pope and his clergy. The speaker brought out the fact that the two basic principles of the Infallibility and the Authority of the Bible alone were restored to the church through the Reformer, after they had been all but lost under the doctrines of men. The Reverend deplored our complacency regarding Reformation Day, surrounded as we are by witches, false faces and legalized bribery, trick-or-treat. The speaker called the members to diligent study of the Scriptures in order to find the Word of God, and in it the knowledge of the way of salvation.

The Hudsonville Mr. and Mrs. Society held their Oct. 27th meeting at the Children's Retreat and Training School, and the Sr. Mr. and Mrs. of First Church enjoyed the same privilege the next evening. Mr. Zuidema, a teacher at the Training School, conducted the society through the building, showing some of the work of the children. The tour was enjoyed by all, especially as they realized, in a small measure, the work accomplished by those dedicated men and women of the staff; being reminded of the statement of our Savior, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these little ones, ye have done it unto me."

The first public program for the purpose of raising funds for our P. R. Christian high school has been announced for Nov. 22 at Hope Church. The Hope Octette, assisted by other musical numbers will provide an hour of listening pleasure with songs of praise worship of our Covenant God.

Adams School board is conducting a deficit drive to obtain \$10,000. They have mailed pledge cards throughout the

churches which were to be received in a special collection Nov. 8.

The Holland Ladies' Aid Society is happy to have secured the services of Mr. Tom Elzinga to lead them in their Bible discussions.

Hope's bulletin reveals that Rev. and Mrs. H. Hanko's baby has returned home from the hospital after a satisfactory recovery.

The Hull Young People's Society sponsored a Reformation Day program Sunday, Nov. 1, scheduling Rev. G. Van Baren as speaker. Vocal numbers and group singing rounded out the evening.

The Men's Societies of South Holland and Oak Lawn met in joint session Nov. 2. The Rev. Vanden Berg answered the question, "Is present day man delving too deeply into the secrets of nature with the attempt at space travel?" A general discussion of the subject followed the speech.

The Hudsonville congregation donated gifts of fruit, linens and cash for the Holland Home and for Pine Rest through the efforts of the members of the Ladies' Society who canvassed the congregation for that purpose.

The Fall Mass meeting of the Young People's Societies was held at Hudsonville Nov. 5. The Rev. B. Woudenberg was scheduled to speak on, "What is implied by the inspiration of Scripture." Also scheduled was a debate on, "Resolved that P. R. churches should sing hymns in the services."

Did You Know . . . ? That a Federation of Prot. Ref. Christian Schools has been in existence for over three years; that it is composed of the Adams, Hope and South Holland-Oak Lawn societies; that this year Mr. H. Meulenberg, of Adams school, is president; that one phase of its work is the conducting of monthly seminars at Adams school, said seminars being attended by teachers, prospective teachers and ministers in the area; that the main subject of the seminar is, "Psychology and Pedagogy," currently discussing the Scriptural principles of psychology; that the Rev. H. Hoeksema has answered the question of soul, mind, will and emotions; that Prof. H. C. Hoeksema has discussed the influence of sin upon the person; and, that Rev. G. Vanden Berg presented a study on the influence of grace and the operation of the Spirit upon the nature of man; and, finally, that these seminars are conducted by the reading of a paper by a minister or a teacher, followed by group discussion.

Bulletin Quote (Rev. Harbach quoting from the works of A. Fuller): "Man loves to *think*, and cannot live without thinking; but he does not love to think of God; 'God is not in all his thoughts.' Man delights in *activity*, is perpetually in motion, but has no heart to act for God. Men take pleasure in *conversation*, and are never more cheerful than when engaged in it; but if God and religion are introduced they are usually struck dumb, and discover an inclination to drop the subject."

Surely Mr. A. Fuller was not describing us, was he?

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.