

# THE STANDARD

*A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE*

VOLUME XXXIII

OCTOBER 15, 1956 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 2

## MEDITATION

### An Appraisal of Christ's Work

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9:9-13

The scene of the opening incident of this story is laid on the road leading from Damascus to the Mediterranean Sea, the commercial highway from the interior of Asia.

That also explains the hut where Matthew sat at the receipt of custom. Here the caravans passed with goods on which they had to pay tribute, taxes or custom.

Matthew was a publican, and that was very bad. They were as a rule a bad lot. First, they were in the employ of the hated Romans. Second, their occupation was to exact tribute. Third, since they set their own price, they often practised fraud and extortion. The territories and districts where they plied their trade were farmed out to them by the authorities. Fourth, because of the above, they were classed with the harlots and sinners generally. They were cast out of the synagogue; they were deprived the right to take an oath before the Jewish rulers, and were hated by all the orthodox Jews.

They were, therefore, a lonely and despised lot.

Matthew was one of them.

However, it is clear that something had happened to this man. Otherwise we cannot explain how he immediately arose and followed Jesus when He called him away from

his work. Matthew must have heard of Jesus; His words had done their work: the Holy Spirit applying that Word; and consequently, when the call to discipleship and apostleship comes to him, he is ready. Immediately he quit his miserable work, and followed Jesus.

\* \* \* \*

How passing strange is the work of Jesus!

Here He calls a man to the highest office and work a man may ever do on earth: apostleship of Jesus. And he is one of the lowest scum on earth. He is destined to be an apostle of the Lamb of God. He is to follow the Light of the world. He is to be a witness of His death and resurrection. He is going to be a writer of the Bible. He is going to have his name inscribed in the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem. He is going to be, with the other eleven, the very foundation of the church of God, of which Christ is the cornerstone.

But he is a publican! How mysterious are the works of God.

Why does God act this way?

In general I may say: because Matthew was loved of God. And certainly not because of anything in him: he was a despised publican. But in order to *become* something. In a special sense he was destined to be a vessel, a special vessel unto the praises of God.

\* \* \* \*

I wonder how much Matthew understood of this. I do not think that he understood much of the greatness of blessings which God would shower down on him.

But he understood enough of these riches to be very happy.

And he showed it: he made Christ a great feast in his own house. Modestly he omits this detail in his own Gospel, but Luke mentioned the fact.

He was very happy and thankful to Jesus for the great honor bestowed on him. And he showed it too in the fact

that he invited a great company of publicans and of others to this feast.

And I would beg you not to blame him for inviting this great company of the despised publicans. What else could the poor man do? These publicans were the only souls that would have anything to do with him. He was a social outcast. And instinctively he knew that Jesus would not blame him.

Yes, and Jesus accepts the invitation!

What a scene!

On the one hand we see the offscouring of noble, nice, and honorable society; and on the other the Face of Jehovah God, full of glory and truth.

But wait! Do you see that austere, dignified company, coming with violent disapproval written on their faces? They are the ministers of that day. They had heard of this shameful spectacle. And they would see for themselves.

No, they were not bidden to the feast. First, because the publican Matthew dared not invite them. Second, because if he would have, they would never dream of accepting the invitation.

Hush! They have arrived at the house of Matthew-Levi! They see, and what they see is enough to make them boil with indignation. What shameful spectacle! Here is the Man who gave Himself such exalted names: The Light of the world; the Son of God; the Son of David! And here He hobnobs with the lowest ebb of society.

And pray: why?

They will supply the answer: Like seeks like! Christ is really not any better than this scum.

\* \* \* \*

What wicked caricature do they paint of Christ and His work.

Through their blindness and hatred they judge Jesus by their own wicked standards. And here they are: the scribes, pharisees and lawyers of Israel were the cream of God's chosen race. To know and practice external law observance is righteousness. To mingle with the low and obscure is sin. Hence: touch me not, for I am holier than thou. The multitude that knoweth not the law is cursed.

Yes, it's and appraisal of Jesus and His wondrous work.

But what a misevaluation!

First, of Israel. They were God's own people. But they call them scum.

Second, of themselves. They were supposed to be the shepherds of Israel, but they act the hireling. They will have nothing to do with the sheep.

Third, of Jesus. He is really God's Shepherd and will

surely bring them to the fold. But they call Him the scum of the earth.

Fourth, of God. For God seeks those that are lost. But they? Oh no, we are too holy to touch these unclean creatures.

Yes, in that one question: "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? They condemn God, Christ, God's people, and their own calling.

But they are blind, and see not.

And with scorn they look their condemnation, sweeping the whole feasting multitude with hateful eyes.

\* \* \* \*

But Jesus has heard their question, and He will not let them wait for the right answer.

The Lord is going to judge and condemn them out of their own mouths.

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

That was a proverb of their own making: a winged word of that day.

And that proverb is the opening wedge for more condemnation of these sons of the devil.

Attend to this: they were the self-asserted leaders of chosen Israel. But Israel is sick: look at those miserable publicans and sinners who feast with Jesus. Hence, they should labor in God's house, and be instruments in God's hand to cure the sick, the spiritually sick.

But it is also an implied condemnation of these pharisees and their ilk. You find in the words of Jesus an ironical concession: you call yourselves whole. You are the physicians. But these poor, miserable folk are sick. Why then don't you do your work?

But this proverb exalts the Christ.

He is the true Physician. And He consequently seeks the sick unto death, and cures His own sheep.

You may be sure that this dart found its mark.

\* \* \* \*

But there is more to come. The Lord will quote their Scriptures.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!

That first statement must have fallen like molten lead on their hearts.

Imagine: Jesus rudely dismisses them: the cream of the crop. Go ye! Leave Me to My work. You bother Me!

And further: "And learn what that meaneth!"

To be sent home with the injunction: go and study! You do not know what you are talking about! You have need of much study!

For shame! They were the class that knew all! That's all they did: learn. And this strange Man would shame them before the unlearned?

But Christ has His text: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice!" Hosea 6:6.

Yes, of course, they knew the text. But they did not understand it.

The text is Jehovah speaking, through His prophet, to His chosen Israel. And in the few words of Hosea are contained the everlasting Gospel of God.

Religion, salvation, does not consist of the sacrifices which man brings to God. God does not will that. And we cannot bring the sacrifice. Never did any man bring sacrifice to God. How could he? He is a miserable sinner, incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil. He comes into this world black with the blackness of sin and guilt, damnable, and destined for eternal suffering.

But here is the Gospel: God will have mercy! Hallelujah!

He brings the sacrifice. And these wicked pharisees should go abroad and publish that to the flock of Israel, and not condemn them and despise them.

God brings the sacrifice for He will have mercy.

Mercy is the love of God for the object of that love in great misery.

And the sacrifice He brings is this Stranger of Galilee.

Oh, they will see the Sacrifice of Jehovah. They will help along, and with wicked hands they will arrange His poor limbs on the cross, not actually, but through their instigation.

God will have mercy!

My heart sings while I write this.

If it were not so, I would be lost forever.

And so Jesus came, was busy that same day while pharisees despised Him, to call sinners to repentance.

Matthew was one of them. Millions followed.

No, not the righteous. Not those that *thought* they were righteous.

But those whose life may be summed up in the doleful plea: O God, be merciful to me, the sinner!

G.V.

## THE STANDARD BEARER

*Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August*

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. G. Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

RENEWALS: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

*Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

## CONTENTS

### MEDITATION —

- An Appraisal of Christ's Work.....25  
Rev. G. Vos

### EDITORIALS —

- Election and Reprobation.....28  
Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage.....29  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

### OUR DOCTRINE —

- The Book of Revelation.....31  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

### FROM HOLY WRIT —

- Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4 (21).....36  
Rev. G. Lubbers

### IN HIS FEAR —

- Giving in His Fear.....38  
Rev. J. A. Heys

### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

- The Church and the Sacraments.....40  
Rev. H. Veldman

### THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

- The Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht.....42  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

### DECENCY AND ORDER —

- Compulsory Retirement of Elders and Deacons.....44  
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

### ALL AROUND US —

- A New One for the Chaos of the Cults.....46  
Freemasonry .....46

### CONTRIBUTIONS —

- Missionary Notes .....48  
Rev. G. Lubbers

## EDITORIALS

### Election and Reprobation

Dr. Berkouwer devotes several pages of his latest book on "election" to a criticism of my denial of the general offer of grace. This we will pass for the time being. Perhaps, in a later connection I may refer back to this. For the present, we are more interested in his presentation of the doctrine of reprobation and related subjects.

In connection with his criticism of my denial of the general offer of grace, Berkouwer first confronts the question whether or not election must be given a place in the preaching of the gospel. Many, according to him, consider it advisable to make of the doctrine of election a latent dogma, by which is meant that it is relegated to the confessions, particularly to the Canons, but that, for the rest, it better be never mentioned, especially not in the preaching of the gospel. Berkouwer, apparently, does not agree with this, although he is very weak. The latter might be expected in view of the fact that he maintains the error that, in the preaching of the gospel God well-meaningly offers His grace to everyone that hears the preaching. Those who maintain this view may, occasionally, bring the doctrine of election in the preaching of the gospel but it never appears as an organic part with the preaching or as the heart of the gospel. Rather it is presented as an indissoluble contradiction. The true preaching of the gospel does not always have to mention the doctrine of election specifically but always proceeds from it as its heart and underlying background. Berkouwer does not want this. Writes he:

"That one has often gone the way of the latent dogma can only be explained from an erroneous doctrine of election and its danger, especially from a deterministic distortion of the confession of election. *This* election could better be relegated to the background because it implied permanently the undermining of the gospel-call and responsibility. But this way is impossible for one who sees election not as a threat to the order of salvation, from the viewpoint of a *potentia absoluta* (absolute power, H.H.) or divine license, but as that election of God that does not rest on our works but is election out of free grace." p. 291.

Notice, that any Arminian can agree with this. Of the doctrine that God absolutely determines the salvation and damnation of men, Berkouwer must have nothing. This he calls determinism. He fails to understand that the moment you say GOD and confess that this all-wise, all-powerful, and absolutely good God determines everything, you can no longer speak of determinism in the philosophic sense of the word. But of God's absolute power in election Berkouwer must have nothing. And in opposition to this absolute power of God, he now speaks of an election of God that is not based on works but proceeds from free grace. Once again, I main-

tain that no Arminian could possibly have any objection to this distinction between God's absolute power and His free grace, not based on works, in election.

Would Berkouwer have any objection to the first article of the five composed by the Remonstrants in 1610? It reads as follows:

"That God by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined, out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on his Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to condemn them as alienate from Christ, according to the word of the gospel in John 3:36; 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,' and according to other passages of Scripture also."

The whole tenor of Berkouwer's book on the "Election of God" agrees with this first of the five articles of the Remonstrants. To be sure, according to this article, just like the whole tenor of Berkouwer's book, it is all of grace, of free and undeserved grace, not of works. But all this is very deceiving as soon as you deny, as does Berkouwer, that the allwise, good, and absolutely powerful God determines who shall and who shall not be saved. The question arises immediately whether man will accept or reject this grace which, also according to Berkouwer, is freely offered to him.

Would not Berkouwer also subscribe to the fourth of the five articles of the Remonstrants? It reads as follows:

"That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting, awakening, following, and co-operative grace, can neither think, will nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, inasmuch as it is written concerning many that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts VII, and elsewhere in many places."

Once more we remark that, according to the Remonstrants, it is all of grace, without works, as Berkouwer also has it. But this grace is not an absolute power, according to this article as well as according to Berkouwer and, therefore, it is not irresistible.

Our Reformed fathers conceived quite differently of election and its power. They declared, Canons 1, 7:

"Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen

through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.

"This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ to be saved by him and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them faith, justification and sanctification, and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy and for the praise of his glorious grace."

Such is the decree of election according to our Reformed fathers.

It is not merely without works; it is not simply out of free grace; but it is divine, absolute power. It is an *unchangeable purpose* according to which God hath *decreed* to give a certain number of persons to Christ, in order that he might *effectually* call and draw them into his communion and bestow upon them all the blessings of salvation, and that he might *powerfully* preserve them to the end.

Of this "potentia absoluta" Berkouwer must have nothing. To him this is determinism. He even speaks of it as divine license, "Godelijke willekeur," as if it were not a contradiction in terms to speak of license in an allwise and all-powerful God!

But it stands to reason that one who must have little (if any) of reprobation becomes weak also in regard to the truth of election.

You wish more proof that, according to our Reformed fathers, election is, indeed, potentia absoluta, absolute power, which no one possibly can resist? I call your attention to Canons II, 8:

"For this was the sovereign counsel and most gracious purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever."

I call attention also to this article merely to show that election is, indeed, potentia absoluta divina, absolute divine

power. It speaks of God's *sovereign* counsel; it speaks of the saving *efficacy* of the blood of Christ which is shed only for the elect; it teaches that, by faith, God brings the elect *infallibly* to salvation.

To be sure, election is not of works; it is of free grace; but it is also absolute divine power whereby God decrees and determines who shall and who shall not be saved.

H. H.

## Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage

The first two conclusions on the question of the remarriage of divorced persons are, to say the least, very strange and unworthy of the broadest gathering of any church.

They are, as we remarked before, wholly negative and, therefore, declare exactly nothing.

Besides, they do not say that no substantial and conclusive evidence *can be* produced from Scripture that parties remarried after an unbiblical divorce or on the ground of their own adultery are living in continual adultery, or that such persons, in order to show the sincerity of their repentance, must break off the relationship with their present spouse; but simply that no such evidence *has been* produced.

We would say that, on the basis of this negative declaration, the only proper decision the synod could have reached is to refer the matter back to the committee or to appoint a new committee for further study.

In a way, however, we can understand that the synod expressed itself thus and simply declared that no substantial and conclusive evidence *has been* produced. This refers, of course, to the history of the case. In the past, for many years, the matter of remarriage of divorced persons, was discussed at the synods of the Christian Reformed Churches, and no final conclusions were reached. Nevertheless, in the light of the fact that no contrary evidence was produced, so that synod did not express that, on the basis of Scripture, such unbiblically divorced persons might remarry, all that the synod could possibly have done is to refer the problem back to a committee for further study and report to the next synod.

During the history of the case, one of the committees appointed by synod to study the case and to report to the synod, took the stand that, through a divorce, a marriage-bond, is always completely dissolved, whether the divorce was biblical or unbiblical, and that, therefore, the divorced parties were allowed to remarry. This was, if I remember well, in 1932. At that time, however, the report of the committee could not find favor in the eyes of the synod. Virtually, however, in spite of the fact that its first two conclusions were negative, this is the stand taken by the synod of 1956. It may be fruitful, therefore, to analyze for a moment the report of that committee of 1932 and see in what way they reached their conclusions.

That committee attempted to base its conclusions on Scripture, particularly on Matt. 5:32 and 19:9.

In the first passage we read the well-known words: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

And the second passage reads as follows: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Now, it is very strange that the committee mentioned above thus explained these words of the Saviour that they came to mean the very opposite of what the Lord said or intended to say. By a strange *hocus pocus* they are so twisted and distorted that the Lord really teaches here that all three parties which are mentioned in the text, the man that forsakes his wife, the woman that is forsaken, and the second man that marries the forsaken woman, all may marry and commit no adultery when they do so. In spite of the fact that the Lord very definitely declares that they commit adultery when they marry or remarry, the committee explains that the Lord teaches the very opposite and that all the parties are allowed to remarry or to marry.

In which way did the committee reach this strange conclusion?

They argued as follows.

1. The first man forsakes his wife. But by the mere fact that he has left her, without anything further, he has, of course, not yet become guilty of fornication. But if, immediately after forsaking his wife, he marries another, he becomes, at the same time guilty of the sin of fornication. But there is also another possibility. Instead of marrying another as soon as he has forsaken his wife, he can wait, until the woman he has forsaken marries another man. And only after this the man also marries again. In that case, thus is the argument, the man does not commit adultery, for he is free to marry again because his first wife has committed adultery by marrying another.

2. The second man marry the woman that is forsaken by her husband immediately, without waiting whether the first husband will marry again. In that case he is, of course, guilty of adultery, for the woman is still legally united in marriage with her first husband. But, of course, he can also wait until the first man is married again. In that case, the woman is free and the second man does not commit adultery when he marries her. The committee thought that they could base this view on the translation of the text in Matt. 19:9 that renders: "Whoso marrieth her *when* she is forsaken" which they then explain as meaning: "immediately after she has been forsaken, and before the first husband has married another."

3. From all this follows, naturally, the possibility of the

woman that is forsaken by her first husband to marry again, without committing adultery. Her husband has forsaken her. And, of course, according to the philosophy of the committee, if she heads off her husband and marries again before he remarries, she commits adultery. But if the man is first in marrying another, she has the right, too, to remarry, and when she does so the marriage is perfectly legal before the Lord and she does not commit adultery.

Thus is the reasoning of the committee that reported to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1932.

A strange reasoning it is, indeed, even on the very face of it.

It leaves the impression of being nothing else than a piece of pure sophistry.

Or is it not strange that one, in the way of reasoning, can come to the very opposite conclusion of what the text literally teaches? The text, no doubt, speaks of three parties that commit adultery when they marry or remarry. But the committee so distorts the text that now their remarriage or marriage becomes perfectly proper and legal before the face of God.

But although this reasoning is sophistry on the very face of it, we will, nevertheless, examine it a little more closely, especially since we are convinced that the decisions of the last synod must rest upon the same underlying basis.

This, however, must wait till our next issue, the Lord willing.

H.H.

#### LORD, MY PETITION HEED

Lord, my petition heed,  
Now help me in my need,  
My Savior be.  
I am Thy servant, Lord,  
My trust is in Thy word,  
Mercy to me afford,  
I cry to Thee.

Comfort Thy servant now,  
While at Thy throne I bow,  
For Thou art love.  
Thy pardoning grace is free;  
Sinners who call on Thee  
Thy tender mercy see,  
O God above.

Lord, hear me while I pray,  
While now in trouble's day  
I seek Thy face.  
To answer, Lord, is Thine;  
Thou only art divine,  
Most bright Thy glories shine,  
O God of grace.

Psalm 86:1-3



## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### Chapter IV

Rev. 2:1-7

#### THE BEGINNING OF DECLINE

They must repent. Their backsliding must become sin unto them, which they confess before the Lord and before another. And they must do the former works. Things must change. In preaching and teaching as well as in the personal communion of the saints the spiritual note must be struck once more. While remaining sound in doctrine, faithful in discipline and zealous in good works, she must return also to her first love and do the first works. Once again the life of the church must spring forth from the root of true love in Christ Jesus her Lord!

This call to repentance is urgent. The church must heed it. So urgent is the matter that the Lord threatens the church with complete extinction if she does not repent. Significant in this connection is the way in which the Lord introduces Himself to this church: "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." He holds the seven stars, the angels of the seven churches. They are His gifts to the church. Only when He gives them are they truly ministers of the Word. Only by His Spirit can they be equipped with light and understanding and life to minister the Word of God. Only when the Lord Himself speaks through them is there preaching of the Word. This is a truth the church in the world must always remember. Training of those that are to serve in the ministry of the gospel is certainly indispensable. But there is no seminary that can furnish the church with ministers of the Word. The Lord alone holds the seven stars in His right hand. If the minister of the Word is not one of those stars Christ holds in His power and bestows on His church on earth, he may be a false teacher, a carnal seeker of self and the world, but he cannot preach the Word. Besides, Christ walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The Church has her life in Him only. It can be a light in darkness only through His Spirit and grace. Without Him she is nothing and can do nothing. Very essential, therefore, it is for any church to stand in living fellowship with Him. She must not leave her love. She must understand that there is no life for her in separation from him. A mere human society can never be a church. This self-designation of the Lord already contains as solemn warning to the church that left her first love. If she does

not repent, but continues in the direction in which she is developing, death, and darkness can be the only result.

But this same inevitable end is directly expressed in the threat of judgment: "or else I will come to thee, and remove the candlestick out of its place, except thou repent," vs. 5. The Lord here addresses the church as her King and Judge. When in this connection He speaks of His coming, it is evident that He does not refer to His final coming to judge the quick and the dead, but of His coming for judgment upon the historical church of Ephesus. Out of that place will He remove the candlestick. The meaning of this is evident. The church of Ephesus will cease to be a manifestation of the Body of Christ on earth. She will become extinct. Outwardly, as a mere human fellowship and gathering, she may probably continue to exist for some time, but she will no longer be a representation of one of the candlesticks in the midst of which Christ walks. If she continues she will be one of those dead churches of which we may notice so many round about us in the world of today. They are bearing the name of Christ's Church falsely. They are no more than mere human associations, without the light of the truth, without the life of Christ. Thus the church of Ephesus will die. In the way of leaving the love of Christ, she will lose every spiritual virtue. The judgment threatened is, therefore, wholly in harmony with the defect and sin of the church. Let us take it to heart. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!

But the Lord does not close this letter with this threat of judgment, but rather with an encouraging word of promise to those that overcome and fight the good fight even unto the end. He introduces this word of comfort with the well-known: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This admonition, therefore, is addressed, not only to the church of Ephesus, but to all the churches, to the whole church of all ages. Not all have ears to hear, even in the church visible on earth. Only they that were efficaciously called out of darkness into His marvellous light can spiritually hear and discern and heed the Word of Christ. To these the Lord now addresses Himself. He did address them, too, in the preceding, though the whole church must hear the call to repent. For, only they that have an ear will obey His Word and repent and do the first works. They must assert themselves in the church of Ephesus and insist upon repentance. They must fight, even within the church, in order that she may reform and return to her first love. This will not be easy. They must expect opposition, even from the carnal element in the church. A bitter fight it may become for them, in which they will have to bear the reproach of Christ and suffer for His name's sake. For worse and more bitter enemies than carnal Israel the church has none in all the world. They must expect scorn and derision, hatred and contempt and persecution. Perhaps, they will be expelled, cast out of the synagogue. Outwardly they may suffer defeat. But if they only will be faithful to the end, they will surely overcome. And to him that overcometh the

Lord will give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. vs. 7.

In the original paradise there stood the tree of life. It stood in the midst of the garden. The garden of Eden was God's House, His dwellingplace with man on earth. It was His tabernacle, in which God blessed man with the fellowship of His friendship. And the midst of the garden might be called the "holy of holies." There God dwelled. There Adam could meet his God as a friend meets his friend. There he had life in the true sense of the word. There also stood the tree of life. It was a sacred symbol to man that he could have life only in God's blessed fellowship. Surely, the tree was more than that. It was a means of life. By eating of that tree man could perpetuate his earthly existence. But it was also a sign of God's covenant with Adam. He could eat of that tree only as long as he stood right with his God. He could not reach the tree unless he could meet his God. And he could not meet his God except in righteousness and holiness and truth. And that same tree of life was also an image of better things to come. For the earthy is an image of the heavenly. Paradise the first is an image of the better paradise of God that is to come, when all the weary night of sin and death shall have passed away, and all things shall have been made new. Then the tabernacle of God shall be with men forever! The perfected tabernacle of God in heavenly glory, in the new creation, is the ultimate realization of the first paradise. It will be far more blessed and glorious than the first paradise could ever be. For, the first paradise was of the earth earthy, but the final realization of it shall be heavenly. When that better day dawns, we shall walk, bearing the image of the heavenly Lord, in everlasting perfection as friends of God. In that new paradise there shall also be a tree of life, planted by the river of life that flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. We shall have more to say about this tree in our discussion of the last chapter of this book of Revelation. Suffice it now to say, that it is not quite correct to identify the tree of life with Christ. It is, evidently, a means in the new creation through which the perfect and eternal life of the redeemed and resurrected saints shall be sustained; as well as a symbol of their everlasting covenant with God in Christ. In a sense, indeed, we may say that the believer has a foretaste even now of what it will mean to eat of that tree of life. But the promise refers to the glory of the eternal kingdom that is to come. Soon the dark night of suffering and battle is past. Presently the eternal morning dawns, the morning of a day of everlasting victory and joy. Then we shall be perfected, and behold the beauty of the Lord in His temple. And forever we shall be satisfied with the pleasure that are at His right hand, eating of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Hear, then, what the Spirit saith unto the churches! The promise is for him that overcometh, that fights the battle even unto the end, and that is willing to suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together! And He is faithful that promised!

## CHAPTER V

### Revelation 2:8-11

#### THE CHURCH STRONG IN TRIBULATION

Just as the church in Ephesus represents the church in the beginning of her decline, though she is still strong in doctrine and discipline, the church in Smyrna is in the midst of tribulation, but rich and strong in every respect, as may be gathered from the fact that the Lord evidently has nothing to complain about her.

The city of Smyrna was a beautiful city, situated north of Ephesus on a bay of the Aegean Sea. In respect to business and industry it might well rival with Ephesus for the honor of being considered the first city of that time. Perhaps it must be largely attributed to this fact that there were many Jews living in Smyrna, who, as usual, belonged to the well-to-do and influential class of people in the city. Also in Smyrna there had been founded a church of Jesus Christ, just as in the city of Ephesus. But as we already suggested, a comparison of the two letters that are written to these congregations respectively will show that there was considerable difference between them. In the first place, there was a difference outwardly, as to their relation to the outside world. Of Ephesus we receive the impression that also in an external sense it was rather a strong congregation, large and flourishing and even able to assert itself over against the world from without to a certain extent. It is true that also in its case the Lord suggested that it was subject to the ill will and mockery of the world; for He speaks of their patience and power to bear. But we do not get the impression that it was persecuted at the time by an overwhelming power of the world. In respect to the church of Smyrna, however, this is quite different. Of this church we are told that it is poor and in tribulation, that the people of God in the city were slandered and falsely accused, that they were persecuted and killed all the day long. However, in the second place, there evidently was also a marked spiritual difference that is worthy of our attention. Of Smyrna we read that it was rich though it was poor; of Ephesus, that it had left its first love. In the case of Ephesus we read that the Lord has something against it; nothing of the kind is found in the epistle to Smyrna. Ephesus is warned with a threat that the candlestick will be removed out of its place if it does not repent. Smyrna receives nothing but the most beautiful and comforting promises and commendation. Hence, we may characterize the church in Smyrna as the church that is strong and rich in tribulation.

The external position of the church in Smyrna and her relation to the world is indicated, first of all, in the words: "I know (thy works) and tribulation." The phrase "thy works" does not occur in the Revised Version; hence, we place it in parentheses. The word employed in the original for "tribulation" denotes a condition of oppression, of being hard pressed, of being in narrow straits. It indicates that the world from without exerted a pressure upon the little con-



gregation that was well-nigh unbearable, that threatened to leave it no standing room in the city. The world hated the little church, and pressed down upon it from every side with a view to its ultimate destruction. It persecuted her, revealed its hatred and contempt in many ways, and caused the members of the congregation to suffer because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. It appears that at the time when the epistle was written to her, her persecution assumed chiefly a social aspect. It does not seem that at the time the people of God in Smyrna were already brought to scaffold and stake. This form of persecution still lay in the future. At the present they were the objects of social persecution, so that they had no standing room in the midst of the world.

That this is true is indicated, first of all, by the phrase: "and thy poverty." The church of Smyrna was poor, not spiritually but materially and socially. Spiritually they were rich, as the Lord informs us. But in a social sense they were poor. Perhaps they had already experienced a foretaste of that form of persecution which will be dominant at the time of the supreme and ultimate manifestation of Antichrist, when the people that refuse to receive the mark of the beast and the number of his name shall be allowed neither to buy nor to sell. It is not impossible to imagine that especially under the influence of the influential Jews they were deprived of many privileges which others enjoyed. They could not do business as others did. They could not make headway in the world from a material and social standpoint, as could the Jews. Perhaps even, they were directly deprived of some of their property: their goods were confiscated because of their testimony of Jesus. At any rate, the church of Smyrna was poor. They had no social standing. They were not rich in earthly possessions. Perhaps they gathered for public worship in a miserable little shanty of a church, and could not even decently provide for the necessity of the angel of the church, who, according to some, at this time was Polycarp, who also suffered martyrdom in Smyrna. It was undoubtedly with great difficulty that they could maintain themselves as a church in the city.

This social form of their tribulation is indicated still further in the words: "and the blasphemy of those that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." The believers in Smyrna were slandered, blasphemed, reproached, and reviled. The Jews, who no doubt could exercise a very subtle and powerful influence in the city, utilized every opportunity to revile the name of the members of the little congregation. Exactly what was the nature of their slander, we are not directly informed in this epistle of the Lord to the church of Smyrna. Yet we may easily surmise the character of their reproach. For the Lord describes these blasphemers, first of all, as those that call themselves Jews, and are not. No doubt they belonged to the nation of the Jews. In a national sense they were children of Abraham. And as usual, they were proud of this prerogative. They made it a special claim that they were the children of God

because they were children of Abraham according to the flesh. The Christians, who made the same claim, were, of course, considered to be and branded as imposters. From this it may be inferred what was the nature of their slander. They publicly called themselves Jews, though in the true sense of the word they were not. They insisted openly that they were the only people of God, that they still expected the Messiah, and that therefore the Christians, who claimed that the Messiah had already come, and who proclaimed Him as their King, were nothing but a dangerous sect, dangerous to the state because they might easily instigate the people of Smyrna to rebellion against their proper authorities and persuade them to acknowledge no other king than Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time, they must have slandered the little church in the very name of their professed King. The Messiah of the Christians was nothing but a crucified criminal,—something that must have been extremely horrifying and repulsive to the rest of Smyrna's population: for the cross was foolishness to the Greeks. However this may have been, it is certain that the slander of those Jews was directed against the believers of Smyrna because of their testimony of Jesus. Principally they slandered the Christians in Smyrna because of the bitter hatred of the Jews of the Christ that had come. For although they called themselves Jews, they were not. Not the national Jews, not the natural descendants of the fathers of believers, are Jews in this dispensation, but only they that are partakers of the faith of Abraham and that are justified by faith in Christ Jesus.

This faith in Christ and justification in his blood these so-called Jews simply despised with their whole heart. They did not believe in Christ. They rejected Him and crucified Him again. They trampled under foot the blood of the new covenant. And therefore they were no Jews in reality. On the contrary, they were a synagogue of Satan, as the Lord informs us. No doubt the Jews possessed a synagogue in the city of Smyrna. Literally the word *synagogue* signifies an assembly, a gathering. And therefore the Lord characterizes these men that call themselves Jews, and are not, as a gathering under the leadership of the devil. Satan is their chief, and he inspires all they do. He therefore is also the instigator of their slander. And also from this description may be inferred what was the nature and the contents of their slander and blasphemy. For the name Satan means "opponent, adversary." He is the opponent of God and of Christ and His people in the world. And as he had gained the leadership in the synagogue of the Jews in Smyrna, and instigated their malignant and pernicious blasphemy, we may easily understand what sort of reproach was cast into the teeth of the little church. The slander of these Jews was decidedly antichristian. They were reviled for Christ's sake. As Christians, as followers of the despised Jesus of Nazareth, they had to bear the reproach and hatred of the world about them. They became for the sake of Christ objects of most bitter hatred and invidious contempt.

However, this could not be the end. More tribulation and

persecution was yet to come. The deepest stage of their suffering had not yet been reached. Now they were poor and slandered, social outcasts in the city of Smyrna for Christ's sake. But the malignity of the synagogue of Satan could not be satisfied by mere slander and words of reproach. Even as this malevolent slander had its root in their bitter hatred against Christ and His church, so it could not cease before it had manifested itself in actual persecution of these Christians. Of this the Lord forewarns them in the words: "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer." And He continues: "Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." It is more than probable that the poor Christians of Smyrna themselves already had a presentiment of the fierce persecution that was presently to break loose over their heads. Hardly could it be different. Persecutions of the church generally do not break out all of a sudden, without any precursory signs and warnings. When we hear the distant rumbling of thunder and see the dark clouds gather threateningly, we know that presently the storm will break forth in all its fury. Thus it is with the persecution of the church. It may come very quickly, but hardly without any premonitions on the part of those that are persecuted. Thus it must have been in the congregation of Smyrna, and they must have understood that the evil slander of the Jews must finally develop into actual persecution. Dark clouds must have been gathering at the horizon at this time. The very form in which the Lord sends His message indicates clearly that this persecution is not far off, that the days of trouble and tribulation are nigh at hand. For the Lord writes that they are *about* to suffer some things, the devil is *about* to cast some of them into prison. The very atmosphere must have been pregnant with indications that persecution was about to break out. And the hearts of the poor believers in Smyrna may well have been filled with fear and gloomy forebodings of the near future. And just because of this the Lord sends them the message of cheer and encouragement. He surely does not comfort them by assuring them that persecution shall not come, that suffering and trouble shall not touch them. But while predicting that suffering will be their lot, He encourages them, and writes: "Fear none of these things." Do not forget! This is the Word of Him that was dead, and behold, he liveth.

Fear not! This is the positive message of the Lord to the church in tribulation. He not only cautions them in advance, that they may be fully prepared. But He also comforts them and encourages them to face the future without fear. He does so, in the first place, by assuring them that it will be Satan that is the prime author of their tribulation. They will be cast into prison, and for ten days they will have tribulation. But they need not be ashamed of their reproach and suffering, nor need they fear. On the contrary, they may deem it an honor to be in oppression, for the simple reason that it is the devil who causes it all. Indeed, it is a glorious comfort to know that the devil is persecuting us, to suffer per-

secution from the hand of the righteous and just is unbearable. But to be an object of the devil's hatred is principally a cause for rejoicing. Perhaps these Christians in Smyrna will be treated by the civil powers in the city as criminals and rebels, and be branded as such before all the world; but nevertheless, they must be mindful of the fact that behind these municipal authorities and behind these malignant Jews is the devil, instigating his agents to do their hellish work. It might be grievous to them to be publicly exposed and treated as dangerous criminals; but to know that the devil was behind it must be for them a cause of serene satisfaction. For to be an enemy of the devil is to be a friend of Christ. To be persecuted by the adversary is the best proof of our belonging to God's party in the world.

Moreover, the Lord encourages them by informing them concerning the essential character of their future suffering. They will be cast into prison, in order to be tried. This indeed was not the devil's purpose; for his highest aim was their apostasy from the truth. But above the devil stands the almighty God. And the powerful Priest-King walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. His purpose will after all be reached. And therefore, also by this explanation of the character of their future suffering the Lord encourages His church. In the fact that the character of their suffering will be a trial they have the assurance that they are not unconditionally delivered to the power of the devil, but that they are safe in the hands of their Lord. It is He that employs even the devil to reach His own divine purpose. Besides, this is a source of comfort to them because it assures them that they shall be faithful to the end through the grace of their Lord. It will not be their downfall. In their own strength they would never be able to stand persecution; but by the grace of Christ they will certainly persevere even unto the end. As they consider themselves, fear no doubt fills their hearts,—the fear that they shall become unfaithful and deny Him Whom their soul loves. But now they are informed that this will not be the ultimate outcome of their persecution. It will assume the nature of a trial. God will try His people, in order that the strength of His grace may become manifest to the world and to the devil, and thus His own name will be glorified. To be worthy to be thus tried, to be deemed worthy of being a manifestation of God's grace over against the devil and the wicked world, is a cause of joy and a source of mighty comfort.

Finally, the Lord encourages His church with a view to the coming suffering by informing them as to the time of its duration. They shall be in tribulation ten days. This measure of time no doubt has symbolic significance. For even though this period should be understood in the literal sense of the word, as applied to the congregation of Smyrna, the symbolical significance would by no means be excluded, no more than the recognition of the historical existence of the seven churches prevents us from considering them in their typical character in relation to the church of all times. But besides, it may safely be adopted as a general rule that the

indications of time and space in the book of Revelation are to be taken in the symbolical sense of the word. Not all the numbers occurring in the book can possibly be taken in the literal sense. But on the general basis that they are symbolic of some higher spiritual reality, they can all be interpreted. And therefore, also these ten days we take in the symbolical sense. And then we agree with interpreters in understanding this expression as being indicative, in the first place, of only a short period. But the brevity of the period is not to be found in the number ten,—for in itself this number may indicate a long as well as a short period of time. No, that the time of their persecution will be comparatively short, though severe, is expressed rather by the fact that it is measured not by years, or months, but by days. In comparison with the glory that shall be revealed in us, the apostle Paul has it, the suffering of this present time is not worthy of consideration. Rom. 8:18. When viewed in the light of the ages, the tribulation of the church in this dispensation is always insignificantly short. So also in respect to the tribulation of the church in Smyrna: it will last but ten days.

The figure ten, however, implies a far greater comfort and is symbolic of a far higher reality than the mere fact of brevity. Ten is a number that is very frequently employed in Scripture, and often occurs in the book of Revelation. The antediluvian period comprised of the lifetime of ten patriarchs. Before the heart of the king of Egypt is inclined to let the children of Israel go to serve their God, ten great plagues are sent upon the country. Life in its totality is measured by ten great spheres, indicated by the division of the law into ten commandments. The Lord in His parable speaks of ten virgins, and of servants entrusted with ten pounds whom he will place over ten cities. In the book of Revelation we read of ten horns of the great red dragon, of the ten horns of the beast and his ten royal diadems, of the ten kings that shall hate the harlot with whom they first commit fornication. Chapters 13 and 17. Now, if we consider this number in the abstract, there can be no question of the fact that it is a round number, that whatever other number is multiplied by it must also be a round number. As such it beautifully serves as a symbol of completeness and fulness.

But if we consider the passages in which the number ten is employed, we soon find that there is still a more specific significance attached to the number ten. The general idea that lies at the basis of its employment in Scripture seems to be that of a fulness, completion, totality, of the measure of anything, whether it be of time or power or action, of reward or punishment, determined solely by the fixed plan of God Almighty. And therefore, in our text it denotes neither that the time shall either be long or short, nor that the evil one shall be permitted to develop his full power in persecuting the church of Smyrna, but it indicates that a certain definite period is allotted the devil, during which he may persecute the church of Christ, a period that is determined not by himself, but by the will and counsel of the

Lord. The devil possesses no power of himself; nor can he sovereignly decide upon the persecution of the church. His power and authority are characterized and symbolized by the number ten. It is both limited and meted out to him by God. It is always the same as in the case of the history of Job. The devil must approach God for permission to afflict God's servant. And when Satan fails to induce Job to apostasy by depriving him of all that he has in this world, he must again turn to the Most High for permission to continue and to aggravate his attack upon Job. The devil, therefore, can never proceed beyond the limits set him by the Almighty. Neither can he reach any other end than the purpose of God in the affliction of His people in the world.

Thus it is with the church in Smyrna. And this is applicable to the persecution and suffering of the church of all ages. The devil possesses power to oppress the church, no doubt. He will make life hard for the faithful in the world. He will rage against them in all his fury. We must expect this. But the blessed comfort for the church lies in the fact that the power of darkness is under the absolute control and sovereignty of Him that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The King of the church has received all power in heaven and on earth, power too to control the devil, the mighty adversary of Christ and His cause and His people in the world. And when the full measure of his time and power has been meted out to him according to the will of God, the Lord bids him stop, and he can stir no more against the church. What mighty comfort for the church in tribulation! The devil can do her no harm, but must serve the purpose of God in Christ. The gates of hell cannot prevail against us. Under the mighty protection and care of her great King, the church has nothing to fear: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

It is evident from all this that tribulation can never harm the church. It is simply a trial, by which the church is sanctified and purified and strengthened in the faith. This is also evident from the epistle of the Lord to the church in Smyrna. Does the tribulation of the church in Smyrna, present or future, cause weakness and fear and trembling in the church? Does it lead the church away from its Lord, and cause it to enter into the camp of the enemy? Exactly the opposite is true. The condition of the congregation in Smyrna was as good as possible. The church was in as flourishing a condition as might be expected in this dispensation. In proof of this there is, in the first place, the negative observation that the Lord in this letter mentions no cause for rebuke. And this is surely sufficient to justify the inference that there was nothing worthy of blame in the congregation of Smyrna. If there had been, the Lord would have called the attention of the church to it. He was thoroughly acquainted with the condition of the church. And if there had been any reason to reprove, He surely would have known and expressed it.

H.H.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

#### 21.

(I Corinthians 4:6-8)

In the verses 6-8 of the fourth Chapter of I Corinthians we hear an *explicit* statement from Paul himself as to the reason and purpose of having dwelt rather at length about himself and Apollos in the preceding Chapter.

Before we go into the meaning of this "explicit statement" of Paul, let us quote the text itself, which reads as follows: "*And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sake; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*"

Thus much the text.

Lest there be any misunderstanding it should be carefully noticed that Paul did far more in the former Chapters than simply speak of himself and Apollos. For the sake of clarity on this point we would briefly recall the following salient points from this letter of Paul. And, let it be noted, these salient points were *doctrinal* points. We have repeatedly stated that Paul is here not writing a *systematic* dogmatics. That is correct. However, such does not warrant the erroneous conclusion that Paul does not bring up *doctrinal* points.

Let us be clearly understood in regard to this matter.

A matter can be and often is very doctrinal, a matter of correct and basic teaching in the Church, even though it is not *as such* a matter of systematic theology. When Paul wrote, there was not any systematic dogmatics written yet. But every word of God was inspired and profitable for *doctrine*, for reproof, for correction in righteousness!

It was a matter of doctrine and, therefore, a matter of correction and reproof!

Wherefore it can be said: as a man's dogmatics, doctrine, is, so must needs his life be. Philosophers in their jargon say: metaphysics is the basis of ethics. When one wishes to know the ethics of the Stoics and the Epicureans one must first inquire into their world-view, their metaphysics, what lies beyond the realm of the physical world, the very meaning of things.

Although the christian, the believer in Christ, gives a different content to this, from a formal viewpoint that is correct. Just think of the biblical conception of faith for a moment as this is expounded in the Heidelberg Catechism.

How can our fathers say and we confess with them, "it is impossible that they who are *ingrafted* into Christ by a true faith, that they should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness," if it is not because the realities of faith and our being ingrafted into Christ makes it spiritually necessary for the believer to live a life of thankfulness! One's metaphysics determines his ethics. As God is so must also our walk in relationship to him and our neighbor be.

That is also the basic presupposition here in the writings of Paul.

It is for this reason that Paul called attention to such basic considerations as:

1. The very meaning and essence of the "word of the Cross," the word of wisdom as preached by Paul. This Word is in its very nature and manifestation such that it is power and wisdom of God in those who are saved. Such "saved ones" are the Corinthians, the church of God in that city. Should then not their conduct (ethics) also be such that their whole attention be to the Word of the Cross and not to the wisdom of words of man?

2. The very nature of their "calling" is such that it is efficacious. Should then their glorying not be alone in the Lord, who called them in Christ, even as He elected them, not many wise according to the flesh, not many strong and mighty, not many noble, but the poor, the weak and the foolish. Surely metaphysics here determines ethics, and thus in Scripture what *we are* in Christ is the basis for the admonition what we ought to be in our life of thankfulness.

3. The very fact, the Spiritual reality, that God has revealed by His Holy Spirit the wisdom of God in mystery to the church (metaphysics) that calls for a conduct of spiritual men putting spiritual things with spiritual. (ethics)

Such had been the pointed thrust of Paul in these beautiful Chapters we have considered during the past year.

When Paul called attention to himself and Apollos as an example that in them the Corinthians might learn not be puffed for one and against the other, he still teaches them the fundamental ordinances in God's church which determine the ethics and conduct of the believers in the church.

Let this truth sink deep into our hearts!

Unless we see this we miss the point in Paul's argumentation, and we will not have studied unto salvation.

What Paul stated about himself and about Apollos was *doctrine*. It was sound teaching, and, therefore, implicit and explicit reproof and correction in righteousness.

It is sound teaching that Paul and Apollos are simply ministers of the grace of life. It is equally sound doctrine that both are fellow-laborers, and that they are thus in God's service. On this footing they are equals. Again it is sound doctrine when Paul is the one who must plant, lay the foundation, and Apollos must water and build upon the apostolic labors of Paul.

And all of this sound doctrine has implicit in it "reproof and correction" for everyone, who with Apollos wills to build upon that foundation layed by Paul.

Such is the basic pedagogy of Paul. We have called attention to this "pedagogical approach" of Paul repeatedly.

And when Paul singled out himself thus, and Apollos, he was simply doing this for clarity sake. The Corinthians and the whole church with them must "learn" something. They must learn not be puffed up. They must not blow their bellows in stinking pride. Such is not the ethics in the church. It does not fit with, flow forth from the realities of the riches in Christ and the spiritual man. And this we must learn. This really means that we "learn" to crucify our old nature and walk in a new and holy life. Paul had to "learn" to be content in whatsoever state he was. And there are many things which we must "learn." We learn from precept and example. Well here in Paul we have both; in Paul and Apollos conduct is the "architype" of the conduct that fits ministers of the gospel in the church, and genders unity and humility among the members of the congregations.

Where these realities are seen we will not feel that the cause of God depends on certain men. We will not boast in men but in the Lord, and acknowledge the gifts and talents in gifted men, without overlooking the fact that at the same time they are poor sinners, saved by grace.

For thus do we truly confess "all that we have we have received!"

It is well to take notice also here of the "point of departure" of Paul in this question "for what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

That is a profound question and not simply a flippant pun may be seen from an interesting note in A. T. Robertson's W. P. on this verse. There we read, "Ten years before the challenge of Pelagius, the study of St. Paul's writings, and especially of this verse and of Rom. 9:16, had crystalized in his mind the distinctively Augustinian doctrines of man's total depravity, of irresistible grace, and of absolute predestination."

Thus wrote Robertson and Plummer of Augustine.

We do well to take notice of this, and take the shoes from off our feet, and say: Lord, all is of thee. May our walk also be this; may it wholly testify that salvation is of thee the Lord alone.

As a man's metaphysics is so shall also his conduct be.

And as man's metaphysics is so shall also the admonitions and exhortations be.

For this reason none can admonish unto a walk of humility as do the Augustinians. They have caught the vision. Think of a Calvin, and a Jensen in the Romish Church, not to forget a Gottschalk in his day. And a Reformed man who clings to the "golden-chain" of Rom. 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified," will surely have a unique "ethics" unknown to the Arminian preacher.

If this "golden-chain" is not broken by anything like "faith is a condition," but is left stand in its metaphysical structure, then the question of Paul: what have you that you have not received, comes to stand in truly bold relief!

Yes, then it is not so that you say: what is it that I did not receive as free-gifts by faith, but then we will surely confess that even the faith to receive and appropriate is of God. All is "gift of God" including faith.

Yes, for then we see that "the good-pleasure, purpose and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which he hath chosen us from eternity, both to grace and glory, *to salvation and the way of salvation*, which he hath ordained that we should walk therein!" Canons I, Art. 8. (et ad salutem et ad *viam salutis*).

Here we see the deep implication of the categorical and arresting question: what have you that you have not received? Here nothing is left excluded. Here the Reformed man bows in the dust and worships. Here in the dust before God he confesses the sin of schism in God's church. Here the flesh is crucified. Here one can say before judges and kings of the earth: all these gifts are of the Lord!

Here we truly say: and all things are of you and ye are of Christ, and Christ is God's.

Why should we then boast as if we had not received it. Why should it be less Augustinian and boast more? God forbid!

As a man's metaphysics is so is his ethics.

An Arminian-Pelagian doctrine has an ethics which does not profoundly boast in the Lord—even when it gives lip service to "all that I am I am by grace," for it will be "resistable" grace.

But the truly Reformed man will say and sing:

*"All that I am I owe to Thee  
Thy Wisdom Lord hath fashioned me  
My life in all its perfect plan  
Was ordered ere my days began.*

G.L.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Monday, October 29, 1956, our dear parents,

MR. AND MRS. P. BYKERK

hope to celebrate their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We join them in this celebration in giving thanks to our covenant God. May God bless them in the way that lies ahead.

"Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways." Psalm 128:1.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Hill  
Mr. and Mrs. Author Bykerk  
Mr. and Mrs. Arie Bykerk  
Lubertha Bykerk  
Cornelius Bykerk  
7 Grandchildren.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Giving In His Fear

Budget-making time is here again.

That is, Church-budget-making time is here again.

Those who are given rule over the congregation, those invested with the right and power to determine the material aspects and needs of the congregation are busy with pencil and paper figuring out how much the financial cost will be for that particular congregation in the year to come.

The needs are not always the same.

Certain items remain approximately the same. It will require so much electricity, coal, gas or fuel oil. The phone bill will be no different than last year. Insurance on the buildings, interest on the loan can be figured out very often to the last penny.

Other items vary from time to time. The buildings received a coat of paint last year and that item will not appear on the budget this year. A new furnace installed two years ago will not need to be replaced this year. But trouble has developed in the pipe organ and we will have to add a tidy sum for its overhaul and repair.

So it goes. How much will it cost us to maintain our services and continue to function as a congregation? What will the total cost be? How much, then, will each family be required to bring up so that this amount is brought in during the coming year? A proposed budget must be presented to the congregation that each one may know how much each family must contribute if all the needs are to be met properly.

We are not interested, at the moment, with making that budget in His fear. That, of course, must always be done. Items must not appear on that budget that militate against the fear of the Lord. There must not appear on that budget one cent that is designated for activities and policies that are conducted outside of His fear. A budget must not be drawn up that is concerned with beautiful and costly buildings but allocates only a few paltry pennies for missionary activity, covenant education of the youth, the maintenance of the Theological School of the denomination, the needy in the church, needy churches and the like. We may have more to say about that later.

At the moment we are concerned with giving in His fear.

We do have in mind those who give in order that the financial needs of the Church of Christ are met by the abundance that God has given.

When that budget is presented and adopted, do you give in His fear?

Do you give?

The question is not whether you part with your money and drop it in the collection plate because the consistory

keeps a record and you do not want the shame of being considered to be a slacker. Do you give?

Only as we contribute to the financial support of God's kingdom in His fear is it giving. The only kind of giving there is is giving in His fear. That is a word that we can well learn anew in this day. Man hardly knows what it is to give.

To give in order to get is not giving but transacting a business deal with others. That surely should never be the case with our offering in the collection plate when we have gathered for divine worship.

Give in His fear and you will give for the sake of giving.

Our Heidelberg Catechism has a word to say about giving in His fear when it, among other things, says in question and answer one hundred three, "What doth God require in the fourth commandment? First, that the ministry of the gospel and schools be maintained . . . and that I . . . contribute to the relief of the poor as becomes a christian . . ." There you not only have giving but giving in His fear. One who places his contribution in the collection plate for the reasons mentioned in this answer and does so for these reasons in sincerity gives in His fear. We do well, therefore, to consider this matter of giving in His fear that our contributions may be pleasing in God's sight.

It is so easy, when the new budget is announced and approved, to grumble because it is higher than last year and then to give grudgingly or refuse to give any more than the budget was last year (or perhaps five years ago). It is quite impossible, then, that we have hallowed the Sabbath and kept the fourth commandment. What is more it means that we have not received God's gifts in His fear and we are intent on misusing them.

The Heidelberg Catechism and Scripture indicate that such is the case when the Catechism insists that the ministry of the gospel and the schools must be maintained and Scripture exhorts us to seek *first* the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

In that connection, it is interesting to look up the texts that are listed as Scriptural proof for the stand of the Heidelberg Catechism. As proof of the fact that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained we find a reference to Deuteronomy 12:19, "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth." I Timothy 1:5 is mentioned: "Now the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." I Timothy 3:14, 15 is cited as proof: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The passage in I Corinthians 9:11 is referred to: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap



of your carnal things?" Finally we also have II Timothy 2:2 which deals with the maintainance of the schools for the maintainance of the gospel: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

That verse in Deuteronomy and the one in I Corinthians 9:11 plainly refer to the support of the one who proclaims the gospel. Yet it cannot be gainsaid that even the passage in Deuteronomy cannot mean merely the Levite who functioned in the temple for God's people. Indeed, we must take heed not to forsake the Levite in our midst; but Israel, to whom these words were addressed, had a broader calling than that. To take heed not to forsake the Levite, Israel had also the tabernacle and temple with all its expenses to support financially. And today, though the "salary" of the "Levite" in our midst is one of the largest items on the budget, it is by no means the only item. However, in the Old Testament dispensation there was only one "church" building to maintain and that one building together with all the Levites was maintained by the gifts of all the Israelites. When, as of necessity today, the Church is divided into many congregations, some larger and some smaller, the financial load becomes very great for the smaller ones. Even then, in the Old Testament dispensation the financial load was by modern standards very high. ALL were required to give one tenth of their income to the support of God's cause. Thus, for example, in Deuteronomy 14:22 we read, "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year." And to tithe means to give a tenth part.

Walking in God's fear in the Old Testament dispensation meant giving unto Him one tenth of all that He had given. The budget was easily made in those days. The Israelite knew plainly what giving in His fear was. And today we are freed from that law of tithing, giving one tenth, not so that now we can give one fifth and still walk in His fear but because in the freedom of Christ we will in His fear give far more than that tenth!

And many of God's people do!

Consider not only the amount placed in the collection plate on Sunday but also the sums spent to give our youth a covenant training in schools that do not militate against and try to undermine the truth of the gospel but teach all things in its light and you have very often a sizable sum that is far above that one tenth. Add to this what is given liberally to charitable institutions of mercy and in special collections for special causes and, if the church budget has been paid in full, it will be well over the one tenth of income.

But even then it is not said that it was all given in His fear.

If it was given grudgingly it was not given in His fear.

If it was given out of a feeling of "I have to but would rather not," it is not given in His fear.

If it is given to acquire a name among men for liberality and for honor among men, it is not given in His fear.

Yet we must give for the maintainance of the gospel and the schools; and we must give in His fear.

By the schools the Catechism plainly has in mind the Theological Schools wherein young men are trained to preach the gospel; and maintaining these schools is essential for the maintainance of the gospel.

This is evident from the reference to II Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This is a reference to the need of training others for the ministry of the gospel; but, of course, this entails quite an expenditure of money today for instructors and the maintainance of buildings. This, in our churches, is included in the budget under the synodical assessments out of which the missionary activity of our churches is paid, the theological school is supported and financed, the needy churches are cared for and all other items which belong to the denominational life of our churches.

That does not mean that the consistory makes no provision for the local christian grade schools and high schools. No one truly interested in the maintainance of the gospel will consider the christian school movement for our covenant youth either unnecessary or an expensive luxury. He will consider it a must. "Missionary zeal" that is eager and willing to spend thousands of dollars to train young men to send them to the Hottentot and foreigner whom he has never seen and does not have interest to provide a covenant training five days a week for the youth of the Church and his own flesh and blood does not have a missionary zeal that is in His fear. One must be deeply concerned with shielding one's own children and the children of one's own church from the antichristian, evolutionistic, atheistic and modernistic influences that seek to destroy their faith if one is to have true zeal that those unseen and unknown and thousands of miles away be brought to the faith. You cannot be unconcerned about the faith of the children given to you by our Covenant God and have concern that means anything before God concerning the faith of those on the four corners of the earth. The schools that must be maintained are also christian grade and high school, if we are to walk and give in His fear.

J.A.H.

---

#### LORD, MY PETITION HEED

By all whom Thou hast made  
Be praise and worship paid  
Through earth abroad;  
Thy name be glorified,  
There is none great beside,  
Matchless Thy works abide,  
For Thou art God.

Psalm 86:4

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER

*The Sacrifice by Philip Schaff.*

The doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass is much further developed in the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers, though amidst many obscurities and theoretical extravagances, and with much wavering between symbolical and grossly realistic conceptions, until in all essential points it is brought to its settlement by Gregory the Great at the close of the sixth century. These points are the following:

1. The eucharistic sacrifice is the most solemn mystery of the church, and fills the faithful with a holy awe. Hence the predicates *thusia phobera*, *phriktee*, *anaimaktos*, *sacrificium tremendum*, which are frequently applied to it, especially in the Oriental liturgies and homilies. (Homilies are religious discourses — H. V.) Thus it is said in the liturgy of St. James: "We offer to Thee, O Lord, this awful and unbloody sacrifice." The more surprising is it that the people should have been indifferent to so solemn an act, and that Chrysostom should lament: "In vain is the daily sacrifice, in vain stand we at the altar; there is no one to take part."

2. It is not a new sacrifice added to that of the cross, but a daily, unbloody repetition and perpetual application of that one only sacrifice. Augustine represents it, on the one hand, as a *sacramentum memoriae*, a symbolical commemoration of the sacrificial death of Christ; to which of course there is no objection. But, on the other hand, he calls the celebration of the communion *verissimum sacrificium* of the body of Christ. The church, he says, offers to God the sacrifice of thanks in the body of Christ, from the days of the apostles through the sure succession of the bishops down to our time. But the church at the same time offers, with Christ, herself, as the body of Christ, to God. As all are one body, so also all are together the same sacrifice. According to Chrysostom the same Christ, and the whole Christ, is everywhere offered. It is not a different sacrifice from that which the High Priest formerly offered, but we offer always the same sacrifice, or rather, we perform a memorial of this sacrifice. This last clause would decidedly favor a symbolical conception, if Chrysostom in other places had not used such strong expressions as this: "When thou seest the Lord slain, and lying there, and the priest standing at the sacrifice," or: "Christ lies slain upon the altar."

3. The sacrifice is the anti-type of the Mosaic sacrifice, and is related to it as substance to typical shadows. It is also especially foreshadowed by Melchizedek's unbloody offering of bread and wine. The sacrifice of Melchizedek is therefore made of great account by Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and other church fathers, on the strength of the well-known parallel in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

4. The subject of the sacrifice is the body of Jesus Christ, which is as truly present on the altar of the church, as it once was on the altar of the cross, and which now offers itself to God through his priest. Hence the frequent language of the liturgies: "Thou art he who offerest, and who art offered, O Christ, our God." Augustine, however, connects with this, as we have already said, the true and important moral idea of the self-sacrifice of the whole redeemed church to God. The prayers of the liturgies do the same. Freeman regards this as the main thing in the old liturgies. "In all liturgies," says he, "the Church has manifestly two distinct though closely connected objects in view. The first is, *to offer herself in Christ to God*; or rather, in strictness and as the highest conception of her aim, *to procure that she may be offered by Christ Himself, and as in Christ, to the Father*. And the second object, as the crowning and completing feature of the rite, and woven up with the other in one unbroken chain of service, is *to obtain communion through Christ with God*; or, more precisely again, that Christ may Himself give her, through Himself, such communion."

5. The offering of the sacrifice is the exclusive prerogative of the Christian priest. Later Roman divines take the words: "This do (poieite) in remembrance of me," as equivalent to: "This offer," and limit this command to the apostles and their successors in office, whereas it is evidently an exhortation to all believers to the commemoration of the atoning death, the *communio sacramenti*, and not to the *immolatio sacrificii*.

6. The sacrifice is efficacious for the whole body of the church, including its departed members, in procuring the gifts which are implored in the prayers of the service.

All the old liturgies proceed under a conviction of the unbroken communion of saints, and contain commemorations and intercessions for the departed fathers and brethren, who are conceived to be, not in purgatory, but in communion with God and in a condition of progressive holiness and blessedness, looking forward in pious longing to the great day of consummation.

These prayers for an increase of bliss, which appeared afterwards very inappropriate, form the transition from the original simple commemoration of the departed saints, including the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, to intercessions for the suffering souls in purgatory, as used in the

Roman church ever since the sixth century. Neale has collected in an appendix to his English edition of the old liturgies the finest liturgical prayers of the ancient church for the departed saints, and deduces from them the positions, "(1) that prayers for the dead, and more especially the oblation of the blessed Eucharist for them, have been from the beginning the practice of the Universal Church. (2) And this without any idea of a purgatory of pain, or of any state from which the departed soul has to be delivered as from one of misery." In the liturgy of Chrysostom, still in use in the Greek and Russian church, the commemoration of the departed reads: "And further we offer to thee this reasonable service on behalf of those who have departed in the faith, our ancestors, Fathers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and every just spirit made perfect in the faith . . . Especially the most holy, undefiled, excellently laudable, glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin . . . the holy John the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, the holy, glorious and all-celebrated Apostles, and all thy Saints, through whose prayers look upon us, O God. And remember all those who are departed in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life, and give them rest where the light of Thy countenance shines upon them."

Cyril of Jerusalem, in his fifth and last mystagogic Catechesis, which is devoted to the consideration of the eucharistic sacrifice and the liturgical service of God, gives the following description of the eucharistic intercessions for the departed: "When the spiritual sacrifice, the unbloody service of God, is performed, we pray to God over this atoning sacrifice for the universal peace of the church, for the welfare of the world, for the emperor, for soldiers and prisoners, for the sick and afflicted, for all the poor and needy. Then we commemorate also those who sleep, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that God through their prayers and their intercessions may receive our prayer; and in general we pray for all who have gone from us, since we believe that it is of the greatest help to those souls for whom the prayer is offered, while the holy sacrifice, exciting a holy awe, lies before us."

This is clearly an approach to the later idea of purgatory in the Latin church. Even St. Augustine, with Tertullian, teaches plainly, as an old tradition, that the eucharistic sacrifice, the intercessions or *suffragia* and alms, of the living are of benefit to the departed believers, so that the Lord deals more mercifully with them than their sins deserve. His noble mother, Monica, when dying, told him he might bury her body where he pleased, and should give himself no concern for it, only she begged of him that he would remember her soul at the altar of the Lord. And Tertullian considers it the duty of a devout widow to pray for the soul of her husband, and to offer a sacrifice on the anniversary of his death.

With this is connected the idea of a repentance and purifi-

cation in the intermediate state between death and resurrection, which likewise Augustine derives from Matt. 12:32 ("And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." — H.V.), and I Cor. 3:15 ("If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." — H.V.), yet mainly as a mere opinion. From these and similar passages, and under the influence of previous Jewish and heathen ideas and customs, arose, after Gregory the Great, the Roman doctrine of the purgatorial fire for imperfect believers who still need to be purified from the dross of *special masses* for the dead, in which the perversion of the thankful remembrance of the one eternally availing sacrifice of Christ reaches its height, and the idea of the communion utterly disappears (There are silent masses, *missae solitariae*, at which usually no one is present but the priest, with the attendant boys, who offers to God at a certain tariff the magically produced body of Christ for the deliverance of a soul from purgatory. This institution has also a heathen precedent in the old Roman custom of offering sacrifices to the Manes of beloved dead. On Gregory's doctrine of the mass, which belongs in the next period, compare the monograph of Lau, p. 484 f. The horrible abuse of these masses for the dead, and their close connection with superstitious impostures of purgatory and of indulgence, explain the moral anger of the Reformers at the mass, and the strong declarations against it in several symbolical books, especially in the Smalcald Articles by Luther (II 2, where the mass is called *draconis cauda*), and in the Heidelberg Catechism (the 80th question, which, by the way, is wanting entirely in the first edition of 1563, and was first inserted in the second edition by express command of the Elector Friedrich III, and in the third edition was enriched with the epithet "damnable idolary").

In general, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper the sacrament continually retired behind the sacrifice. In the Roman churches in all countries one may see and hear splendid masses at the high altar, where the congregation of the faithful, instead of taking part in the communion, are mere spectators of the sacrificial act of the priest. The communion is frequently despatched at a side altar at an early hour in the morning.

Thus far, in this article, our quotation from Philip Schaff as he writes on this sacrament of the Lord's Supper in this second period, 300-750 A.D. We have quoted him at length on the *sacrament* of the eucharist and also on the *sacrifice* of the eucharist. The Lord willing, we will conclude this series of quotations from Philip in subsequent articles by quoting him on the *celebration* of the eucharist, the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice and of the communion. This, too, is very interesting.

H.V.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

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

#### Article 1

(continued)

(Note: A rather serious mistake crept into our previous article, in the second paragraph of the "Introduction." About mid-way in that paragraph you find the statement: "They wanted people to think exactly as many did in the Arminian controversy, that anyone who so strongly spoke of the corruption of man could be guilty of any heresy as far as the salvation of man is concerned." This should have the very opposite sense: "could *not* be guilty . . .")

In this article we have a careful description of three truths concerning man. In the first place, the article speaks of man's original state. In the second place, it treats the manner of his fall. And in the third place, it speaks of the results of his fall as far as his nature is concerned.

Before we give our attention to these details, however, it is well to note some general characteristics of this article.

First of all, I would have you note that the article speaks of "man." It is, of course, true that the *individual man* of whom this entire article speaks was Adam. But Adam is not mentioned by name. The focus of the article is not upon Adam as an individual, nor upon any single individual at all, but upon *Man*. This already gives an indication of the line which our *Canons* are to follow, namely, the organic (and, by implication, the federal, or, covenant) line. Neither righteousness nor guilt, holiness nor corruption, are merely a matter of the individual human being. There is, to be sure, a personal guilt and a personal corruption. But from the very beginning the guilt and corruption of the individual may not be viewed all by itself and cannot be understood when it is viewed in separation from the guilt and corruption of the race. Surely, an individual was created after the image of God in the beginning; but it was not *merely* an individual: *man* was created according to the image of God. An individual sinned in the beginning; but it was not *merely* an individual: *man* revolted from God by the instigation of the devil and his own free will. An individual, Adam, became totally corrupt through his rebellion against God; but it was not *merely* that individual: *man* became totally corrupt. And neither the true character of the fall and sin nor the possibility of salvation can be understood apart from this truth. Man does not stand or fall, nor is he saved,

merely as an individual. And while this individualism does not as such appear in the third article of the Remonstrants, the article is so vague and general that this individualism is not as such ruled out either. It is this individualism which is so characteristic of all Pelagianism and Arminianism. And it is against this fundamental diversion that all who are Reformed must do battle from the outset. This is the speech of our *Canons* not only in the present article, but also in those that follow. And it was already the speech of both our *Heidelberg Catechism* and our *Belgic Confession*,—a speech which the fathers of Dordt found it necessary to emphasize over against the Arminians, who claimed to believe the same confessions.

In the second place, we may note that this article makes none of the rather commonly made distinctions in the image of God. Thus, for example, it is rather customary to speak, even in connection with this article, of the image of God in a broader and in a narrower sense. Originally this distinction was not made with any wrong intent. It was used to distinguish between the image-bearer and the image, between man as he was originally, and remains even after the fall, a rational-moral creature, and the spiritual, ethical character of that rational-moral creature by virtue of the image of God in him. But it was very simple by means of this distinction to fall into the error of maintaining that also after the fall man kept something of the image of God. He remained a rational-moral creature, and thus he retained the so-called "image of God in the broader sense." And so he retained the *image of God*, even though it was in the broader sense. Thus, if one is not careful, he can arrive at the very opposite of the truth that man lost and perverted the image of God completely. And this, in fact, is often the consequence. Man, so it is said, still has something of the divine glory in him. God left some of that glory in man when he fell. It is perhaps even well not to speak of the image of God in the "formal" and "material" sense, though this distinction is much safer. For after all, the "image of God in the formal sense" is, strictly speaking, not the *image of God* in man, but his capacity to be an image-bearer. And as such, he may bear either the image of God or the image of the devil. It is well, therefore, I believe, to limit ourselves to the language of our *Canons*, and to include in the image of God only what this article includes, namely, the excellent spiritual, ethical gifts which man forfeited through his rebellion and fall.

We are now ready to take note of the original condition of man's nature. Notice that, according to the article, the image of God was not something added to man after his creation, but that he was from the very beginning formed according to, after, the image of God (*ad imaginem Dei*). And this implied the following: 1) His mind was characterized by, seasoned with (*conditus*) a true and blessed knowledge of his Creator and of spiritual things. Notice the expression here, which teaches us that as with seasoning in food, so this true and blessed knowledge of God permeated man's

mind. And this knowledge was not simply a formally correct intellectual understanding of things spiritual; it was true knowledge, according to which man rightly knew God his Creator. It was a living, experiential, personal knowledge. He did not know merely all about God and spiritual things; he knew God. He had the knowledge that is life, the knowledge according to which he knew God as the only blessed God, the fountain and source of all goodness, all light, all life. Notice, further, that man is described not only as having the *ability* to know God, but as having an actual knowledge of God. 2) His very will and heart were adorned with righteousness. Hence, man in the very center of his spiritual, ethical being, his heart, and in his will, from which all his determinations and decisions and desires proceed, stood in perfect accord with the will of the only good God. With his mind he knew the good, and with his will he chose the good that was presented to that will by the mind. 3) And hence, all his affections, his inclinations were characterized by purity. Thus, with his entire nature man went out toward God and His fellowship. To know God and taste His goodness, to love God and desire His will, to follow after God with all his strivings and aspirations,—that was life for man. And with that life, the life of the perfect image of God, man was from the beginning alive.

Notice, by the way, that the article speaks of basic things. It does not simply speak of man's active life, of his deeds. It does not even limit itself to the inner activity of man's nature. But it speaks of that very nature itself: of the mind, the will, the heart, the affections or emotions. Also this fact is very important. Just as surely as man's original righteousness was a matter of his very nature, so surely is sin fundamentally a matter of man's nature, and so surely is salvation again something that involves man's very nature.

But what became of that image of God in man by virtue of the fall? Very easily we fall into the error of saying that the fall implied simply the loss of the image of God. Now it is true, of course, that man lost the image of God. This article also teaches that very truth: "he forfeited these excellent gifts." And notice that you have a blanket statement here. Man did not lose them in part, even though it was in large part. He did not, according to the article, retain some of these excellent gifts of the image of God by virtue of a so-called "common grace." No: he forfeited these excellent gifts. That means that, while he retained his intellect, that intellect was no more characterized by a true and blessed knowledge of God and spiritual things; while he retained his will, his will and heart were no more characterized by uprightness; while he retained his emotions and affections, he was no more pure in his affections. And thus, the man who was once in his entire being holy, that is, perfectly consecrated to and devoted to the living God in his very nature, was now no more so dedicated.

But according to the fathers of Dordt, this is only half of the story. Man not only lost the image of God; he gained the image of the devil. That image was changed in man

into its very opposite. For notice that the human mind and will and inclinations are not pictured as being, spiritually, ethically neutral after the fall. But: 1) As far as man's mind is concerned, he entailed on himself blindness, horrible darkness, and vanity and perverseness of judgment. Again, this concerns not merely the thoughts, the product of the mind, but the very mind itself. Man is no longer able intellectually to see the good from the spiritual, ethical point of view. Hence, as the Scriptures have it, apart from the re-birth he cannot *see* the kingdom of God. While he retains his intellectual capacity, he is no more filled with the light, but with the very opposite of the light, spiritual darkness. Not truth and knowledge and wisdom fill his mind, but the lie, ignorance, and foolishness. And from the spiritual, ethical point of view man is, as far as his very mind is concerned, unable to make a right judgment. He is unable spiritually to call the good good, and the evil, evil. Instead he is by virtue of the spiritual bent of his very mind only able to render a perverse judgment. 2) His will is rebellious and wicked, evil, and his heart hard. Again, notice that he not only gives rise to a rebellious decision and a rebellious deed. But his very heart and will are contrary to the will of the living God, and follow after all that is contrary to that will. He has an evil will, a will that perversely and maliciously takes delight in everything that is the very opposite of God's will. God says: "Love Me." Man says, with his evil will: "I hate Thee." God says: "Consecrate thyself unto and serve Me." Man says by virtue of the very malice of his will: "I will devote myself and all my service to the devil." He delights in the evil, corruption in his sphere. 3) And thus, finally, all man's affections are become impure. His "love" is turned to adultery: his "tender mercies" are become cruel; he is in his very nature incapable of anything that is pure and good.

Such is man, according to our *Canons*, without a single limitation or qualification. Such a man, who is in his very nature the diametrical opposite of holy, corrupt to the very ultimate degree, is the object of the converting grace of God.

(to be continued)

H.C.II.

---

### Eastern Ladies' League

Note change of date.

The Eastern Ladies' League will hold its fall meeting October 25 at 8 P. M. in our First Prot. Ref. Church. Student Mulder will be the speaker.

Let's keep this date for an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. Gerrit Pipe, Vice Sec.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Compulsory Retirement of Elders and Deacons

(De Vaste Aftreding van Ouderlingen en Diakenen)

"The elders and deacons shall serve two or more years according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The retiring officers shall be succeeded by others, unless the circumstances and the profit of any church, in the execution of Articles 22 and 24, render a re-election advisable." — Art. 27, D.K.O.

To the above article our churches have added the following decision: (Acts of Synod 1944).

"In case of difficulties in the congregation, the office-bearers then serving shall continue to function until their chosen successors can be installed."

This is substantially the same as the decision recorded in the Christian Reformed Church Order by J. L. Schaver which reads thus:

"In case the installation of newly-elected officers is postponed, the term of office of the retiring elders and deacons is extended until the installation takes place." (Acts of Synod 1912)

To this appendix we shall come back presently but we must first consider the article proper.

Concerning this article of our church order we may briefly note several elements before discussing the matter itself:

1) The article expresses the rule for what is commonly known in Presbyterian circles as "Term Eldership" in distinction from "Permanent Eldership." (These terms apply to the deacons as well). Concerning this distinction and the meaning of these terms, the Rev. G. Lanting wrote a feature article in Vol. 32, No. 13 of the *Standard Bearer* and, consequently, we will not repeat that now.

2) The article does not literally limit the term of office-bearers to a specified period of time. It merely states, "Two or more years" which, as a relative expression, can only mean that the minimum term of service by an elder or deacon is two years while the maximum term is left undefined. There is no binding rule in the church order that stipulates the exact length of time that the office bearers are to serve in the churches.

3) The tenure of office is determined by "local regulation." This means that each church decides this for themselves. It is not, therefore, necessarily the same in all the churches even of the same denomination. In one church an elder may be elected for five years, in another for three, and in still another for only two. The size of the congregation and other local circumstances determine this and, therefore, each consistory must decide this as is in the best interests of their particular case. There are too many ele-

ments that vary in different localities to make it advisable to attempt to set any fixed time.

4) Under the system proposed in this article, "a proportionate (evenredig deel) number shall retire each year." The purpose of this stipulation is to avoid having the entire consistory or a large majority of it replaced at the same time and thus creating an entirely new consistory that is inexperienced and unacquainted with the affairs of the church. That would be detrimental to the congregation. This rule avoids this possibility. As it is, if there are nine elders in a church who each serve for three years, three of them shall retire each year and be replaced by others. The same, of course, applies to the deacons. If there are six of them serving three year terms, two will retire each year. Thus in a consistory of fifteen members, no more than one third of its constituency is ever replaced at the same time and two thirds of it always remains composed of men who have had experience in consistorial matters. This arrangement has many things in its favor.

5) Finally, we should notice that although the Article favors the practice of "Compulsory Retirement of Office-bearers" (Vaste Aftreding), it does not altogether exclude the possibility of an elder or deacon continuing in the office after a given term through re-election by the congregation. This, however, should occur only when and where circumstances are such that the welfare of the church would be endangered by the termination of the services of those office bearers whose time in office has expired. This provision is exceptional and the exception should not be made the rule. Although the article allows this provision, it does not encourage its use. It is intended only for unusual circumstances. If then such office-bearers are to be presented to the congregation for re-election, the consistory should have very preponderant reasons for doing so. A re-election is possible but not probable. It is permissible but not likely. The rule remains that after serving a given specified period which is stipulated at the time of the election, the elders and deacons are to be retired at least for one year. Such is the intention of the church order and such is also the practice in our churches.

It may be interesting to know that this practice of compulsory retirement of elders and deacons (Vaste Aftreding), to which we have no doubt become so accustomed that we no longer question its propriety, has been considered in times past by many Synods of Reformed Churches. Its reappearance time and again at these Synods would seem to indicate its importance in the mind of the church. Although today there are no doubt still some who would like to see the present practice changed and who favor "permanent eldership," the matter is not contested among us since "Vaste Aftreding" has become a fixed part of our ecclesiastical custom. In this custom we do not stand alone for Reformed Churches have followed it since the time of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Dr. H. Bouwman tells us that elders and deacons in the



Apostolic times were chosen for life and, for this reason, most of the churches later judged that this was proper and, consequently, ordained office bearers for life terms. Up to the time of the Reformation this practice remained in vogue. It was John Calvin, the Genevan Reformer, who introduced a change. Historically, we must trace the origin of the twenty-seventh article of our church order to him. He, primarily to safeguard the churches from the dreaded hierarchical practices of Rome in which ecclesiastical power is flagrantly misused by a few too long in seats of authority, thought it better to appoint elders and deacons for a limited period. Since Scripture itself is altogether silent on the matter of the length of office-bearer's term, Calvin and other Reformers concluded that the churches are free to regulate this matter according to their own best interests and welfare. In Geneva the office-bearers were appointed for one-year terms with half of them retiring then every six months. Such was the ruling of Calvin's Church Order of 1541 and the principle of this ruling has been followed by Reformed Synods ever since.

In 1568 the Wezelian Convention ruled: „De helft van de ouderlingen en diakenen zou naar omstandigheden elk jaar of elke zes maanden aftreden en anderen in hun plaats verkoren worden, met vrijheid om de bekwaamsten, zo ze bereidwillig waren, voor een jaar of een half jaar te continueren, d.i. zonder herkiezing te herbenoemen.” Freely translated: “Half of the elders and deacons shall, according to circumstances, retire every year or every six months and others chosen in their place, with the liberty, if desired, to extend the term of the most capable a year or a half year without reappointment by re-election.”

The Synod of Emden in 1571 extended this period to two years with half retiring each year with the church retaining the liberty to lengthen or shorten this according to circumstances. The following Synods, held in Dordrecht in 1574 and again in 1578, followed this same rule.

Once more the matter was brought before and considered by the Synod of Middelburg in 1581. We note that for twenty years the question was almost constantly before the churches. This Synod maintained substantially the same ruling as the previous synods so that the practice of one half of the office bearers retiring each year continued. Each consistory, however, was left free to extend the term of her office-bearers. This, however, would not automatically be the case by a decision of the consistory. The name of the incumbent would have to be submitted on nomination with others to the congregation and if he was re-elected (approved) by the congregation, he might serve another term. This would be done only where circumstances necessitated. Ordinarily office bearers retired when their term expired.

Another phase of this question arose before this same Synod out of the persecuted church of London. This concerned the question of life-time service of elders and deacons. The Synod requested the advice of a certain Professor

Danaeus from Leyden who submitted the following four points of counsel:

“1. Scripture does not teach that office bearers are to remain always in that calling. Retirement is permitted and to avoid ecclesiastical tyranny, it is better than life-time service.

2. It is desirable that more persons be given experience in the affairs of the church.

3. Through retirement the consistory each time looses a part of half of its constituency and so the danger of tyranny is reduced.

4. In the event some continue in the office, which is permissible, they must nonetheless be approbated by the congregation.”

Unfortunately the Synod did not act upon this advice because they could not finish their agenda but that they were in agreement with it appears evident from the fact that the former ruling was again retained without change.

In 1586 the Synod of 's Gravenhage maintained the same article as did also the Synod of Utrecht in 1618-19 with but two additions. They added:

1. “For two years” was changed to “for two *or more* years.”

2. At the conclusion of the article was added: “unless the circumstances and the profit of any church, in the execution of Articles 22 and 24 render a re-election advisable.”

And so we have the article in its present form today. Next time, D.V., we will present the arguments pro and con for the practice of “Compulsory Retirement of Office Bearers,” give our evaluation of these arguments, and attempt to answer a few practical questions submitted in respect to this practice.

G.V.D.B.

## O PRAISE THE LORD, HIS DEEDS MAKE KNOWN

O praise the Lord, His deeds make known,  
And call upon His Name;  
Sing ye to Him, His praises sing,  
His wondrous works proclaim.  
Let hearts rejoice that seek the Lord,  
His holy Name adore;  
Seek ye Jehovah and His strength,  
Seek Him for evermore.

Ye children of God's covenant,  
Who of His grace have heard,  
Forget not all His wondrous deeds  
And judgments of His word.  
The Lord our God is God alone,  
All lands His judgments know;  
His promise He remembers still,  
While generations go.

Psalm 105:1, 2

## ALL AROUND US

### *A New One for the Chaos of the Cults.*

I have in my library a book entitled: *The Chaos of Cults*, very ably written by the Rev. J. K. Van Baalen, minister in the Christian Reformed Church. I was reminded of this treatise on modern strange religions when I read the short article appearing in the September 28th issue of *The Banner* and written by the Rev. Peter Van Tuinen. The subject was: *Alice's Heresy Growing in Africa*.

The reverend writes: "'Alice,' the self-styled prophetess who has been stealing converts from missionaries in Africa, has almost paralyzed the Christian Church in the Lubwa district of Rhodesia. This report was made during the Annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, meeting in Edinburgh last month.

"The assembly was told by the Foreign Mission Committee that missionaries in Northern Rhodesia are 'losing the battle to the strange new religion of Alice.' They added that thousands of persons are trekking to hear and see the false prophetess, and that she has even inspired her converts to build their own churches.

"Alice — her real name is Lenshina Mulenga — is 32 years old. She claims to have a direct connection with God and insists that she died but God kept her from entering heaven, telling her instead to return to her own people. She warns them to give up witchcraft and repent of their sins. Alice also says that God told her there were two books, one for whites and one for the blacks. And the black book was the right one. God speaks to her during a strange whistling. Missionaries watching her activities say she just steps behind a tree and blows a small instrument. The natives, ordered to bow their heads, are greatly impressed.

"In 12 months 60,000 have listened to and been baptized by Alice. And once changed to her loyalty, most natives refuse to change back to christianity."

To be gullible for all kinds of hocus-pocus I thought was especially an American trait. But when you read this, it appears to be quite universal. Perhaps one might offer as a reason for the thousands of blacks falling for the persuasions of Alice their ignorance and illiteracy. But how then would you account for the thousands in civilized and educated America falling for the "Alices" over here? Is not the answer respecting both the African and American Alice-ites to be found in the Scriptural prophecy: "And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many." Matt. 24:11?

### *Freemasonry.*

Speaking of religious cults, *Life Magazine* of October 8, 1956, presents a rather clear picture of Freemasonry supple-

mented with colored pictures of some of the rites, and dignitaries in this semi-religious fraternal organization. Those interested in a brief commentary on this thriving secret society may peruse the 15 pages of *Life* with profit.

The writer of the article contends that this "ancient fraternity is thriving in America." Writes he:

"In a country full of fraternal orders the oldest and by far the biggest is Freemasonry. One out of every 12 adult American males — some four million of them — are Masons, subscribing to the Masonic ideals of morality and brotherhood of the ancient order. Their numbers have, in the past 10 years, increased by almost a million and the membership of U.S. Masons today is twice that of all the rest of the world. They have enlarged their circle by bringing wives, sons and daughters into allied organizations.

"The Masons describe their order, whose full title is Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, as 'a system of morality based on allegory and illustrated by symbols.' A worldwide organization which grew out of guilds of stoneworkers who built Europe's medieval cathedrals, Freemasonry is open to any man who believes in 'a Supreme Being.' There are Mohammedan and Buddhist Masons but few Catholics, since the Church forbids this. Freemasonry came to the U.S. about 1730 and has numbered among its members 13 U.S. Presidents, from George Washington to Harry Truman. The somewhat austere and intellectual cast of European Freemasonry has been embroidered in America with rich ritual and color, which *Life* shows in photographs on these pages. It has also produced a complex organizational structure explained on pages 106, 107.

"The basis of Freemasonry is the local lodge, called the Blue Lodge, to which all Masons belong. In the U.S., Blue Lodges are organized into state groups, each ruled by a Grand Master. Advanced degrees of masonry are offered by the Scottish Rite, which has northern and southern jurisdictions, and the York Rite. Masons can, and frequently do, take advanced degrees in both these rites. But though rituals of Freemasonry become elaborate, the trappings ornate, the antics of some allied organizations pretty outlandish, the Masons are earnest, pious and dedicated men believing in helping each other as brothers and learning 'the fundamental truths, the observance of which tends to promote stability of character, conservatism and good citizenship.'"

The most interesting feature in this article is the colorful diagram showing the structure of Freemasonry and its allied organizations.

The chart of Masonic structure resembles two sets of stairs that begin and end together. In between the two sets of stairs is a huge arch in which are represented by colorful figures the various allied organizations of the Masonic order. Among the latter are the following: Tall Cedars of Lebanon, and Grotto, for which Master Masons are eligible. There is also Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls, to which girls with a Mason in the family can join. There is also the

Order of the Eastern Star to which women may be joined; and the Order of De Molay to which boys may join. At the top of all these is the Shrine to which only 32 degree Masons or Knights Templar can join; and Daughters of the Nile, where a Shriner's wife may join.

The two stairways represent on the one side the Scottish rite and on the other, the York rite. The former stairs has some 33 steps in it, the last representing the highest order of Masons, namely, a 33 degree Mason, who is called Sovereign Grand Inspector General. The York rite represents 10 degrees known by name and not degree number. After he passes the third step where most Masons stay, he may pass on to the fourth where he is called Mark Master. The next in succession are called Past Master, Most Excellent Master, Royal Arch Mason, Order of the Red Cross, Order of the Knights of Malta, and last and highest is the Order of Knights Templar. Each rite and each of the various degrees has its own symbol as well as each Allied Organization. It would be quite a study by itself to be able to memorize all the various symbols this secret order uses.

The article goes on to say that "though many groups are organized primarily to promote social pleasure, they all retain the seriousness of purpose that Masons can never completely forget. The Grotto supports cerebral palsy clinics. The Tall Cedars of Lebanon fights muscular dystrophy and the Shriner maintains 17 crippled children's hospitals. Nowhere is this seriousness of purpose more emphasized than in youth organizations that are sponsored directly by Lodges. The Rainbow Girls teach 'right living and thinking.' The De Molay strives to 'create leaders and develop character.' This interest in young people is fruitful for the Masons. Every year many De Molay boys become Masons and Rainbow Girls and Job's Daughters move into Eastern Star." ". . . The Tall Cedars of Lebanon, organized primarily to have fun, draws its name from the Trees used in bulding King Solomon's Temple."

The article goes on to say, "Throughout its 239 year history Freemasonry found that its secrecy and rituals have both attracted members and aroused enemies . . . After decades of religious bitterness many Englishmen now found comfort in a moral system based on unchanging building tools — the compass, square and level — and embraced an order that saw God as 'The Grand Architect.' Wherever Englishmen went they founded Masonic Lodges. Enlightened Europeans certain of human perfectibility and distrustful of ancient institutions like the Catholic Church, joined. Among them were Frederick the Great, Voltaire and Mozart.

"But the strange costumes, the aristocratic flavor of Freemasonry made the lower classes suspicious. In London Masonic parades were stoned. The antagonism to the Roman Catholic Church that grew with the Enlightenment was reflected in anticlerical attitudes of leading Masons. This aroused the hostility of Pope Clement XII who in 1738 denounced the order, 'for if they were not acting ill, they

would not . . . have such a hatred of the light.' Lodges in Catholic nations were closed, often by mobs. Today, though a few Catholics are Masons, the Church has never reversed its historical position. Any Catholic who takes part in Masonic religious rituals or swears Masonic oaths of secrecy that could run counter to the Catholic concept of the confessional has automatically excommunicated himself."

The article closes with a brief report of the existence and progress of Freemasonry in America. George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, two of the fathers of our country, were famous Worshipful Masters in the secret order.

We also have in our library a book on the subject of Freemasonry which probably does not treat the subject as objectively as Life tried to do, but which nevertheless treats the subject and in such a way that your hair stands on end when you read of the sin and corruption perpetrated, within this organization. It tells of the persecution to which its members are sworn, the awful profanity of its oaths, the profane use it makes of the Holy Bible, the sham of its boasted benevolence; the fact that Freemasonry is a false religion, and its relation to the church of Christ, etc., etc.

If these things are true, and there is no reason to disbelieve them, it is no wonder that our Reformed Churches (and I mean, of course, not Reformed in name only) have decreed the incompatibility of membership in these secret orders and in the church.

The Romish Church, in my opinion, is thoroughly inconsistent when it disallows members to join Freemasonry; but does nevertheless allow its members to join secret orders that are composed mainly of Catholic members.

M.S.

#### THE SEASONS ARE FIXED BY WISDOM DIVINE

The seasons are fixed by wisdom divine,  
The slow changing moon shows forth God's design  
The sun in his circuit his Maker obeys,  
And running his journey hastes not nor delays.

The Lord makes the night, when, leaving their lair,  
The lions creep forth, God's bounty to share;  
The Lord makes the morning, when beasts steal away  
And men are beginning the work of the day.

How many and wise Thy works are, O Lord!  
The earth with the wealth of wisdom is stored;  
The sea bears in safety the ships to and fro,  
And creatures unnumbered it shelters below.

Thy creatures all look to Thee for their food;  
Thy hand opens wide, they gather the good;  
Thy face Thou concealest, in anguish they yearn;  
Their breath Thou withholdest, to dust they return.

Psalms 104:1-4

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

Today is October, the fourth day. Since the first week of August I might again be here in Loveland after an absence of two months. During most of that time Candidate Bernard Woudenberg held the fort here in Loveland. The undersigned was occupied with Synod proper, with the work of the Stated Clerk in general and the Court Trial of Second Church. Then too I might enjoy a few weeks of vacation and be with the family in Grand Rapids.

But now I am back in Loveland and have no trouble keeping busy and occupied from morning till night.

After one month of vacation the Catechism again meets. Sunday School is still being conducted each Sunday forenoon prior to the service, and two services are held.

At the present time Catechism is also being conducted for members of the Loveland church in the Denver area. In the North West corner of Denver is a little suburb called Arvada. It is not far from Golden, Colorado. Here we were able to obtain a Jaycee Hall each Thursday evening, and here we conduct catechism for young and old. Always some of the brethren from Loveland accompany me to Arvada, a distance of some 45 miles. These catechism classes in Arvada are really semi-illustrated lectures at the present time. And they are being advertized as such illustrated lectures to the public in the Arvada Enterprise and the Jefferson Sentinel, covering the entire N. W. Denver.

Later we may be able to tell you more about our labors here in Denver, particularly in the S. E. section of the city, where many people of Reformed persuasion live. However, since we can obtain a building in N. W. Denver, and also advertise here to a large church-world of the Reformed truth, we are doing here what our hand finds to do.

Then too a young brother in the congregation (one who attends the services) has requested to be further instructed in the truth, so that he may be baptized and permitted to the table of the Lord and also have their children baptized. This also takes up one evening per week at his home.

At present I am living here in Loveland where my good wife stayed with me for the past few weeks. Now she is again in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with the children on Maude Ave., N. E. However, I also have a room with one of the Denver families. It is perfectly made to order, and, of course, free from charge. This brother has been considerable aid in the work about Denver. Paul had his companions in travel; a lone Home Missionary needs aid of the brethren along the way.

Loveland has had the pleasure, and the privilege of entertaining many of our people this summer from Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota, not to forget

California. There scarcely was a dull moment from that viewpoint.

As to the future we know this is in good hands. Our trust is in the Lord. He will do all things well. And so our prayers ascend to Him from whom all blessings flow. We believe and trust that the gathering of the church is in His hand, and we labor not to proselytize a few individuals but that the children may be fed, the lost sheep be gathered, and the grace of God be magnified.

Remember also this labor in your prayers, dear brethren and sisters. For God gives his grace and Spirit, as a conscious reality, to those who ask Him for it, and are thankful to Him.

G.L.

### PRAISE THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD

Praise the Lord, for He is good,  
For His mercies ever sure  
From eternity have stood,  
To eternity endure;  
Let His ransomed people raise  
Songs to their Redeemer's praise.

From captivity released,  
From the south and from the north,  
From the west and from the east,  
In His love He brought them forth,  
Ransomed out of every land  
From the adversary's hand.

Wandering in the wilderness,  
Far they roamed the desert way,  
Found no settled dwelling place  
Where in peace secure to stay,  
Till with thirst and hunger pressed  
Courage sank within their breast

To Jehovah then they cried  
In their trouble, and He saved;  
He Himself became their Guide,  
Led them to the rest they craved  
By a pathway straight and sure,  
To a city strong, secure.

Sons of men, awake to praise  
God the Lord who reigns above,  
Gracious in His works and ways,  
Wondrous in redeeming love;  
Longing souls He satisfies,  
Hungry hearts with good supplies.

Psalms 107

## MEETING OF CLASSIS WEST

Wednesday, September 19, 1956

Oak Lawn, Illinois

Classis West of our Protestant Reformed Churches met in regular session in Oak Lawn, Illinois, Wednesday, September 19, 1956. This marked the first time that our Oak Lawn church had ever entertained a classical gathering. I am certain that the classical delegates enjoyed this visit to Oak Lawn. We were surely royally received.

The gathering was opened by the president of the former classis, Rev. H. H. Kuiper, with a word of prayer after we sang Ps. No. 151 and the reading of II Tim. 2. After the classis was declared constituted the Rev. Vanden Berg functioned as chairman and the Rev. Kuiper functioned as clerk of this classical meeting.

Three of the churches of Classis West were represented at the Classis by only one delegate. This, we understand, is in violation of the Church Order, Art. 41, unless, of course, it was impossible for more than one delegate to attend. And the classis also decided to call the attention of the churches to this violation of the Church Order. In the mouth of two or more witnesses shall every word be established. The rule that our classical gatherings must be attended by two delegates from every church is very important. This will become apparent, for example, when censure cases must be treated. The churches should put forth every effort to send two delegates to these classical meetings.

The biggest item of business on this classical meeting was the examination of Candidate Gise Van Baren who had accepted the call to our Doon church. Because of this examination the Synodical deputies from Classis East were also present: Revs. Hanko, Schipper, R. Veldman. These brethren were granted and advisory vote. Brother Van Baren gave a good account of himself. The Classis decided unanimously to admit him to the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments and to advise our Doon church to proceed with his ordination. We understand that the ordination of Candidate Van Baren will have occurred already at the time of the appearance of this number of the Standard Bearer.

The Revs. J. Heys and H. Veldman were elected church visitors, and the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema was elected as alternate. The Classis decided that these brethren will visit all the churches of Classis West.

A schedule of classical appointments is drawn up as follows: Doon: Sept. 30, Rev. J. Heys; Oct. 7, Rev. H. Veldman. Pella: Oct. 7, E. Emanuel; Nov. 4, J. A. Heys; Dec. 2, G. VanBaren; Jan. 6, G. Vanden Berg; Feb. 3, H. Veldman; March 3, R. C. Harbach.

That we continue in the church militant again became apparent from the fact that the classis was called to treat a censure case.

The questions of Art. 41 were answered satisfactorily. After we sang No. 8 of the Doxologies the Rev. R. Veldman led us in the closing prayer.

Rev. H. Veldman,

Stated Clerk