

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the good Shepherd!" John 10:11a

There are many abominable occupations in this sorry world.

Think, for instance, of the murderers, thieves, panderers, white-slavers, brothel keepers, etc. Enough to make one's stomach turn.

Still, one and all, they are not the worst of the lot of sinners. This motley throng of evil doers shall rise in judgment with another class of sinners that are much worse than they and shall condemn them. It will be more tolerable to the panderer and the pimp, the keeper of the brothel than this other class.

The denizens of the dark alleys and the slums are not nearly as horrible as this other class, even though they look and speak and walk ever so sweetly. But when the Great Judge and Arbiter shall turn them inside out it shall be seen to the abhorring of all flesh that they were really the worst of offenders, that they are filled with all uncleanness. Then it will be proven conclusively that they were the *corps d'eclat* of the devil.

I have in mind the false shepherds of Israel. Whores and publicans shall go into the Kingdom of God before them.

But why?

Jesus had seen their doings. A miserable sheep of His flock had come to conversion and because of that conversion and his talk of conversion before the Pharisees they threw him out.

They are the worst of the lot of sinners. They are the unhappy beings that do the unpardonable sin. They call the work of the Holy Ghost a work of the devil. They eat up

the sheep and clothe themselves with their wool and let the sheep go hungry. They never gather but always scatter. They are robbers and thieves in the holy things. Therefore they are the most abominable of sinners.

At the time that Jesus walked the land they were called and they called themselves the shepherds of Jehovah's flock. They were confident that they were a guide of the blind, lights of them which were in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, teaching others;—but what a tragedy! They murdered the Son of that same Jehovah and they persecuted all those that were sent by Him to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. All the ages Christ wanted to gather the children of Jerusalem but they would not let Him. They obstructed this ingathering at every step. And heaped up wrath. Presently their homes are left them desolate when they burn in flaming hell . . .

And Jesus' pronouncement of woe upon these hypocrites is but the New Testament echo of Jehovah's: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"

They are the most unhappy of beings, next to the devils. For them is reserved a place that shall be dreadful. More tolerable to Sodom and Gomorrah!

O, God! make us faithful!

On the background of this dismal picture of utmost wickedness the Lord paints the picture of the beautiful, fair and lovely Shepherd.

I am the Good Shepherd. That is Jesus.

The word that is translated *good* is a rich word. The Greeks used it for things that were pleasing, beautiful, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable. And why? Because the primary meaning of the word is sound, hale and whole.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the eternal idea of the Shepherd. On earth we find but the shadow, remote, weak, faulty, impure. The whole shepherd is in Jesus. He is in His Shepherdship hale and sound. He fills it to the utmost.

It is the reason for the absolute success of Jesus as a Shepherd. He cannot fail for He is the True Shepherd.

Oh, beloved, watch Him!

He came to the fold and called His sheep by name. The deathblow to all universalists and free-willists. Jesus indeed is softly and tenderly calling His sheep, even to-day. But He does never call at random. He calls His sheep by name. Presently He tells the Father that He has taken care of the sheep that were given Him by the Father. He has not lost any of them.

The sheep that hear their name are gifts of the Father to Jesus. And also the Father knew them. He knew them in everlasting love and determined their individual name.

Oh no, the Good Shepherd does not call you by the name that your parents gave you. He calls you by the name that God gave you.

That name: the hungry one for God; the man and woman and child that stammers in the yearning of his heart: When shall I appear before God? That name: the laboring one and heavy laden: their sins are such a load, too heavy to bear. And they hie themselves to the Cross of the Shepherd. The believing ones and the meek, the poor in spirit and the sorrowing ones, those that have no spiritual money to buy heavenly bread and wine: they are all bidden come, come to the Saviour. How wonderful!

And when they rest in the bosom of the Shepherd, when they could not any more go for weariness, and He gathered them in His arms, they told Him: "It is Thou, oh Shepherd, that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are Thy people, and the sheep of Thy pasture!" Ps. 100.

His Father gave the name in all eternity: the name as the revelation of their essence; His Father gave these named sheep to His Son, the Shepherd, the Good; and He softly and tenderly is calling to-day, calling to-day!

And they know Him also. When they hear His soft and tender voice on a thousand hills, in the ravines and on the mountaintops, they listen raptly and answer Him. They recognize His voice, they long for His words of truth and consolation, they are led by Him along the very quiet waters, they lie down in green pastures. And they rest in His bosom. Happy, a thousand times happy are the sheep of Christ.

And He cares for them. He knows their needs and I am blest. For from hour to hour He feeds and nourishes and cherishes His own sheep. They never go alone in the wilderness of this awful world. His protecting care and His guiding love are their safety.

And He leads the way.

But, oh horror, there is the wolf. No fear, never fear, for the Shepherd gives His life for His sheep. And when we would pity the sheep that are bereft of their protecting shepherd, we must not, for the laying down of His life is

their very safety, from the wolf. He has laid down His life, but as the conquering Hero over death and hell, He arises Triumphator. He is their eternal Shepherd.

And now it must be admitted: it does seem strange how these sheep are in the world, in the very midst of wolves and hateful ravening devils. Are not the children of God like unto orphans in the storm? And do we not see them in "cruel mockings, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword: we see them wander about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented . . . they wander in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth!"

Listen! Let us steal, unaware to them, close to them in their blood and persecutions. Be quiet, very quiet, and I assure you that your riddle will be solved. Ah, while tears are streaming down their hollow cheeks, while the executioner pauses the downward sweep of the sword, I hear them in sweet refrain: "But we see Jesus! Crowned with glory and honor!" Heb. 2.

There is your answer. He is crowned Lord of lords and King of kings. All things are in His hand. Things in heaven, things on earth and things in hell. They all are His servants. Also the stake and bonds and the suffering of His sheep. It is but His leadership. It is the negative pasture for the sheep. The sheep have heard His voice and they follow Him. They have heard His commentary of the way to heaven: "that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22b.

And if you are interested to know the deeper reason we are told that all this suffering burns the dross from the pure gold of the nature of the sheep. The character of the sheep is also foreknown and afordetermined. We must become as sweet and as fair and lovely as the Good Shepherd. For that reason all the impure elements must be burned out of us. We are treated like gold which in its impure state is cast into the crucible. And the fire burns. But presently the glistening and glittering gold is found at the bottom of the cup. We must be chastened for our profit. We must be pressed sore so that we obtain much of God's holiness. It is pasture for the sheep.

And in the midst of this suffering He is still near them. He whispers to them in His Word. Beautiful words of Jesus! How they charm even in prison. And while the furrows of wicked stripes show red of your blood, you will sing Psalms with Paul and trust with Stephen, the martyr. It is the green pasture of the Good Shepherd.

And not for long shall you suffer. There is an end. The Lord has heard the cry of His sheep: Return, Oh Lord, how long and it repent Thee because of Thy servants. He comes quickly.

And then for the last time through the valley of the shadow of death. But even there is the Good Shepherd. He has made the valley bright with His Cross. The beams

of eternal mercy shall lighten the dreadful valley. Hence, death has no sting for the sheep. They sing when the Doctor says in whispers low: He is failing! They sing, for through the mists of their fever they hear the first strains of heavenly singing. They sing, for they see the guard of honor that Jesus sends. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels . . ." Yes, he was carried to the eternal, heavenly pasture, where the fountains are ever flowing.

Therefore we would plead with you not to detain us, for we must move onward. We have once heard the voice of the Shepherd say: Come unto Me, My sheep, and I will give you rest. And once hearing the beautiful words of Jesus, we are enchanted, captivated by this silvery speech of the Christ. We have once tasted that the Lord is good and gracious, and now we long for the eternal diet of rest and peace with God.

Yes, the most horrible occupation is to be a false shepherd of Israel; "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

But, methinks, the most beautiful occupation is to be an undershepherd of Jesus. Then we may take the beautiful words of Jesus and tell them to the sheep. And they and we may then feast on the banquet of words. They are dainties "of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

And we may then grow together, the sheep and the undershepherd, sheep one and all, for the pasture of the Good Shepherd is surpassing in deliciousness.

Oh, Good Shepherd! Call us, feed us, guard us and save us to the uttermost! G.V.

### Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Oak Lawn, Illinois, Wednesday, September 17, 1958. The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agendum must be in the hands of the stated clerk not later than thirty days before the meeting of Classis.

Anyone needing lodging is requested to write Rev. G. Vanden Berg, 9402 South 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois.  
Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk.

### Consistories, Attention!

By mid-September the following catechism books will be available for use in our churches: Bible Stories For Beginners (Book One), Old Testament History For Juniors, and Old Testament History For Seniors. For copies of these books contact the Rev. G. Vanden Berg, 9402 South 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois. The price of the books is 30c each. Please send the price of the books with your order.

The Catechism Book Committee,  
J. A. Heys, Secretary.

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## EDITORIALS

### The Synod of 1958

There is one more item of importance in regard to the Synod of 1958 to which we must call your attention. It concerns a matter of correspondence with the Christian Reformed Church.

The Synod had received another letter from the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in regard to fraternal relationship with them. To this the Synod decided to reply as follows:

"The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.

"Dr. R. J. Danhof, Stated Clerk.

"Dear Brethren:

"In answer to your letter directed to us as of July 24, 1957, we once more wish to inform you of our deepest sincerity expressed in the letter to you, dated June 10, 1957, in which we ask you to rehearse with us the history of 1924-25.

"We feel deeply grieved with the sentiments expressed under B, 2 where you tell us, 'The tone and contents of the letter are not such as give promise of fruitful discussion,' whereas you present to us no grounds whatever for this conclusion.

"We once more wish to impress upon you our willingness to discuss with you at any time the differences that separated us these many years.

"Moreover we feel it is your bounden duty to accede to our request, even though the two churches may not again be united into one, that nevertheless brotherly relations may again be restored between us.

"With Christian greetings,

The Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches,  
Rev. G. VandenBerg, Stated Clerk.

From *The Banner* of August 1, 1958, we quote the following:

"It was decided that Synod reply to a communication from the Protestant Reformed Church of America (Rev. H. Hoeksema group) as follows:

"Dear brethren: We are in receipt of your letter dated June 12, 1958, in which you reaffirm your interest in interdenominational discussion. Although your rejection of our sincere invitation to our Centennial Synod has erected a barrier to such discussion we wish you to know that we are always willing, upon your invitation, to enter into such conference. However, we judge that such discussions must not be polemical rehearsals of past history, should recognize a common Reformed basis, and should point to a fuller expression of our oneness in Christ."

"Yours in Christ,

"The Synod of the Chr. Ref. Church."

Well, it seems to me that this decision presents, at least a glimmer of hope that, ultimately, the Christian Reformed

Church might recognize the Protestant Reformed Churches as Reformed. By implication they do this already.

I would suggest that at our next Synod it be decided that we invite the Christian Reformed Synod to such a conference as was suggested by them. Then we can, at least, discuss matters, present our side of the case, and publish the results of such a conference so that all our churches may know what was said and done.

The Christian Reformed Synod placed, from the outset, three restrictions on such a conference. With two of these we can agree at once. They are that such a conference must proceed from a common Reformed basis, and that the purpose should be a fuller expression of our oneness in Christ.

The first of these restrictions, however, I do not quite understand. It is that such a conference must not have for its purpose "polemical rehearsals of past history." Now, it is true, of course, that the term "polemical" has a somewhat harsh sound. It suggests a battle, a fight. But suppose that, instead of using the term polemical, we speak of "fraternal rehearsals of past history." This could not possibly be objectionable. And I cannot see how such fraternal discussions of past history could possibly be avoided in such a proposed conference. Remember:

1. In 1924 the Christian Reformed Church cast us out on the basis of the fact that, if we did not agree with the notorious "Three Points," we were un-Reformed. We did not, of our own will, leave the Christian Reformed Church. In fact, at the time, we had no intention to leave. Besides, we had the perfect right to remain, for the Synod of 1924, although the committee of pre-advice in the matter of "common grace" had advised discipline if we should refuse to sign the "Three Points," did not adopt that part of the report and, therefore, evidently did not favor discipline. Nevertheless, what the Synod refused to do, the two classes, Grand Rapids East and West, in a very illegal manner, accomplished. The three pastors, Rev. H. Danhof, Rev. G. M. Ophoff and the undersigned, with their consistories and congregations, were expelled from the Christian Reformed Church. And this is the origin of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

2. Now, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, in the second point of its restrictions on the discussions in such a proposed conference, mentions that there must be a common Reformed basis. With this, of course, we agree. But how is this possible? Did not the Christian Reformed Church in 1924-25 cast us out because we were un-Reformed? Is it not then, established from the outset that there is no common Reformed basis, according to 1924-25? Hence, must not this common Reformed basis be discussed at the very beginning of the conference?

3. It seems to me, therefore, that especially two questions must be discussed at such a proposed conference, and they cannot possibly be avoided. The first I intentionally will put in this way: Can anyone that denies the "Three Points" of 1924, as we certainly do, be soundly Reformed? If, in the

conference, this question is answered in the negative by the Christian Reformed members of the conference, the matter is settled: no common basis can be found. If, however, they answer the question in the positive, one more question must be answered. It is this: Did the Christian Reformed Church do right or did it commit a serious error, when they cast out of their fellowship good Reformed men and their congregations.

These questions must be answered.

And I would propose that our next Synod send an invitation to the Christian Reformed Synod for a conference for the purpose of having a fraternal (not polemical) discussion on these questions. H.H.

### The Declaration of Principles

Canons III, IV treat of the corruption of man and of his conversion to God.

The first five of these articles do not directly concern us here, since we are particularly speaking of the promise of God. The first three of these articles deal with the fall and total depravity of man which is hereditary. All men are conceived in sin, are totally depraved, dead in sin and in bondage thereto, "and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor dispose themselves to reformation." Art. 3.

The fourth article is of interest to us, because the Christian Reformed Synod, in 1924, quoted it in proof of their contention that the natural man, by so-called common grace, is able to do good in the sight of God. The trouble is that they, no doubt intentionally, failed to quote the entire article and by this failure distorted and corrupted the whole article. In the beginning of this article, the Canons speak of the glimmerings of natural light, "whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment."

Thus far the Synod quoted the article.

But the Canons here continue: "But so far is this light of nature sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God."

By this last part of the article, the Canons reveal very plainly that they must have nothing of the good which natural man can do by "common grace."

But this is passing.

We are, at present, dealing, not with the second, but rather with the "First Point" of so-called common grace, with the "Declaration of Principles," and with the sovereign, unconditional promise of God, which those that recently departed from our churches rejected.

And all the rest of this chapter of the Canons certainly emphasizes that the application of the promise of God and of salvation is by sovereign grace alone.

Thus, for instance already in art. 6: "What therefore neither the light of nature, nor the law could do, that God performs by the operation of his Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation; which is the glad tidings concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old, as under the New Testament."

And again, after the Canons have emphasized that the unbelief of those that are lost and reject the salvation of God is not the fault of the gospel nor of Christ presented in the gospel, but that it lies in themselves, Article 9 continues to teach that, nevertheless, the fact that others receive the gospel must and cannot be ascribed to themselves or to the exercise of their free will, but to God alone: "But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversions, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains, but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord according to the testimony of the apostles in various places." Art. 10.

It is very plain from this that God realizes His promise only in those whom He will save, that is, in those whom He has chosen from before the foundation of the world. It follows that, since God cannot lie, the promise is not for all but for the elect alone. The *presentation* of the gospel may and does come to all that hear, but the promise itself is not for all, but for the elect alone.

That this is true is also evident from He. 6:13-18: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

Such is the promise of God.

It is an oath of the Most High.

It is an oath to the heirs of the promise.

It is an oath for those that are known in the immutable counsel of God, that is, therefore, for the elect.

It is absolutely unconditional.

H.H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER IV

#### Revelation 8:1-6

#### *The Presentation of the Prayers of the Saints*

The saints whose blood was shed pray for that particular form of judgment that is connected so closely with the shedding of their own blood. But all the saints nevertheless through the Spirit of Christ that is in them, waiting and longing for the glory of God and the perfect fellowship of His covenant through the coming and completion of the kingdom of Christ, pray for judgment, that God may be vindicated and the everlasting economy of glory may be established.

That this is actually the correct view of the matter is also clear from the fact that the text speaks of the prayers of *all* the saints: not of the prayers of a few, but of the prayers of all. This implies all the saints in the strict sense of the word. It implies, in the first place, the saints of all ages, the saints that have ever appeared in the history of the world. This prayer of the saints is heard at any time. We must not make the mistake of imagining that there is one definite period in history in which these prayers of the saints rise. For then they could not be the prayers of *all* the saints. And yet this is emphatically stated. Hence, also this scene of the seventh seal, as all the other seals, evidently covers the entire period of this dispensation. It refers to all the saints of all lands and from among all nations of the earth. It implies the saints that have already entered into glory everlasting. But, in the second place, this word *all* indicates that we may not think here of the particular prayer of the individual saints, but exactly of those prayers which they all have in common. As saints they have common needs and common desires. As saints, under the control of the Spirit of Christ, they utter but one great prayer, to which all the rest of their life and their prayer is subservient: "Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." All the saints, as members of the body of Christ, pray for the coming and the perfecting of that kingdom of Christ. And it is that prayer that is here presented to the Almighty. That prayer is always heard from the lips of the saints. But that prayer, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, will grow more fervent and more powerful as the time draws near when the Lord shall come, until it really becomes the prayer of the longing quoted at the close of the Book of Revelation: "Come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly."

It is those prayers of the saints that are here presented

as being offered to the throne of God. As the seven angels that stand before God are still reverently waiting, another angel comes with a golden censer and stoops over the altar that is before the throne of God, in order to offer the incense which he receives with the prayers of the saints to the Most High. As he does so, the sweet vapor rises to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and evidently is well-pleasing and acceptable to Him. Such is the presentation of the text. The question is often asked whether the altar that is mentioned in the text is the altar of incense, that stood in the holy place, or the altar of burnt offering as it stood in the outer court. According to some, it is even interpreted as being the ark of the covenant, that stood before Jehovah in the most holy place. Moreover, the suggestion is even made that the angel that comes with the incense is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, since He alone makes our prayers well-pleasing in the sight of God Almighty. It is our opinion, however, that all these detailed explanations are unnecessary, and raised questions that cannot possibly be answered. It really makes no difference whether the altar here is the altar of incense or of burnt offering. As far as the fire is concerned that is mentioned in the text, it seems to have been the altar of the burnt offering. And as far as the incense is mentioned, it seems to refer to the altar of incense. And as far as it stood in the presence of God, it may have been the ark of the covenant. But all these questions are immaterial to the explanation of the passage. The essential idea is that prayers are upon the altar before God, and that incense is added to the prayers, thus symbolizing that the prayers now rise to God Almighty. The same applies to the question concerning the angel that is mentioned in the text. The question as to who is this angel is altogether irrelevant to the essential idea. That it was not Christ Himself would seem to be implied in the fact that he receives the incense: it is given to him. At any rate, what is revealed here is simply this: in heaven the prayers of all the saints are made acceptable unto God, so that they rise before Him and are well-pleasing in His sight, even as the vapor of the incense is sweet and pleasing in His nostrils.

This is the symbolism. And what is the reality corresponding to this? We must remember that the Lamb has received the book with the seven seals. And the Lamb opens that book: seal after seal is broken by Him. This book with its seals represents, as we have seen, the decree of God Almighty as a living force, completing the kingdom He has given to Christ. And therefore, as Christ opens seal after seal, He thereby completes and perfects the kingdom of heaven. Thus it was with the other seals, as we have seen before. All these seals became forces, living forces in the history of the world which would ultimately lead to the perfecting of the kingdom of Christ. Thus Christ uses the gospel. Thus He employs war. Thus He uses the social contrast in the world. Thus He employs the very power of death. Thus He energizes the outcry of the saints under the altar. And thus He causes the shake-up of the physical universe. To that end He also sends forth the angels with



the seven trumpets presently, that constitute the second part of this seventh seal. But thus it is also with the prayers of the saints. These prayers are, in the first place, included in the book of God's decree. God Himself has from eternity decreed that the saints should pray. Before the kingdom can come, their prayers must be full according to the measure of that decree. Hence, Christ Himself, as the head of His body, employs these prayers of the saints as forces to bring the kingdom of heaven unto perfection. Of these prayers He is the author, for we do not pray of ourselves, but through the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us. Christ therefore prays within us through His Spirit. He teaches us, He causes us to pray for the coming of the kingdom. And thus the prayers of these saints rise to God Almighty, crying for the perfection of the kingdom of heaven. He adds to them the sweet incense of His atoning blood. And on the basis of that atoning blood He presents them to the Father, and says: "Father, I will that these prayers be heard." When these prayers are full, according to the measure of the decree of God, they will be one great outcry of longing, rising from the body of the Savior: "Thy kingdom come, O Lord."

Is that prayer answered? It certainly is. It is sad enough that we so often fail to see the answer of the Almighty to His praying people. But the answer is there. This answer is indicated in the last part of our text. For we read: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." The idea evidently is this, that the saints, praying for the kingdom of God, receive a preliminary answer even before the kingdom cometh. That is the entire purpose of this passage, to show us that our prayers are not lost in space, but that we can see their answer already here upon earth. Oh, we do not see this if we are blind for these effects of our prayers. We certainly cannot see this if we have never learned to pray as the saints of Christ pray. We do not see this if our prayers still concentrate around ourselves and around our earthly and carnal needs, and if we have identified ourselves with the present world. Then indeed we pray wrong, and we understand wrong, and we judge the present history of the world in a wrong light, and we cannot see the fulfillment of our prayers. Of course not! If Israel had identified itself with Egypt, do you think that it would have seen an answer to its prayer in the plagues that were sent upon the land? I tell you: nay, but it would have prayed the Lord that these judgments might be taken away. It would not have understood that the fire had been taken from the altar in heaven and cast upon the land because their prayers for deliverance had risen to the Lord Sabaoth. And the same is still true. It is because we identify ourselves with the world that we do not recognize the answer to the prayers of all the saints, and do not see that God is bringing the kingdom according to His promise. And yet, so it is. The saints pray for the coming of the kingdom. And these prayers are presented as forces with sweet-smelling incense to God Who sitteth upon the

throne. And the answer that is sent to the earth is the fire of God's wrath, taken from the same altar before His throne. That fire cast upon earth reveals itself in omens of judgment and destruction. It reveals the presence of the Judge. Voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes are symbols of judgment. And therefore, the passage means to teach us that in answer to the prayers of all the saints for the perfecting of the kingdom the judgments of the King are sent to the earth. It is through these judgments, it is through great upheavals, — through war and bloodshed and changes in the physical world, — that the everlasting kingdom will surely come. And for that very reason these judgments are an answer to the prayers of the saints, assuring them: "My kingdom will surely come. It is coming now. It will come till it all shall be completed. And My name shall receive the honor and the power and the glory and the wisdom forevermore."

The same answer the saints that prayed in heaven receive. For we read in the closing sentence of our passage: "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." In what this preparation consists the text does not tell us, and it is of minor importance. Sufficient it is to notice that they prepare themselves visibly, so that John in the vision, and therefore also the saints in heaven, could see their preparation. Again, this preparation is an answer to their prayer. When these angels sound the trumpets, they know it, that judgments will come. And along the way of judgments the kingdom of God will be perfected. And therefore their preparation immediately after their prayer assures them that their prayers are heard and accepted by the Most High, and that presently their inmost desires shall be granted. So is the picture. And therefore, this is the practical lesson of our passage. In the first place, it teaches us that we shall not be disturbed about the judgments of Christ that come upon the world. These judgments are upon earth now. And they shall increase. They must increase. For in no other way can the kingdom of God come. Sin and unrighteousness will develop, must develop. And this sin and unrighteousness must be destroyed. And the glory of Christ must be revealed and vindicated, and can be vindicated only by the judgments upon the world. Be not disturbed, therefore, and by no means implore God that He may stop bringing His kingdom in the way of judgments. And if you should feel that your prayers are not answered, then know that there is something wrong with your conscious life. The prayers of all the saints are certainly answered. And the beginning of their fulfillment you may see in the judgments of Christ upon earth. Bring therefore your prayers in harmony with the revealed will of your God. And spiritually separating yourselves from the world, let your prayers be in the true sense of the word: "Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

H.H.

## TRANSCRIPT OF ADDRESS AND QUESTION HOUR

held under the Auspices of the Committee for Protestant  
Reformed Action, Hull, Iowa, July, 1954

Speaker: Rev. H. Hoeksema

Beloved Brethren and Sisters:

In many, many ways and for many reasons I am very glad that I may address you tonight. In the first place, because it is my conviction that the history we are making, and especially the history we have made in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, is in many ways similar to the history we made in 1924. I think it was in this same spot, if I'm not mistaken, — at least in the Community Hall of Hull — that in March, 1925 I explained to the people in Hull and in Sioux County, in the afternoon and in the evening, day after day, the difference that separated us from the Christian Reformed Churches. I explained in detail at that time the well-known Three Points that were adopted by the Christian Reformed Churches in Kalamazoo in 1924. I explained and emphasized that in general there is no common grace, and that particularly the preaching of the gospel is not grace to everyone that hears the gospel, but is grace only for the elect. On that basis the church in Hull, and afterwards the other churches in Sioux County were organized; and still later, the church in Edgerton, and the church in Manhattan was established. On that basis, and on no other basis. It is my conviction, as I hope to show tonight, that by this time, 27 or 28 years later, we have again departed from that basis. I do not enter in tonight into the controversy that has been raging in our churches about the question of conditions. That is not necessary, and it would certainly tempt me from the course which I intend to follow. I want you to know that I am not here to convert anyone. I do not convert people. I'm not here to represent any faction in our churches. There is no such thing as a Hoeksema-faction in our churches. I represent, — and you may controvert me, if you wish, — I represent the cause of the Protestant Reformed truth: the same as I represented in 1924, and no other cause.

In the second place, I want to say a word of introduction as to the purpose of my speech. You must not expect any oratory from me tonight. All I want to do is present to you the mere facts. I'm not even going to try to color the facts. I wish to present to you the truth of the whole controversy in our Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, and nothing more than that truth. If, after presenting that truth, you are not quite convinced, you can present your questions; and I'll try to answer them to the best of my ability. I think that is as fair as anybody can possibly expect.

In the third place, I want to say that I'm not here to talk about personalities. I will avoid all personalities, in which I am not interested. If any of you, however, want to ask personal questions that concern me, I am very glad

to give account of myself, even though I'm not here for that purpose. This meeting is purely meant to be an informative meeting. I want to give you information. And the information will have to be given in the way of facts, in the way of the plain and clear truth. I have nothing to hide, nothing whatsoever. And I will present the case as it developed.

And then I wish to say, in the first place, that I will enter in, after a brief introduction concerning the situation in my own church, with which you are not acquainted, of course, — I want to enter in, in the first place, into the doctrinal issue. After all, that is of chief importance to you and to me. If there is no doctrinal issue, we could not possibly have separated as we did in the First Church. But there is a doctrinal issue. And that doctrinal issue I'm going to make plain to you.

In the second place, I'm going to enter into the fact, the question, of the church political procedure. And I'm going to tell you exactly what happened in that respect.

First of all, then, let me try to acquaint you with my church in Fuller Avenue. You understand, of course, that a thing like this, that causes separation in a congregation, does not come as a thunderclap out of a clear sky. It was not so in Fuller Avenue. Certainly, you can understand that a serious thing as a split in a congregation, which is liable to extend in the churches, is not coming all of a sudden, and did not come of a sudden in the church which I represent. There's a long history even in Fuller Avenue. I believe I read in *Concordia* that it is too bad that what belongs together has been torn asunder. That is not true. What belongs together has remained together. And what does not belong with us has torn itself from us, as it should be. That is the truth. And that is not only a question of one or two statements that were proclaimed from the pulpit. But that is the question of the history of our congregation in the last, — O, — the last 6, 7, 8 years. The thing developed. It gradually became more and more evident that there were in our midst that were not Protestant Reformed at heart and in their confession. It started to manifest itself very plainly and very clearly when we finally determined to establish our own Protestant Reformed Christian School. I always agitated, I always recommended to my people from the very beginning of the history of 1924 that we should have a school of our own. Because if our children were instructed in the schools of the Christian Reformed Churches, we could never expect them to remain Prot. Ref. But for a long time there was no action. But when that action was finally started, — maybe some 10 years ago, — the opposition to that movement became very manifest. There were many that opposed that movement with all that was in them. They hated the very idea of establishing a Protestant Reformed Christian School. And they did not go along. That that is true may be evident to you from the fact that even now, when we have established a school of our own, have established 9 grades of lower education, there are in all Grand Rapids, drawing from the four churches in Grand Rapids, — representing, I think, some



650 families, — only 300 children that attend our school, no more. That, I think, is a bad sign. O, I know, that Protestant Reformed schools cannot easily be established everywhere. But wherever it is established, and wherever it can be established, I think it's a very evil sign that Prot. Ref. people oppose that movement, and refuse to send their children. Now we have separated, most all of our people that meet Sundays in the Christian High School of Grand Rapids are in favor of that school. That is evident from the fact that from our people alone we collected for the Adams Street Chr. School, our own school, just as much in one collection as otherwise we collected in the whole congregation together. That's one thing. That, of course, filled me not only with grief, but also with apprehension.

The second evidence that things were not as they should be was manifest when the Declaration of Principles was adopted. That Declaration of Principles, which is a thoroughly Protestant Reformed document, and which should have been adopted at the beginning of our history, — that Declaration of Principles was the second offense, the second occasion that many took offense in my own congregation.

There are other signs. Our English Men's Society a year ago was in the habit of asking after-recess speakers from the Christian Reformed Church: Calvin College professors, De Vries, Monsma, Stob, Van Til, and others, were preferred above and to our own Protestant Reformed ministers. And they spoke for them on all kinds of subjects. Some of our ladies attend the Reformed Bible Institute, a Christian Reformed institution of very dubious character. And there they enjoyed themselves very much, and they learned, as they say, to witness for Christ. All these things developed in our congregation.

And then, the sermons of the Rev. De Wolf, to which protests were lodged, was the next objection, and the next item, and the next stage of development in the history. I can tell you now we have separated, — or rather, now they have separated from us, — and we meet in a separate building, all our people are glad. With one accord, with one mind, with one heart and soul, they join in worship as they never did before. That is true of myself. I was very glad when finally we had gone apart. I could not live anymore in that atmosphere, in that atmosphere of corruption that characterized our First Protestant Reformed Church. That was true of the Rev. Hanko, who was very glad and relieved when finally we worshipped in a place by ourselves. That was true of our whole consistory, and that was true of all our people. Brethren and sisters, I assure you we did not belong together anymore. And we will not join together again, unless the Lord works miracles and gives to those people repentance. That is the fact.

Now about the sermons, it has been said more than once that the whole thing in Fuller Avenue, in my church, was a question of a couple of statements. Even if that were the case, I ought to tell you that those statements were serious, and implied very serious heresies. And the Consistory, let me

say, could not possibly condone and support that heresy and let the Rev. De Wolf continue to preach as he did. I'll make that plain presently. But it is not even true that it was a question of two statements, and nothing else. I have here an official document which I presented to our Consistory, and which later went to the Classis, in which I relate the history of the case. I want to read that to you, and explain as much as is necessary. I have here "A brief history of the case in re the sermons preached by the Rev. H. De Wolf in April, 1951, and in September, 1952. The sermons preached. The sermon of April 15, 1951. On this date the Rev. De Wolf preached a sermon which I did not hear personally." I want to emphasize that: I did not hear that sermon. They say that this is a Hoeksema case. It's not true at all. This was not a Hoeksema case from the very beginning, not at all. I didn't even start the case. It was more than a year afterwards that I entered into the case; not before. You must remember that personally I am often not present at my own consistory meetings. If the Consistory were here, they would know that. My doctor advises me, because of my condition, and because of my sickness 6 years ago, the doctor advises me to avoid excitement as much as possible. And because of that, and also because the consistory meetings always took place on Monday evening, and at 8 o'clock the next morning, or 9 o'clock, I have school, theological school, I avoided the consistory meetings as much as possible. In the second place I say then: I did not hear that sermon. I could have heard it, because I have a loudspeaker in my own home connected with the church, and I could easily have checked up on that sermon, but I did not. But immediately after the sermon several people called me up, and said, "What's the trouble with the Rev. De Wolf tonight? He was certainly not Protestant Reformed." They called me up. I told them: "I did not hear the sermon, and you better go and visit the Rev. De Wolf." I don't know what they did. But then, the Consistory received protests on that sermon in April, 1951. And there were several protests. I will not mention the name of the protestants at that time, but there were several. And these protests, — let me first of all say this: I did not hear, I say, the sermon personally; but at which according to the protests received by the consistory, the Rev. De Wolf spoke as follows: "God promises everyone of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved." I quote more: "You have nothing to do with election and reprobation. Your responsibility is to believe. If you will believe, you shall be saved." This, according to one protest. According to another, he said. "Election and reprobation have nothing to do with the gospel." Listen: the Rev. De Wolf denied having made these statements. There is no record of it. We usually have records of sermons, but there was no record of this sermon. Nevertheless, there were two testimonies which agreed at least in this, that the Rev. De Wolf belittled and deprecated the truth of election and reprobation, which is the basis and the heart of the Reformed truth, and especially of the Prot. Ref. truth.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### V.

(Matthew 24:15-28)

We should keep in mind that Jesus is addressing his disciples in this Chapter and the next; it is an eschatological discourse. Two closely related questions are here answered by our Lord. They are concerning the fact, that, according to Jesus' word, not one stone in the temple would remain standing and that would not be thrown down! The utter destruction of the temple in the light of the prophetic word! We do well to give heed unto it as unto a light which shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star of eternal hope arise in our hearts.

We have noticed together that Jesus is answering two questions. They are: 1. *When* shall these things be. 2. *What* will be the *sign* of Christ's Parousia, and the consummation of the ages. This last does not refer to two different chronological times and events in history, but refers to the one point of history from two different aspects. The Parousia of Christ is the consummation of the ages! Let it be remembered when reading this prophetic discourse of our Lord.

First of all Jesus emphasized that the history of the world will be characterized by much unrest, wars and rumors of wars; in diverse places there shall be earthquakes. False prophets will come with their panaceas for the world's ills. But be not deceived. All these things must come to pass in order that from the womb of God's counsel the First-born among many brethren, the Son of Man may rise to his appointed pre-eminence. Hence, the end is not by and by, but these are the beginnings of birth-pangs in history.

Secondly we pointed out, that in this history there will be much tension, unrest in the bosom of nominal christendom. All men will hate the true church. And this hatred shall be especially from the false church. However, he that endureth to the end shall be saved. *World-history* is, at bottom, *church-history*.

We now come to the instruction of our Lord in the verses 15-28. Also here we are dealing with apocalyptic (prophetic) revelation and not with a description simply of historic facts, foretold in chronological order! It is well to allow this to sink deep down into our hearts. This is not a passage to simply satisfy our curiosity, but a word which, when we read, we must give heed to, study it, and learn to read the "times" in the light of this prophetic word! Wherefore we have the solemn word of Jesus: "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (verse 15) and, again: "Behold, I have told you before" (verse 25).

The passage which we would discuss in this essay reads, in part, as follows: "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand). Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is in the house-top not come down to take any thing out of the house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. . . . Wherefore if they say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth: behold he is in the secret chambers: believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together.*"

(We suggest that the attentive reader read this passage in its entirety from his own Bible!)

There are various elements in this prophetic description which call for a bit of explanation.

The first matter to which we would call attention is verse 15. We refer to the sentence: "When ye therefore see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, spoken of by Daniel the prophet . . ." In this sentence we would single out the following.

a. That Jesus here pin-points the time when we shall see the "sign of the Son of man" and of His Parousia. It is the indication that the Son of man is about to come with the clouds of heaven. It is a culminative point in history! When ye *see* the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, then history has really come to its *culminative point* in wickedness among men, and the time has come that God's people be delivered with the complete and final deliverance!

b. That Jesus speaks of the "*abomination of desolation.*" It should be noticed that this is a quotation from the prophecy of Daniel. It is a rather free rendering of Dan. 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11. In all of these passages Daniel is being instructed concerning the holy city and the temple of God. Daniel had been searching out from the prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11, 12 concerning the time of the captivity of Israel and of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the holy temple. The angel Gabriel explains the meaning of the Holy Spirit concerning the SEVENTY WEEKS, based evidently on the 70 years of captivity in Babylon. In this history all is based upon the separation between what is holy and common, between what is inside and outside of the holy place. It is particularly abominable to have idols and idolatry in the temple. As long as idolatry is outside of the temple and God's people can worship God according to His ordinances all is yet well. However, as soon as the idols are placed in the temple in the stead of the worship of God, pretending to be the true worship of God, then all is different. That is *the* abomination! Nothing offended the religious sense of God's people as did this. It made the worship of God officially impossible. It was the extermina-

tion of the true worship of God by way of *abomination*.

c. And such abomination (to deprecate as ominous-detestation in the highest degree) is therefore in this case the abomination of *desolation*. Because of its utter uncleanness such abomination barred all religion. It corrupted the true worship of God so utterly that it could no longer be recognized. It made of the most Holy Place an utter desolation. It is like the desert. Nothing can thrive and grow there. Where the songs of praise used to rise to God, there is utter silence.

d. There were times in history in the O. T. when this happened. Often such was in part the case when evil kings were on the throne in Judah. However, always again there was reformation, that is, a returning to the worship of God as ordained by Him in His holy temple. In the days of **Daniel** there was nothing but ruin. The temple would be **rebuilt**. In the days of Jesus the temple of Herod had been in the process of construction for forty-six years. However, there was much which was abominable. Think how Jesus twice cleansed the temple symbolically. It was necessary to cleanse the house from being a "den of thieves." Yet, that was *not yet* the abomination of iniquity. The instituted service of God could go on. However, in such times as those of Antiochus Epiphanes then there was abomination in the temple, and also as of that of Herod, when he mingled the blood of the Galileans with the blood of the altar.

e. However, Jesus is looking toward a later date in this passage. He has in mind that time immediately before His return in His Parousia, when the Man of Sin will be revealed, and when the Mystery of sin will be unfolded. Then all organized and instituted worship of God will be banished from the earth. Antichrist will have succeeded in setting up "the abomination of desolation." The Son of God will be denied in His Deity! If only man will worship the Man of Sin, sitting as a god in the temple of God, then one will not need to suffer!

f. These will be days the like have never been yet, nor shall they afterward. They will be days that if they were not shortened no flesh would live, who would fear God. For the elects' sake they are to be shortened. And, if it were possible, the very elect would perish!

Of this time Daniel spoke already. Such is the explicit word of Jesus. Jesus connects his word with that which was spoken by God through Daniel. This word was known to the disciples. Hence, they must turn their attention to that word of Daniel. And from thereon they must read of the coming of the Son of Man and of His Parousia. And they must know that when such a time comes, which is an *infallible sign* of His coming, since it *can only come once* (see Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21) then they can lift up their head knowing that redemption is nigh!

In connection with this "great tribulation" than which there is none greater, Jesus utters a series of warnings.

These warnings are uttered in language derived from the time and place in which they were spoken. Hence, we read of Judea, the mountains, etc. However, the entire discourse of Jesus is couched in apocalyptic language. Rising from the plain of the present historical setting in true prophetic style, a universal pattern of things is portrayed. We will need to reflect when we read, and, in faith, read our times in the light of them. (See Matthew 24:32 ff.)

Wherefore, the warnings of Jesus in the verses 16 through 20 are not too difficult to understand.

When Jesus speaks of those in Judea to flee to the mountains, and that he which is on the housetop is not to come down to take something out of the house in flight, etc., it simply means to depict times when flight is the only recourse, and also that flight is utterly hopeless. The church will be so hemmed in—that deliverance can only come from above. It can only come by a total destruction of all wickedness and wicked men.

It will be a time of utter ruthlessness. The pregnant woman is in "normal" (?) times given the utmost consideration! Such is also the lot of the sucking child. But in times such as those it will be the culmination of all ruthlessness of a universal scale. The powers that be will be turned loose against the righteous and there will be no defense.

Yet, then Satan will have his hour. He will try at such a time by seduction to tempt God's people to the false christs and the false prophets. Then they will try to have men bow before the abomination of desolation. The people of God will be tried. It will be beyond a long endurance. The way of disobedience will be presented most attractively. All kinds of escapes will be presented—the secret chamber as well as the desert. But in hiding is no defense. That is not the victory. The church cannot go "underground."

She will endure to the end. The days will be shortened. God will come marvelously to our defense. The Son of Man will hear in heaven. He will come suddenly, visibly like the flashing of the lightning from the one end of heaven to the other. All the wicked shall be terrified, and wail. They shall look on Him whom they pierced. And retributive judgment shall be righteous, swift and final.

And the scene? Where the dead bodies lie there shall the vultures be gathered. It is the scene of those conquered in battle—like Pharaoh's hosts on the shores of the Red Sea.

He that readeth let him understand!

G.L.

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### TRIO

Revs. C. Hanko, J. Heys and G. Lubbers at Loveland, Colorado.

### CALLED

Rev. G. Lubbers by Loveland, Colorado.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Covenant Joy

What joy! What a thrill! when the attending physician approaches with extended hand to congratulate you on the birth of a bouncing baby boy or of a bright-eyed baby girl.

What a joy! What a thrill! for a mother to receive her new-born babe, cherish it in her arms and fondle this little bundle of life for which she had waited so long.

There it lies, a perfect little being. Every little finger and toe in place, delicately formed and equipped with such cute, little nails. Its peaceful, if not innocent look of contentment and/or lusty yell for food gives evidence that inside, where the eye cannot see, all the various organs are there in their places with the amazing network of nerves and blood vessels running through the whole to make it the most wonderfully designed and marvellously constructed body that can be found here in this vale of tears. It gives every evidence of soon displaying what a wonder-work of wisdom and divine power has been wrought in the formation of its mind, what powers it will have of memory and imagination, what ability of reading, writing, deducting, reasoning, calculating and planning are created in its brain.

What man in his right mind could ever attribute this product to some evolutionistic process and claim that it evolved from the lower creature we call the monkey? What man in his right mind could believe that this wonderful and awe-inspiring body, mind, heart and soul had its origin billions of years ago in an original cell, whose origin cannot be explained but is vehemently denied to be the work of the living God?

We say it, and we make no excuse or apologies for it!

No man *in his right mind* can say and believe such things concerning the new-born babe. And surely he would never, never say it of his own flesh and blood that he now sees after well-nigh a year of anticipation.

We make no apologies for the expression.

Why should we?

God says that of the evolutionist. Why shouldn't we? He does say that. Through the psalmist he says in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . ." Through another psalmist He writes in Psalm 119:99, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation." In the same Psalm, verse 130 is a text that speaks the same truth. The psalmist declares there in God's name, "The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." We could go on and multiply the texts which speak this same language. Let us quote but one more, and that one which presents the matter from a different angle, "The fool hath

said in his heart, There is no God." That the evolutionist says when he wants to attribute the existence of all things and the present form of all things to a process in which there is no God and when he "explains" all things in the denial of God. He is a fool, God says. And a fool is not a man in his right mind.

Surely he is not spiritually in his right mind when he denies the very God who has made him. Surely all his natural knowledge and wisdom is so much nonsense, folly and ignorance when he ignores the Supreme Being. Would you consider that man as having his right mind who, when asked to name all the living creatures of this earth, not only deliberately left out man but also, when his attention was called to this fact, vehemently denied that there is such a creature as man? Is, then, that man who denies God, ignores Him, rules Him out of His Own creation, while he is utterly dependent upon that God for all things, is that man then a man in his right mind?

We do well to bear in mind that "in his right mind" means in the mind wherewith God created man in the beginning. In his right mind a man knows God even as Adam was created in the image of God with a mind that was filled with true knowledge of God and of all things. O, indeed, as far as natural things are concerned, man after the fall did not become an idiot. He did not lose his reasoning power and did not become like the brute beast of the field. No, it is worse than that! Although he remained a thinking, willing creature, he lost all his spiritual power to think and will correctly. Now he is able to think and will only in terms of the lie and of sin. That definitely is not his right mind. He may become a genius according to the standards of this world. He may be hailed for his brilliant mind and the mental gymnastics which he can perform. But the regenerated child of God has more understanding than this depraved unbelieving man of the world. The entrance of God's word gives a light that this atheist, this sin-darkened man of the world never receives into his mind. And note that the text underscores what we say when it declares, "It (God's Word) giveth light to the simple." Ah, then, without that word they are simple and not in their right mind. And if the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the unregenerated, unbelieving evolutionist has not even that beginning, that principle of wisdom, how can we say that he is in his right mind? And what saith the Scriptures about this further? This: Through the Apostle Paul God admonishes His people to let this mind be in them which was in Christ, Philippians 2:5. There, indeed, we have One whose mind is right, in Whom there was the fear of the Lord, whose heart and mind were filled with God's Word, Who never denied God but confessed Him every step of the way. With His mind in us, which we have through regeneration and the power of His Spirit, we are in our right mind: right before God, right according to God's decree that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace.

The covenant parent, who is spiritually in his right mind, who sees his child for the first — whether it be his first-born or his twelfth — he only has a joy that is a covenant joy. To be sure, he rejoices in the fact that God has given him a child. For *more* than nine months he had made this a matter of prayer and waited as God was performing marvellous things which eye could not see. And when the child which he has had all these months he now can see and handle and tend, his joy is great over this gift. No question of that when you are speaking of a covenant parent. But at the same time — and not afterward — he also rejoices in that he has received covenant seed. It is not simply a joy that now his name may be carried on and that he leaves seed behind when he dies. It is not simply a joy at having received a child of his own and of receiving a being that he can love and caress as his own. He rejoices in God's covenant. He rejoices in seeing the Church of God grow and in seeing the citizens of the kingdom of heaven being born and the day of the King, Christ, being prepared.

But there is another covenant joy which we have in mind with our title above. It stands in connection with that joy which the covenant parent experiences when he sees the child for which he prayed and which he desires to receive as a covenant child.

It is a greater joy.

It is the greatest joy a covenant parent as parent can have.

John speaks of it in his third epistle, verse 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

That applies, of course, to the man whom God calls to feed, comfort and instruct in the truth in the Church. A pastor, a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a missionary of the Word of God has no greater joy in his office and work than to hear, to see, to know that his spiritual children walk in truth. It cheers him. It makes him rejoice. And how he can weep inwardly — and sometimes outwardly and openly — when they will not walk in truth and despise God's covenant! What grief it brings to his soul! What anguish! He has the experience of the psalmist who declared, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law," Psalm 119:136.

But it certainly also applies to the natural father and his own flesh and blood. He rejoices to receive a child from the Lord. Though with fear and trembling he begins to train up that child in the fear of the Lord; yet he has no greater joy than to know that his child walks in truth and that God is pleased to gather HIS children out of his children. No greater joy can a covenant parent have.

He rejoices in the physical and mental progress his child makes. It causes him sorrow when his child suffers in the physical sense. He has joy when that child grows, comes home from school with good marks, speaks his first

little piece in public at this or that program. It does give him joy to see that child develop, take his or her own mate for life. And who will deny that it does give him joy and a thrill when this child of his presents him with the right and honor of being called "Grandfather"?

But here is the greatest joy a covenant parent can have: He hears, he sees and knows that his child walks in truth! That means that he sees that work of God in his child according to which he knows that his child's mind is spiritually right, that he is in his right mind spiritually. He sees that his child walks in that truth.

And you?

The question is not simply whether you have had that joy, whether it has been your blessed experience to hear that your flesh and blood walks in truth. There is a deeper and more important question: Do you consider that to be the greatest joy that you can experience in this life as a covenant parent? Are you deeply and sincerely interested in the spiritual achievements and activities of your child? Or is the greatest joy that you can hear the word that your son or daughter has attained to this or that degree, to this or that position, to this or that honor among men? These may give you joy. Do not misunderstand. But is your stand that of the Apostle John that you say — and mean it — that you have no GREATER joy than to hear that your children walk in truth? Is this the pinnacle, the acme, the height of joy for you in regard to what you hear of your children?

And again, it is not a question as to whether you can say that with John, and whether you can say that to me and to your fellowmen. Can and do you say it before God? And do your actions say it?

We have come to the point of our observation for this time of life in His Fear: Will your children this year be taught by those who are in their right spiritual mind, and who know that truth in which you say you desire to see above all that your children walk?

Can you be sincere when you do not send them to those who know and teach the truth?

Will God be convinced?

Never mind whether you can satisfy men and convince them that you speak the truth, when you say that your greatest joy is to hear that your children walk in truth. Can you convince God and even yourself that withholding the truth from your children and subjecting them to the lie and things taught by those who are not in their right spiritual mind will bring you that greatest covenant joy?

Let us be honest about the whole thing: if your *greatest* joy is to hear that your children walk in truth, will you not put forth EVERY effort to have them learn and know that truth so that they can walk in it?

J.A.H.

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

THE DECLINE OF THE PAPACY AND THE AVIGNON EXILE.  
A. D. 1294-1377.

The explanation of Philip's violent animosity and persistent persecution is his cupidity. He coveted the wealth of the Templars. He robbed the bankers of Lombardy and the Jews of France, and debased the coin of his realm. A loan of 500,000 pounds which he had secured for a sister's dowry had involved him in great financial straits. He appropriated all the possessions of the Templars he could lay his hands upon. Clement V's subserviency it is easy to explain. He was a creature of the king. When the pope hesitated to proceed against the unfortunate order, the king beset him with the case of Boniface VIII. To save the memory of his predecessor, the pope surrendered the lives of the knights. Dante, in representing the Templars as victims of the king's avarice, compares Philip to Pontius Pilate.

"I see the modern Pilate, whom avails  
No cruelty to sate and who, unbidden,  
Into the Temple sets his greedy sails."

The house of the Templars in Paris was turned into a royal residence, from which Louis XVI, more than four centuries later, went forth to the scaffold.

The Council of Vienne, the fifteenth in the list of the ecumenical councils, met Oct. 16, 1311, and after holding three sessions adjourned six months later, May 6, 1312. Clement opened it with an address on Psalm 111:1, 2, and designated three subjects for its consideration, the case of the order of the Templars, the relief of the Holy Land and Church reform. The documents bearing on the council are defective. In addition to the decisions concerning the Templars and Boniface VIII, it condemned the Beguines and Beghards and listened to charges made against the Franciscan, Peter John Olivi (died 1298). Olivi belonged to the Spiritual wing of the order. His books had been ordered burnt, 1274, by one Franciscan general, and a second general of the order, Bonagratia, 1279, had appointed a commission which found thirty-four dangerous articles in his writings. The council, without pronouncing against Olivi, condemned three articles ascribed to him, bearing on the relation of the two parties in the Franciscan order, the Spirituals and Conventuals.

The council has a place in the history of biblical scholarship and university education by its act ordering two chairs each, of Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee established in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca.

While the proceedings against Boniface and the Templars

were dragging on in their slow course in France, Clement was trying to make good his authority in Italy. Against Venice he hurled the most violent anathemas and interdicts for venturing to lay hands on Ferrara, whose territory was claimed by the Apostolic See. A crusade was preached against the sacrilegious city. She was defeated in battle, and Ferrara was committed to the administration of Robert, king of Naples, as the pope's vicar.

All that he could well do, Clement did to strengthen the hold of France on the papacy. The first year of his pontificate he appointed 9 French cardinals, and of the 24 persons whom he honored with the purple, 23 were Frenchmen. He granted to the insatiable Philip a Church tithe for five years. Next to the fulfillment of his obligations to this monarch, Clement made it his chief business to levy tributes upon ecclesiastics of all grades and upon vacant Church livings. He was prodigal with offices to his relatives. This was a leading feature of his pontificate. Five of his kin were made cardinals, three being still in their youth. His brother he made rector of Rome, and other members of his family received Ancona, Ferrara, the duchy of Spoleto, and the duchy of Venaissin, and other territories within the pope's gift. The administration and disposition of his treasure occupied a large part of Clement's time and have offered an interesting subject to the pen of the modern Jesuit scholar, Ehrle. The papal treasure left by Clement's predecessor, after being removed from Perugia to France, was taken from place to place and castle to castle, packed in coffers laden on the back of mules. After Clement's death, the vast sums he had received and accumulated suddenly disappeared. Clement's successor, John XXII, instituted a suit against Clement's most trusted relatives to account for the moneys. The suit lasted from 1318-1322, and brought to light a great amount of information concerning Clement's finances. Ehrle the Jesuit scholar, calculates that Clement's yearly income was between 200,000 and 250,000 gold florins, and that of this amount he spent 100,000 for the expenses of his court and saved the remainder, 100,000 or 150,000.

His fortune Clement disposed of by will, 1312, the total amount being 814,000 florins; 300,000 were given to his nephew, the viscount of Lomagne and Auvillars, a man otherwise known for his numerous illegitimate offspring. This sum was to be used for a crusade; 314,000 were bequeathed to other relatives and to servants. The remaining 200,000 were given to churches, convents, and the poor. A loan of 160,000 made to the king of France was never paid back.

Clement's body was by his appointment buried at Uzeste. His treasure was plundered. At the trial instituted by John XXII, it appeared that Clement before his death had set apart 70,000 florins to be divided in equal shares between his successor and the college of cardinals. The viscount of Lomagne was put into confinement by John, and turned over 300,000 florins, one-half going to the cardinals and one-half



to the pope. A few months after Clement's death, the count made loans to the king of France of 110,000 florins and to the king of England of 60,000.

Clement's relatives showed their appreciation of his liberality by erecting to his memory an elaborate sarcophagus at Uzeste, which cost 50,000 gold florins. The theory is that the pope administers moneys coming to him by virtue of his papal office for the interest of the Church at large. Clement spoke of the treasure in his coffers as his own, which he might dispose of as he chose.

Clement's private life was open to the grave suspicion of unlawful intimacy with the beautiful Countess Brunissenda of Foix. Of all the popes of the fourteenth century, he showed the least independence. An apologist of Boniface VIII, writing in 1308, recorded this judgment: "The Lord permitted Clement to be elected, who was more concerned about temporal things and in enriching his relatives than was Boniface, in order that by contrast Boniface might seem worthy of praise where he would otherwise have been condemned, just as the bitter is not known except by the sweet, or cold except by heat, or the good except by evil." Villani, who assailed both popes, characterized Clement "as licentious, greedy of money, a simoniac, who sold in his court every benefice for gold." Villani tells the story that at the death of one of Clement's nephews, a cardinal, Clement, in his desire to see him, consulted a necromancer. The master of the dark arts had one of the pope's chaplains conducted by demons to hell, where he was shown a palace, and in it the nephew's soul lay on a bed of glowing fire, and near by a place reserved for the pope himself. He also relates that the coffin, in which Clement was laid, was burnt, and with it the pope's body up to the waist.

By a single service did this pope seem to place the Church in debt to his pontificate. The book of decretals, known as the Clementines, and issued in part by him, was completed by his successor, John XXII.

*The Pontificate of John XXII. 1316-1334.*

Clement died April 20, 1314. The cardinals met at Carpentras and then at Lyons, and after an interregnum of twenty-seven months elected John XXII, 1316-1334, to the papal throne. He was then seventy-two, and cardinal bishop of Porto. Dante had written to the conclave begging that it elect an Italian pope, but the French influence was irresistible.

Said to be the son of a cobbler of Cahors, short of stature, with a squeaking voice, industrious and pedantic, John was, upon the whole, the most conspicuous figure among the popes of the fourteenth century, though not the most able or worthy one. He was a man of restless disposition, and kept the papal court in constant commotion. The Vatican Archives preserve 59 volumes of his bulls and other writings. He had been a tutor in the house of Anjou, and carried the preceptorial method into his papal utterances. It was his ambition to be a theologian as well as pope. He solemnly

promised the Italian faction in the curia never to mount an ass except to start on the road to Rome. But he never left Avignon. His devotion to France was shown at the very beginning of his reign in the appointment of eight cardinals, of whom seven were Frenchmen.

The four notable features of John's pontificate are his quarrel with the German emperor, Lewis the Bavarian, his condemnation of the rigid party of the Franciscans, his own doctrinal heresy, and his cupidity for gold.

The struggle with Lewis the Bavarian was a little after play compared with the imposing conflicts between the Hohenstaufen and the notable popes of preceding centuries. Europe looked on with slight interest at the long-protracted dispute, which was more adapted to show the petulance and weakness of both emperor and pope than to settle permanently any great principle. At Henry VII's death, 1313, five of the electors gave their votes for Lewis of the house of Wittelsback, and two for Frederick of Hapsburg. Both appealed to the new pope, about to be elected. Frederick was crowned by the archbishop of Treves at Bonn, and Lewis by the archbishop of Mainz at Aachen. In 1317 John declared that the pope was the lawful vicar of the empire so long as the throne was vacant, and denied Lewis recognition as king of the Romans on the ground of his having neglected to submit his election to him.

The battle at Muhldorf, 1322, left Frederick a prisoner in his rival's hands. This turn of affairs forced John to take more decisive action, and in 1323 was issued against Lewis the first of a wearisome and repetitious series of complaints and punishments from Avignon. The pope threatened him with the ban, claiming authority to approve or set aside an emperor's election. A year later he excommunicated Lewis and all his supporters.

In answer to this first complaint of 1323, Lewis made a formal declaration at Nurnberg in the presence of a notary and other witnesses that he regarded the empire as independent of the pope, charged John with heresy, and appealed to a general council. The charge of heresy was based on the pope's treatment of the Spiritual party among the Franciscans. Condemned by John, prominent Spirituals, Michael of Cesena, Ockam and Bonagratia, espoused Lewis' cause, took refuge at his court, and defended him with their pens. The political conflict was thus complicated by a recondite ecclesiastical problem. In 1324 Lewis issued a second appeal, written in the chapel of the Teutonic Order in Sachsenhausen, which again renewed the demand for a general council and repeated the charge of heresy against the pope.

H.V.

### Theological School

Theological school, the Lord willing, will begin its sessions September 10, at 9 o'clock a. m.

Signed Rector

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

#### *Introduction*

For a correct understanding of this fifth chapter of our *Canons* two things are necessary. In the first place, we must remember that this chapter forms our fathers' reply to the last of the Five Articles of the Arminians. And secondly, we must bear in mind that this fifth head of doctrine is the *fifth*, that is, that it follows upon and can be understood only in the light of the preceding chapters of these articles against the Remonstrants. Hence, we do well, before entering upon a detailed discussion of this chapter, to elaborate a little concerning the two factors mentioned above.

As to the first, we must remember that the Arminians officially denied the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. They could never avoid this. He who denies election and makes atonement general and presents conversion as dependent upon the free will of man must needs end by leaving all of salvation in doubt, by allowing all to depend on free will, and by denying the perseverance of the saints. In this connection I want to emphasize, first of all, that the Arminians *deny* the perseverance of the saints. We must remember this. The Arminians do not have any perseverance of the saints left at all. One might say that they make the perseverance of the saints dependent upon free will. And this is correct as far as it goes. But we must understand well that by this stricture upon the doctrine of perseverance they destroy this blessed and comforting truth. And secondly, they denied this doctrine *officially*. This is not merely the Reformed opinion, but it is plain fact. Some have been deceived by the fact that the Arminians in their fifth article appear to leave the matter of perseverance an open question, to be settled from the Holy Scriptures. But this was merely some more of the characteristic guile and deceit of the Remonstrants. True enough, at the close of their last article they wrote: "But whether they are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginnings of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with the full persuasion of our minds." It is also true that they had

the brazen audacity to quote John 10:28 in this very article: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." But this was neither honest doubt nor ignorance. This is the language of men who knew very well that the Reformed truth included the perseverance of the saints. It was the language of men who were well acquainted with the beautiful confession of assurance of preservation placed on the lips of the saints by the *Heidelberg Catechism* in connection with the doctrine of the holy catholic church: "... and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof." But the Remonstrants were well aware of the fact that in their denial of this precious truth they could never come "with the wooden shoes on." They had to "soft-pedal" their denial. Hence, they tried to give the appearance of leaving themselves open to conviction on this subject. But in reality they already denied the Reformed doctrine of perseverance when they said earlier in the article: "That those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of his life-giving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations, extends to them his hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire his help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no craft or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ's hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: 'Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'" Notice the following, please:

1) Nowhere do the Arminians make the flat and unqualified statement that the saints *do* strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and *do* win the victory. They merely have the "full power" to do this. Now there is nothing wrong as such with the statement that they have the power to gain the victory. But it is not enough: especially when dealing with Arminians one must ask whether or not the saints also *gain* the victory.

2) The Arminians like very much to speak of "assistance." The saints have the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations. But this is plainly synergistic. The power is in man, and Christ through His Spirit merely assists. Grace is a help and a crutch. This is not Reformed and Scriptural, and never has been. On the other hand, the Arminians in this article nowhere speak of the absolute preserving power of God's grace or of the work of preservation. For a Reformed man it is impossible to speak of *perseverance* of the saints without speaking of the *preservation* of the saints by God's almighty grace.

3) Even this assisting grace, according to the article, is conditional and utterly dependent upon man's free will: Christ assists them "... and if only they are ready for the

conflict, and desire his help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling . . ." There you have it, the same old Arminian heresy: if only they are ready for the conflict and desire his help and are not inactive! And we may ask: what if, as has been frequently the saints' predicament, they are not ready for the conflict, do not desire his help, and are inactive, yea, actively walking in sin? Is it then no longer true, "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand"? Such is the Arminian position.

It is against this plain denial of the perseverance of the saints that the fathers of Dordrecht were constrained to draw up the Fifth Head of Doctrine, to present the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in its true light, to answer the evil charges brought against this Reformed doctrine, and to expose the false presentation of the Arminians.

And this defense of the truth stands necessarily in close connection with the preceding chapters. In the doctrine of the sovereign predestination of God is the fountain of the doctrine of perseverance: the believer is predestined not because of foreseen faith and foreseen perseverance, but unto faith and unto perseverance as the way of his salvation. In the doctrine of Christ's particular, limited, atonement is the guarantee of this perseverance. For even as Christ's death is not a mere intention or willingness to save, but is an actual and definite payment and satisfaction for all the sins of all the elect, so it follows that the redeemed can nevermore come into condemnation: they must persevere. In the twin truths of man's total depravity and inability and God's efficacious grace of conversion is the principal realization of this perseverance: for man is saved by almighty grace, and faith and salvation are wholly free gifts. And the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God will therefore surely perfect the good work which He begins, and the saints shall without fail reach perfection. Hence, the Reformed Christian must needs believe the truth of the perseverance of the saints also.

This truth of the perseverance of the saints is sometimes also called the doctrine of the preservation of the saints. In the former term the saints are viewed as the subject: they persevere. In the latter term they are viewed as object: God preserves them. These are not two different doctrines, but two aspects of the same doctrine. The preservation of the saints is the cause of the perseverance of the saints. The grace of preservation becomes manifest in and through the saints as perseverance on their part.

However, because the *Canons* are an answer to the Arminians, who frequently charged the Reformed with maintaining a doctrine of preservation that denied all necessity of perseverance, that made of the saints inactive stocks and blocks, and that made men careless and profane, the fathers in these articles proceed entirely from the viewpoint of

*perseverance*, not preservation. This is not to say that they do not mention preservation, for they do, and they emphatically attribute the perseverance of the saints to God's grace of preservation. But their approach is that of perseverance, as also the title of this chapter indicates. The result has been that in these articles we have a very beautiful treatment of the manner in which the grace of preservation operates in the saints unto their perseverance, coupled with a most instructive treatment of the relation between the assurance of preservation and the Christian life. Very profitably, therefore, we may give heed to this instruction.

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Article 1. Whom God calls, according to his purpose, to the communion of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, he delivers also from the dominion and slavery of sin in this life; though not altogether from the body of sin, and from the infirmities of the flesh, so long as they continue in this world.

This translation is a bit wordy, though not essentially inaccurate. The part beginning "he delivers . . ." could better be translated: "them indeed he also delivers from the dominion and slavery of sin, but not altogether from the flesh and the body of sin in this life."

Rather unexpectedly, we would almost say, the fathers begin their exposition of the doctrine of perseverance by speaking of the Christian himself as he is in this present life. It does not take long, however, to discover that this method of the fathers is quite correct. After all, the subject is the perseverance of the *saints*. And if we speak of the perseverance of the saints, it is of the utmost importance that we understand clearly what is meant by a saint. It is impossible to determine who persevere and who do not persevere, and to determine whether the saints persevere at all, without determining first of all what constitutes a saint.

And our fathers furnish a rather careful description of a saint here,—a description which will in large measure determine their further description of the doctrine of perseverance. In fact, we may add at once, that already at this juncture the Reformed and the Arminian part ways as to the doctrine of perseverance. Principally the Arminian will have to grant that if this description of a saint is correct, then two conclusions follow: 1) All the Arminian examples of the falling away of saints are stricken from his hand. There is not a single record of a saint of this description that ever fell away. 2) The falling away of a saint of this description is *per se* impossible. In order to see this and to see how the fathers presently come to this conclusion in the articles that follow, let us pay attention to the various elements of this first article.

In the first place, a saint is one who is called by God, according to His purpose. We need not elaborate on this

truth here, for all this has been established in the preceding chapters. Only we must notice that by these words the perseverance of the saints is immediately linked to God's counsel of predestination and to the divine calling. He is a saint not by virtue of anything that he has done, but by virtue of the fact that God has chosen him and called him to be a saint. Hence, in the doctrine of perseverance we deal with the question whether or not the work of God can be destroyed.

In the second place, we are taught here that a saint is one who has been called to the communion of God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Also this is important. For in the first place, it emphasizes the idea of organic union with Christ. To be a saint is not simply an act, but it is a state of being, a condition of life. It implies a bond of fellowship. To be called to the communion of God's Son, we may add, is at the same time to be called out of the fellowship of the world and of the devil. And secondly, this element of sainthood again emphasizes the thought that a saint is nothing in himself. He is a saint only in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the head, and the saint is a member of His body. All that he is and all that he has as a saint is only of and in Christ Jesus.

In the third place, according to this article, a saint is one who is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and therefore inwardly renewed. This is of great importance, for it strictly limits the category of the saints with whose perseverance we are concerned in this chapter. There may be men who perform works that are apparently good, outwardly good. And such men may be known as Christians, that is, as saints, by *us*. In all the ages of the history of the church there have been such men. They may have been men that for a time led a very exemplary Christian life, men who were leaders and teachers in the church, office-bearers, who to all appearances were saints. But later on they become manifest as evil men. They fall away. They begin to lead an evil life, or they become false teachers and attempt to lead the church astray. Scripture speaks of many such men. There is the example of Judas Iscariot, who apparently was so highly esteemed that he was the treasurer of the disciples and carried the bag, and of whom none of the disciples seemed to think when the question as to the identity of the betrayer arose. But he fell away. There are those who are said to have a "temporary" faith, but who fall away when persecution arises. The apostle John mentions those who "went out from us, but were not of us." And the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter six, speaks of men who apparently were eminent members of the church, but who fell away and who cannot be renewed unto repentance. The Lord Jesus Himself also mentions those who prophesy and cast out devils and do many wonderful works in His name, but who are refused entrance into His kingdom at the judgment. And of course, if all these are included in the category of "saints," then one can come to no other conclusion than that there is a falling

away of the saints. However, a true saint is one who is inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost, one who is regenerated, who has the principle of the life of Christ in his heart.

Now concerning such a saint two things must be said that are of great importance for the truth of perseverance:

1) First of all, he is a man that is delivered from the dominion and slavery of sin in this life. Through his being called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ and his being regenerated by the Holy Ghost he is actually changed, renewed, in such a way that he is no more the servant of sin. He is not only free from guilt and condemnation, but he is actually delivered from the dominion of sin. What is implied in this deliverance? We can best show this by comparison. As a natural man, a non-saint, he served sin willingly, loved sin, delighted in sin. Sin was not only his mistress, but he was the willing slave of sin. He was consecrated to sin with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, and the enemy of God. When, however, he is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, this is entirely changed. He is no more the willing slave of sin, but is become the enemy of sin in his heart. His attitude toward sin is radically changed. He hates sin, all sin, including the sin that he himself still commits.

2) But in the second place, this does not mean that in this life already the saint is become a perfect man and is entirely free from sin. He still has his flesh, and is not delivered from the body of sin. And by this flesh is to be understood the old nature of the Christian, the spiritual power and operation of sin as it comes to manifestation through and operates in and through the body. And in this life that flesh and that body of sin remains with us to the very end; it is not destroyed until we die. Hence, while principally the saint is regenerated and renewed, and while according to this principle he comes to stand radically over against all sin, he has but a small beginning of the new obedience, and the flesh with its lusts still remains, against which the saint has to strive all his life long. The saint is not a perfect man. He is not even a man that can attain to perfection in this life.

And this means, on the one hand, that we must not expect too much, so to say, from his perseverance. Perseverance does not mean perfection, not in this life. And on the other hand, this at once explains the necessity, as well as the possibility of perseverance. It explains the necessity because it is exactly against his flesh and the body of sin that the saint must fight all his life long and in the face of which he must persevere. And it explains the possibility, because it is that principle of the new life that must be preserved and that must persevere and that can be preserved and can persevere unto the end through the grace of Christ.

H.C.H.

## JESUS' BAPTISM BY JOHN

The broadest account of it you will find in Matthew 3:13-17: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." The accounts in Mark and Luke are considerably briefer and contain a few significant variations from what we read in Matthew. In both the voice from heaven speaks *to* rather than *about* Jesus. Also, Luke speaks of Jesus "praying" in connection with His baptism and is a bit more specific about the manner of the Spirit's descent, when he says, "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove." John refers to this baptism of Jesus more in passing. "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him." John, therefore, as well as Jesus saw this descent of the dove. The fact that it is referred to in all the gospels attests to the tremendous significance of this baptism of Jesus by John.

\* \* \* \*

The history is well known.

"Then cometh Jesus" — while John was baptizing there in Jordan and busily engaged in his ministry as the herald of the Lord Jesus. Daily many people came to him from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. Then cometh also Jesus. It is time for the Lord to step out of His retirement and the seclusion of Galilee to manifest Himself as Messiah and to enter upon the great office and mission for which He had come into the world. The voice had cried in the wilderness; the way of the Lord has been prepared; His paths had been made straight. And now, at the time set by God, Jesus emerges from the quietness of Nazareth to inaugurate His work and assume His Messianic office.

"To be baptized of John." Jesus came, therefore, with set purpose and for a specific reason. Obviously, the impulse was entirely from within. There was in the case of Jesus no specific divine calling as with the prophets of the old dispensation. His consciousness as Messiah needed no outward stimulus. His calling had been clear to Him from the beginning. Already at the age of twelve, when with the doctors in the temple, He had been aware of it. Certainly it is clear to Him now. The hour is come and Jesus acts. Consciously and deliberately He takes the way that will lead to

Calvary, and the first step on this way of the fulfilment of all righteousness is this baptism by His forerunner, John.

Considering the basic note of John's preaching and the meaning of his baptism, this act of Jesus is most amazing, is it not? John's preaching was essentially that of repentance; his baptism that of remission of sin through repentance. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Mark 1:4. We ask with wonder: why should Jesus be baptized with that baptism? His life was absolutely sinless, was it not? He was the Person of the Son in human nature. He knew no sin. If that were not the case we would not now have a gospel to preach. Holy and undefiled, separate from all sinners, without even the remotest awareness of sin — that was Jesus of Nazareth. Why then submit to a baptism that signified the remission of sin and could be received only upon repentance?

In this light it is most understandable, that John should be hesitant about baptizing this Jesus and should say, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" What would you have said? This is not disobedience on the part of the Baptist; merely reluctance due to deep-seated scruples. His treatment of Jesus is the opposite of that of the Pharisees and Sadducees. These he refused to baptize because of their sins and impenitence. Jesus he was reluctant to baptize because of His sinlessness. John looked into the face of this Man of Galilee and, prophet that he was, he at once saw the difference. This Man needed no repentance. He also looked at himself and was profoundly aware of his own natural depravity. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Surely the greater should baptize the lesser; the sinful one should be baptized of the holy one. It seemed sacrilege and blasphemy to do it this way. He recoiled at the whole idea. That we can understand.

However, John was in error here. Obviously, he was in the dark. It was altogether proper and necessary that this baptism should take place. True, as far as the personal life of Jesus was concerned the Baptist was right. From that viewpoint there was no need; there was no place for John's baptism in the life of Jesus. He had nothing to repent of; no sin to be put away. However, it becomes quite different as soon as we see this Jesus of Nazareth as the God-ordained Head of His church and the end of the entire law. In the office and mission of that Jesus there was certainly place for that baptism.

Therefore Jesus answers the Baptist as He does, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Notice the note of authority here. Notice, too, how Jesus confirms John's faith in His sinlessness by the absence of any reference to repentance and by regarding His baptism, not as a token of personal remission and repentance on His part, but as an act which fulfils all the righteousness He came to realize. What a majesty and serene confidence

in this word of Jesus, the first recorded word of Jesus since he was twelve years old. All John's scruples are gently set aside. Jesus says, as it were: You are right, John, I am greater and holier than you, but for that very reason you must do what I ask. "Suffer it now." At another time it may be reversed. "For thus it becometh us." Us! You and Me, John! Thus it behooves you to act with Me, and Me to act with you, as forerunner and Messiah, herald and King. "To fulfil all righteousness." The principle underlying this baptism, therefore, is the principle underlying everything He does, His incarnation, His life and obedience, His death and resurrection. And when He says this He is not only thinking of this symbolic act, but of His entire work of redemption.

"Then he suffered Him." That's all. No description of details as far as the baptismal rite itself is concerned. The Spirit purposely withholds all reference to mode. Certainly, if the method of baptism, immersion or sprinkling, were vital the Spirit would have made some reference to it. Interesting to me is what Lenski writes on this point: "All the ancient pictorial representations of the baptism of Jesus, as well as of other baptisms, show other modes, never immersion, Clement F. Rogers, *Baptism and Christian Archaeology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press. This layman collected all the ancient pictorial representations, starting with the prevalent assumption that he would find immersion there presented. When he found the opposite, he changed his view. Even the ruins of ancient baptisteries show that these were too shallow to have permitted immersion."

\* \* \* \*

Basically there is no difference between the baptism of Jesus and our baptism, that of the Shepherd Himself and the sheep baptized into Him throughout the ages. Sacramentally, there is only one baptism. It signifies the entering into the covenant of God. That is the ultimate essence, the spiritual reality. Of that spiritual and invisible reality the water baptism is the visible sign and seal, preaching and confirming, that God has established His covenant with us and our children, and that He causes us, Abraham and his chosen seed, to enter into that covenant and thus into eternal life with Christ. And only when the grace of God has brought this to pass in and for us can we say that we are truly baptized. The covenant is the ultimate in the way of life and glory for the creature. It is the blessed and never-ending relation of friendship between God and His people; friendship, family life with the Triune Father in heaven. It is our salvation, the end and purpose of all. Election and reprobation, the incarnation and death and resurrection of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, everything is the means toward the realization of this covenant. And because this covenant is the heart of all our salvation, therefore it is only proper that baptism should signify and seal our incorporation into it.

Furthermore, baptism is the entering into that covenant through the blood and by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection as Israel entered Canaan through the Red Sea. Hence, the covenant is the end, the destination as it were; Christ is the way, the door, through Whom we are separated from sin and the world and enter into the former. The need of this one and only way lies in the fact of sin, of course. By nature "we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom (covenant) of God, except we are born again. This, the dipping in, or sprinkling with water teaches us" (Baptismal Form). By nature we are as far as far can be from God and His covenant, separated from Him by an infinite chasm of sin, guilt, corruption, death. Thus we cannot and may not dwell in covenant fellowship with God. Therefore we must be delivered from all this misery in the only possible way of atonement. And this is possible only in Jesus Christ. He only is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He only lays the foundation of the covenant in His blood. In Him only is atonement, forgiveness, justification, renewal, eternal life. Baptism, therefore, is the sacrament of washing and renewal through Christ, by faith, whereby we are received into the covenant of God. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:3, 4.

Essentially all this applies also to Jesus. He, too, will enter into His Kingdom and that through the way of His own death and resurrection. His own blood is the door through which He Himself must enter. However, in a way everything is different when we speak of Jesus, precisely because we do not think of Him as a mere individual, but as the Head and Redeemer of His Church. Personally, and merely as the Holy Child Jesus He did not have to enter through atonement. But you never think of Jesus apart from His elect church. He will enter into the everlasting Kingdom at the head of an innumerable host of chosen sinners. With them He is one. Them He represents before the face of God. Them He must redeem and them he must raise again at the last day. Therefore He took upon Himself all their sins and He, Who knew no sin, was made sin for us. For sinners they were, chosen indeed, but sinners nevertheless, hopelessly lost in guilt and death. And therefore He could enter only in the way of His own death and resurrection.

That, then, was the wholly peculiar aspect of the baptism of Jesus: it was a sign of baptism in His own blood, of entering into death, bearing the punishment of sin, paying for sin, and rising again to a new life for the sins and salvation of His people. All this Jesus will accomplish in the way of obedience that lay ahead, especially that great Passion week. Through this way He will descend into the deep abyss of



His suffering, bear the full load of the wrath of God and thus atone for His church. In this way He will achieve an everlasting victory for Himself and His people and come to His glorious Kingdom in the way of righteousness. That is the righteousness Jesus came to fulfil. For the sake of His people He would be "numbered among the transgressors." As their Head He would be "despised and rejected of men," bruised and cast out, nailed in cruel hatred to the bloody cross, and thus He will "bear the sins of many" and "My righteous Servant shall justify many." That was His real and great baptism—the baptism of His Passion. To that baptism He looked forward all His life on earth. Matthew and Mark tell the story of some ambitious disciples, who asked to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left in His Kingdom. Jesus looked at them and said: "Are ye able to drink the cup, that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Thinking, perhaps, that He was thinking of this water baptism the disciples said: "We are able." You and I know that He was looking to that other baptism of which this water baptism was only shadow and prophecy—the Passion Baptism.

It is with a view to that way and work that lay ahead, that Jesus is and must be baptized here by John. It signifies that greater baptism in His own blood and death. It inaugurates the work that lies ahead. Here he enters upon His public ministry and redemptive work. Here he pledges, as it were, that as the obedient Servant of the Lord He will fulfil all righteousness and willingly descend into the valley of His own death. Here we have both a consent and a prophecy. A consent to the only method by which sin can be atoned. A prophecy of that final baptism toward which His face was set throughout His ministry.

Thus we can also understand the other things mentioned in connection with His baptism by John. The fact, that as He descended into Jordan He was praying, consecrating Himself as the Servant of the Lord and praying for the Spirit without measure. Thus we can understand the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove at this time. There is little doubt, that only John and Jesus saw this descent of **the Spirit**. What did it mean? That Jesus now receives the Spirit for the first time? Of course not! There was a permanent relation between Him and the Spirit of God. He was begotten of the Holy Ghost as no other ever was. Always He lived and willed and thought by the power and illumination of the Spirit. However, here there is a special anointing as the Lord enters upon His ministry. Here there is an outward, visible, symbolic descension, anointing Him to His wholly special Messianic office and task and promising the Son in human flesh, that the Father will enable Him to the end, and that the strength and courage He will need will be there in fullest measure. What power thus filled Him is evident from all His teaching and miracles and His entire amazing work of salvation.

And thus we also understand the voice from heaven:

"Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Here is the Father's approval and benediction as He begins His work; the Father's seal that Jesus Christ is indeed the Father's chosen one for this great task; the Father's acceptance of the Son's consecration to His Messianic calling. And for Jesus Himself it means the unbroken consciousness of the Father's good pleasure in Him as from this moment on He will set face toward Jerusalem and the great sacrifice He must bring. He has the Father's word as a light in the frightful darkness that lies ahead: "I am well pleased."

R. Veldman

### MOTIVE TO GRATITUDE

O come, my soul, bless thou the Lord thy Maker  
And all within me bless His Holy Name;  
Bless thou the Lord, forget not all His mercies,  
His pardoning grace and saving love proclaim.  
Bless Him, ye angels, wondrous in might,  
Bless Him, His servants that in His will delight.

Good is the Lord and full of kind compassion,  
Most slow to anger, plenteous in love;  
Rich is His grace to all that humbly seek Him,  
Boundless and endless as the heavens above.

His love is like a father's to his children,  
Tender and kind to all who fear His name,  
For well He knows our weakness and our frailty,  
He knows that we are dust, He knows our frame.

We fade and die like flowers that grow in beauty,  
Like tender grass that soon will disappear;  
But evermore the love of God is changeless,  
Still shown to those who look to Him in fear.

High in the heavens His throne is fixed forever,  
His kingdom rules o'er all from pole to pole;  
Bless ye the Lord through all His wide dominion,  
Bless His most holy Name, O thou my soul.

Psalm 103

### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to its sister member, Mrs. Adrian Lenting, in the loss of her father,

MR. JOHN SCHAAP

May our Heavenly Father sustain the bereaved in their great sorrow. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, President  
Mrs. S. Vroegh, Secretary

## ALL AROUND US

### *Mistaken Notions on Marriage.*

The July 27, 1958 bulletin of the Holy Name Parish, a Roman Catholic Church in my community, fell into my hands, part of the contents of which we thought would be of interest to our readers. It appears that the priests in the local parish use the surplus space on their bulletins to instruct their members in the doctrines of that church. In the bulletin above referred to we read the following:

"There are few subjects on which more mistaken notions are held and handed down by non-Catholics (and even sometimes by Catholics) than that of the Catholic idea of Marriage. Some of the mistaken notions one runs across in this matter are the following, with the Catholic doctrine explained:

1. *That marriages between non-Catholics are considered invalid marriages by the Catholic Church.* This is *not* true. The Catholic Church teaches that two non-Catholics, whether baptized or not baptized, who without any impediment of the natural law give the proper consent of marriage to each other are validly married. Their children are not illegitimate in the eyes of the Catholic Church and their marriage ordinarily binds them for life.

2. *That the marriages of Protestants are 'second-class' marriages or somehow inferior to the marriage of Catholics.* This is not true. The marriage of rightly baptized Protestants is as much a sacrament for them as is the marriage of any Catholic couple.

3. *That a divorced person cannot become a Catholic, or that a divorced Catholic cannot be admitted to the reception of the sacraments.* This is not true. The one thing that may prevent a person from becoming a Catholic, or from receiving the sacraments, is remarriage after a divorce from a valid sacramental marriage. One who was divorced by his (or her) partner, or who had the bishop's permission to obtain a divorce for grave reasons, or who, having been wrong in seeking a divorce, has repented sincerely and tried to make reparation, may be a Catholic in good standing and receive the sacraments, as long as there is no intention or attempt to marry again.

4. *That divorce and remarriage are not wrong for non-Catholics.* This is not true. Divorce and remarriage are forbidden by the natural law as well as by the explicit words of Jesus Christ. That is why the Catholic Church considers a non-Catholic bound to his first lawful spouse as long as that spouse is alive. The only exception to this is that mentioned explicitly by St. Paul in behalf of non-baptized people or pagans, who, on becoming Christians may, under certain

circumstances, be declared free of the bond of their pagan marriage.

Much of the prejudice that exists against the Catholic Church springs from ignorance of the truth as explained above. Catholics should know the truth and make it known to others where questions such as these arise."

The reader knows, no doubt, that where Protestant Churches have two, and only two, sacraments, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Roman Catholic Church has seven sacraments, one of which is the sacrament of marriage. The statement under 2 above "The marriage of rightly baptized Protestants is as much a sacrament for them as is the marriage of any Catholic couple," is true therefore only from the Catholic viewpoint.

No doubt, too, the position expressed under 3 and 4 above is also motivated by the fact that the Catholic Church considers marriage a sacrament. However, it should be noticed that on the matter of divorce and remarriage the position of the Catholic Church stands on firmer ground than the Christian Reformed Churches of this country. The latter have adopted the position that remarriage of divorced persons is permissible. The reason why we mention this is because historically and doctrinally we stand closer to the Christian Reformed Church, and it hurts us to see this church departing farther and farther from the truth of the Scriptures. May God give abundant grace to the faithful in that church to rise up in protest against the corrupt doctrines and practices until there is repentance and amendment.

### *Synod Condemns Television.*

Also recently someone saw to it that we received, among several other church papers, two copies of *The Banner Of Truth*, a little paper published by the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the U.S.A. and co-edited by the Revs. J. Van Zweden and W. C. Lamain. The copy to which we refer in this article appeared under the date of June, 1958. The article on "Television" was written by the Rev. J. Van Zweden.

The writer in the first part of his article emphasizes the warning given by the Lord Jesus in Mark 13:37, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" Toward the concluding part of his article he writes as follows:

"Watch! against the great danger of television. How are untold multitudes of worldly people, non-members of any church, but also millions of religious people tempted to bring television into their homes! How many who have condemned the worldly moving picture shows and warned their children not to visit such places, have now made a moving picture show of their own home. This evil has even entered into our congregations in this land, and a minister from Holland wrote me that they were also obliged to censure a member for bringing this dangerous evil into his home. Members have left the congregation, denied their confession

made before God and the people, despised all admonitions and warnings, in their great desire and zeal for this dangerous idol. Oh, what shall the end be if they do not come to repentance and they shall one day have to stand before the great Divine Judge with their children.

"Oh, may the consistories of our churches in the United States, Canada, and Holland, stand with the prophet Habakkuk upon their watchtower and take heed to the Word of God and the decision of our Synod, realizing also that they, as office-bearers in the Church of Christ, have received the authority to use the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven against those who deny their confession, and especially when they make a moving picture show of their home for themselves and their poor children.

"The Synod declaration reads as follows: 'The Synod condemns the use of television in the home, judging it to be in conflict with the Word of God and with the confession of faith made in the presence of God in the church. The Synod judges unanimously that rigorous measures must be adopted to cope with the conformity to the world as regards television, since it can lead to nothing other than great detriment to the family. The consistories are to admonish with patience and forbearance, but upon continued failure to heed their admonition, to proceed with censure.'

"We would call to your mind what Rev. Lamain has written about this subject a few years ago; also the following: Compare this statement with the equally emphatic declaration of our fathers in the 35th Lord's Day of our Heidelberg Catechism with regard to the images in the Roman Catholic Church: 'We must not pretend to be wiser than God, Who will have His people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of His Word.'

"Oh, may I beg our readers to watch and pray by the grace of God against this terrible idol and evil — television. Seek strength at the throne of grace to keep it far from your homes and children. Warn your children in all difficulties and temptations . . ."

That there is danger in the use of television, and that the majority of programs produced over television as they come into our homes today are not compatible with our Christian principles, and, in some instances, even morally debasing, no one can deny. Even the worldling, who possesses enough so-called "common grace" refinement, complains of the demoralizing effect of television especially on the youth of our time.

I suppose that there are some Christians who have that abundant grace whereby they can control the instrument in its use and therefore dial off those programs that conflict with their Christian confession and walk. This writer has observed that every time he looks at television his old nature seems to have dominion and he wants to see all that television has to offer. That is the reason he does not yet have the instrument in his own home. Perhaps he is not in possession of that abundant grace others can boast of. To this writer it is indeed shocking to observe those parents

who have solemnly (?) taken upon their lips the sacred vows expressed at the time of the baptism of their children, and who then turn about face and actually place their children before the television set and let them drink in with relish all the corruption Hollywood can produce. We have even noticed in our audience while preaching on the Lord's Day two youngsters seated on opposite sides of the auditorium slinking down in their seats, as if hiding from each other, and pointing their index fingers at each other as imaginary guns. No one has to ask where they got the idea. That there is room for a warning to Christians concerning the use of television in our homes, we will readily concede. Nor do we hesitate to issue such a warning both from the pulpit and on the written page.

However, that the church consistorially, classically, or synodically should legislate in this matter, we consider a step in the wrong direction.

Though the editors of *The Banner Of Truth* do not say so in so many words, they nevertheless leave the impression that it is their position and that of their churches that sin is in things. This, of course, is not true. No more than grace is in things, is sin in things. Sin is a matter of the heart. Now certainly the church assumes a wrong position when it decides to legislate sin. Where will the end be if the church begins to do this? Is it not true that many Christians mis-use their automobiles, not only in disobeying the traffic regulations, but also to desecrate the Lord's Day? To be consistent will not the church also have to censure her members that fail to heed the admonition not to do so? Again, many women members of the church mis-use cosmetics. Will not the church, to be consistent, have to discipline those members who fail to heed the admonition to be moderate in all things? Verily, there is no end to the legislative processes when once the church begins to go in this direction.

In the second place, if we are not mistaken, the Netherlands Reformed Churches are governed by the same Church Order of Dordrecht by which the Protestant Reformed Churches are governed. And is not the decision taken by the Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Churches in direct violation of Article 30 of that Church Order? which reads as follows: "In these assemblies (namely, consistory, classis and synod) ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common." Let the editors of *The Banner Of Truth* please explain how the use of television is an ecclesiastical matter. It is our candid judgment that something positively is lacking in the preaching of those churches that need to resort to the laying down of precept upon precept to curb the life and walk of the Christian who stands in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

Today is the thirtieth of July. It is our last day here in Isabel before we go to Forbes to conduct the Study of the Canons, teach Catechism for the adults from the Heidelberg, and the little children from History of the Old Testament for beginners and more advanced.

Just this morning we finished a seven weeks' period of Summer Bible School (Catechism in Sacred History) here in the church at Isabel. During the same period we also conducted Catechism classes for the little children at Forbes, at the home of Lorenz Bertsch. There was, we felt, a need for such classes. The little children, from the very nature of advanced instruction in both Sunday School and the adult Catechism class, do not get the attention they need or deserve. Both the consistories of Forbes and Isabel consented to the holding of these classes. We have Friday morning and Saturday morning yet at the Bertsch home with the children. Then these classes will be ended. If it were only for these children's sake I feel a certain regret to leave here and "vacation" in Michigan. It was with genuine joy that we might conduct these classes. And, we believe, with profit for the children!

It was heartening that here in Isabel we began with four children in the class; it was with seven children that we ended. One of the girls, 14 years in age, also desired to come. She took with her the younger sister. Another little girl brought her cousin. Those who would like to see a "movie" of the children playing outside of the church kindly contact the undersigned. We have other excellent pictures.

It should be understood that there is no Christian day-school in either Forbes or Isabel. Nor is there one in Loveland, Colorado, for that matter. When Mrs. Lubbers and I were in Loveland very recently (it was upon our own expenses that we traveled) the desire was uttered by more than one that they would welcome a two months' Bible History Course for the children there too.

It has been a busy time for us in these parts this summer. Not much time to get rusty. During the past seven weeks a typical week's schedule looked as follows:

1. Sunday — Sunday School, preaching in A. M. Sermon in evening service. At Isabel.
2. Monday evening — Study of the Canons at Isabel, 7:30-9:00.
3. Tuesday morning — Bible Class from 9:30 till 11:10.
4. Wednesday morning — Bible Class 9:30-11:10.
5. Wednesday evening — Heidelberg Catechism 7:30-9:00.

6. Thursday drive to Forbes 180 miles. Thursday evening 8:00-9:45 Study of the Canons.
7. Friday morning — Bible Class 10:00-11:00. Friday evening, Heidelberg Catechism 8:00 till 9:30.
8. Saturday morning — Bible Class 10:00 till 11:00.

Often the undersigned needs to make but one sermon in two weeks on the Heidelberg Catechism, since he can preach the same sermon in both Forbes and Isabel. However, more often than not he must make a different sermon in the free-choice text sermons, due to different occasions and needs of these two churches.

We are happy that two young ladies from Isabel and two from Forbes plan to attend the Young People's Convention of our churches. They plan to travel with Mrs. Lubbers and the undersigned to Grand Rapids. When these lines are read, we trust, this shall belong to history.

While in Michigan your Home Missionary is scheduled to preach three Sundays. It would be a wonderful thing if a mass meeting could be rallied in First Church building where the undersigned could show some pictures, have a tape played, an actual reproduction of a Study of the Canons — unrehearsed. I sincerely believe this would bring the work of the undersigned a bit nearer to the experience of our people — and to their hearts.

Too busy during the summer months? Let it not be said!

I would not like to tell that to the people here in Forbes and Isabel!

God willing, we shall be back in these parts when these lines are read in *The Standard Bearer*.

May the Lord find his servants faithful when he comes. May He give grace to labor while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.

G.L.

### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society "Eunice" of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, herewith expresses its sympathy concerning a beloved member, Mrs. Albert Talsma, in the death of her sister

### MRS. GERRIT VANDEN BROEK

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit of our Lord may sanctify to her and the sorrowing relatives the truth of God's Word that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose."

President Rev. M. Schipper  
Secretary Mrs. M. Schipper

## **REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST**

**July 9, 1958**

**Hudsonville, Michigan**

Rev. G. Lanting, chairman of the last meeting of Classis, led in devotions.

The Credentials showed that all the churches of Classis East were represented by two delegates. Also the Revs. J. A. Heys, H. C. Hoeksema and G. Vanden Berg, Delegates ad examina from Classis West, are present along with Rev. H. Veldman as visitor. They are given an advisory vote by the Classis.

Rev. J. A. McCollam, following the order of rotation, presided, while the Rev. G. Lanting transcribed the minutes.

The chief item on the agenda for this session of Classis was the examination of Candidate A. Mulder. The Consistory of Kalamazoo requested that Classis examine him, and the Classical committee prepared the schedule for the examination which Classis adopted. The Revs. G. Lanting, C. Hanko and M. Schipper examined the Candidate in the six loci of Dogmatics; the Rev. R. Veldman in Knowledge of Scripture; the Rev. B. Woudenberg in the Knowledge of the Confessions; the Rev. J. McCollam in Controversy; and the Rev. G. Vos in Practica. The Revs. R. Veldman and B. Woudenberg were Sermon Critics. Classis decided by a unanimous vote to advise Kalamazoo to proceed with the ordination of Candidate A. Mulder into the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. After a few appropriate remarks by the chairman, Classis sang a Doxology, and the Rev. R. Veldman offered a prayer of thanksgiving, also imploring God's blessing upon the youthful Candidate.

Classis then disposed of several matters of correspondence and reports of several committees. Most of the correspondence was addressed to Classis by the Stated Clerk of Synod and received for information. One matter Classis decided to refer back to Synod. The report of the committee re the Overture of Hope Church re the proposed Conscientious Objector's Charity Card was tabled to the next meeting of Classis. The committee re the composition of Hymns, which had no report, was continued and instructed to report to the next Classis.

The Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked of and answered satisfactorily by each Consistory.

Classis decided to meet next time in First Church, Grand Rapids, on October 1.

Rev. C. Hanko closed the Classical sessions with thanksgiving to God, after the chairman made a few appropriate closing remarks.

M. SCHIPPER, Stated Clerk