

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

"How Shall We Escape?"

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him . . . ?

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Hebrews 2:3 and 10:29

The promulgation of the law of Moses was a manifestation of light.

It was the Word of God spoken by angels and committed in God's Name to Moses and through him to the people of Israel.

By itself it was wonderful too. Is it not wonderful to know what the Lord's will is for our life? What beautiful strains of music! Love God above all and your neighbour as yourself. No wonder that every transgression and disobedience was punished with a just recompense of reward. That was just. He died without mercy under two or three witnesses. That was just. No one can possibly find fault with it. To sin against that which is lovely and sweet calls for ugly punishment. And they received it and will receive it in the Judgment Day, who have been guilty of such great sin.

If that be true, and it is true, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation as is manifested unto us who live under the everlasting Gospel? Or how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? Heb. 10.

What will be your answer, reader?

The Bible points out that this sorer punishment shall consist in a fearful looking for of judgment, fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversaries. It shall be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For our God is a consuming fire. Many, oh so many stripes, compared to the heathen.

Yes, the lot of the heathen shall be terrible. They had the law of God which testified in their hearts. Their consciences would admit that the law was good. They would accuse and excuse each other and themselves, testifying thereby that they knew the law of God. God had revealed it unto them. And when presently the hidden things of the heart are revealed when God shall turn the hearts of men inside out, then it will become manifest that they are worthy of eternal death. Oh yes, even if we imagine the poor mortal who will receive the least punishment of all, his lot will be very grievous indeed. They shall receive few stripes, says Jesus. But these few stripes certainly are eternal damnation and everlasting despair.

Still there are degrees of suffering in hell.

And that is just.

Sin against the holy and lovable law of God will be punished with sore punishment.

But how much sorer punishment will he receive who has trodden under foot the Son of God?

It is difficult to form a conception of such heinous crime.

Trodden under foot, the Son of God. We tread under foot that which we detest. We are very dainty people. Sometimes we turn away in disgust from things that are exposed to our view. To touch such objects is then abomination to us. But trample on it, yes, that we dare do. The soles of our feet may come in contact with those objects from which we turn away in disgust. We will kick them aside.

And this we do by nature when we come in contact with the Son of God.

Now if the law of God was beautiful and sweet, how shall we appraise the Son of God, the Mediator of God and men, the vicariously suffering Servant of Jehovah.

He came to seek them which the Father had given to Him. But to seek, redeem and save them He willingly enters their eternal prison of death. He willingly and motivated by Divine love takes all their guilt upon His neck and groans under the burden of the wrath of God. Honestly, such love cannot be properly evaluated. No matter how long eternity is, we shall never grow weary to honor Him and love Him for that love that was bestowed on us by that Eternal Son of God. He emptied Himself and assumed the role of slave, crawling in the dust of death for our sakes. He let all the grandeur of Sonship go begging and became the Man of sorrows so that you and I could be filled with heavenly joy. He became an outcast, weeping in the wilderness and sweating blood in the garden so that you might walk in liberty and taste that God's communion is better than life.

Is not the Son of God, is not the bloody Man of sorrows far sweeter than the manifestation of the law of Moses?

And when a mortal man dares to trample the manifestation of God's wondrous love under foot, how much sorer punishment, suppose ye . . . Ah, I do not know, Lord!

* * * *

But it must be terrible beyond compare.

What shall even the reception be, that Judas will receive of Sodom? How shall he be greeted in hell by Gomorrah? And when hell even will upbraid such detestable creatures how is God to recompense them?

Whenever and wherever they saw and heard the manifestation of the blessed Gospel, they would trample under foot the Son of God; when you spoke to them of the Blood of the Testament, how that Jesus shed His precious blood in the agony of His soul, they would say that such blood-theology was an unholy thing. Horrible!

Well, if we with our knowledge of heavenly things deem such creatures horrible indeed, how will God appraise them in the Day of days?

Yes, hell for the Japanese and Chinamen will be terrible: but hell for despisers of the Blood will be a hundred times worse. There are degrees of suffering in that place of sorrows. And despisers of the Son of God, His Blood and the Spirit of grace will lie in deepest hell.

So great salvation!

Because God *delivered us* from so great a death!

* * * *

So great a death!

Things that are beautiful assume a still brighter hue when compared with their very opposites. Salvation by the

blood of the Son of God is so very great because it saves us from so great a death.

Is not our death very great?

Just imagine that you and I are fleeing from God as far as our thoughts and inclinations can carry us. And to be apart from God is death. He is the very Fountain of good things for the image bearer. He is the Sum Total of all things that are sweet and lovely, light and life, goodness and kindness, health and happiness, forgiveness and grace, longsuffering and mercy and a thousand other blessings. Yet, we flee from Him. We do not like Him, but hate Him. We say with all that in us lies: Depart from me, O God, for I have no pleasure in Thy ways! Is not our death great?

But God is furious with sin and the sinner. And He sentenced man unto death all his life on earth, all his existence in the rotting grave and all the dreary wakes of an eternity in hell. He ascribed the false prophet to be our teacher and devils to be our companions. He meted out to the human race because of their guilt the habitation that really was prepared for devils. So great a death!

But we are saved from all that.

"Thy great salvation, Lord! So will I answer them that scoff . . ."

Great salvation by the Son of God because He went into that prison of death. He suffered the terrible conflict and poured out His soul into death. He suffered the torture to be forsaken of the Fount of Life and happiness in order to save you, dear reader. He shed His blood and sent His Spirit so that you might be divorced from the Devil and false prophecy. So that you no longer would run away from God, but be halted in your tracks and made to consider and say: In the Home of my Father in heaven there is bread enough and to spare! But here I suffer hunger and thirst, where all the streams are dry.

* * * *

Great salvation for it fulfills all your needs.

You need God. You need His communion and love. You need the angels of life. You need the companionship of perfect saints. You need a beautiful world around you. You need the continuous Word of God to nourish you everlastingly. You need His comforting speech telling you ever and anon: I love you, my dear son! You need all that *if you are to be happy*. You need your God.

So great salvation.

Therefore the saints in the new paradise will sing in ever more beautiful strains the heavenly song: Thou, O Son of God, hast purchased us to God by Thy blood. Forever the sign of the slaughtered Lamb shall be in the midst of the Throne to remind us, to remind us ever and again, that we are saved with so great salvation!

That blood is preached, manifested in your midst by the Word that began to be spoken by Jesus.

That blood sings the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

Shall we then neglect so great salvation?

Oh, if we do, then the damned in hell from the city of Sodom shall rebuke us in that awful Day. Then the very criminals of foreign lands shall stand up in judgment against us and they shall call our horror righteously begotten.

When you are found in the pews on Sunday in this land and neglect so great salvation, deeming the blood of Jesus an unholy thing; then the very recesses of the place of torment shall reverberate with the oft-repeated question that will sear our souls and bodies: Friend, art *thou* here?

But if not: if we do not neglect so great salvation, if we do not despise unto the Spirit of grace (through His sweet grace over us) but on the contrary, when we by His Spirit are found at the foot of the Cross of sweetest grace—then we shall be saved, then we are saved, then we shall make heaven musical forever by songs of salvation.

Ah, God be praised for His unspeakable Gift!

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.

Announcement

The Rev. G. Lubbers, home missionary of our churches, will be at home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the Sundays of August 10, 17, and 24. On these Sundays he will be preaching in Oak Lawn, Ill., and in South East, Grand Rapids, Mich. However, this leaves the pulpits in Forbes, N. D., and Isabel, S. D., without preaching services. Any of our ministers, who might be passing through these parts, are reminded hereby that they are welcome to preach in these churches on any of the above-mentioned dates.

Rev. G. Lubbers, Home Missionary.

Eastern Ladies' League Board Meeting

Delegates, take notice! The next Board Meeting will be held, the Lord willing, in our Creston Church on August 25 at 8:00 P. M.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, *Vice-Secretary-Treasurer*.

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EDITORIALS

Our Synod of 1958

The Committee of Pre-advice in the matter of the proposed new Bible translation advised Synod to adopt the following letter:

"Dr. M. J. Wyngaarden, Corresponding Secretary of the Committee for Bible translation,

"Calvin Seminary,

"Franklin and Calvin, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

"Dear Dr. Wyngaarden:

"In reply to your missives directed to the Protestant Reformed Churches of America in regard to the matter of Bible translation, the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America express appreciation for the consideration shown in the invitation to collaborate in this project.

"Although we agree with your committee that there is room for improvement in the present translations, we do not feel that at this time we can collaborate with you in this project."

"Fraternally yours,

"The Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches."

The grounds for this advice of the committee are the following:

"1. We feel that this request is worthy of an answer.

"2. That we answer negatively is because of the complexity of the group that is invited to work on this project as composed of Arminians and Premillennialists."

The Synod, however, accepted the request to collaborate in the proposed new Bible translation. It considered, as also the committee expressed it, that there is, indeed, room for such a new translation. It also was of the opinion that in this important request we might not refuse, especially in the light of the fact that we do have men that are able to collaborate in this matter. And, finally, as far as complexity of the group is concerned that are to work together in this project, the Synod felt that, after all, it is not a matter of doctrine that is to be decided but merely a question of translation from the original. Besides, if we should ever feel that the translation would go in the wrong direction, we could always refuse to collaborate any further.

The Synod appointed the Revs. G. M. Ophoff, H. C. Hoeksema, and undersigned for this work. H.H.

* * * *

Yesterday, July 13, we received the very sad news that the Rev. Ophoff had a stroke while he was on his vacation. It happened evidently in Toledo, Ohio, on his way home. As yet I do not know how serious it is. If I have more information before this Standard Bearer is printed, I will let you know. In the meantime, let us all remember the brother, whom we dearly love, before the throne of grace. H.H.

Missions and Common Grace

On the subject of "common grace" in relation to the mission work of the Christian Reformed Church writes the Rev. L. Verduin in the *Reformed Journal* of June 1958.

He writes that the Christian Reformed Church, in regard to mission work in the sense of evangelism, is a very sick man. Several doctors have already stood at the bedside of this patient, according to him, and they have suggested various remedies; but they, evidently, do not agree among one another, neither as to the nature of the illness nor as to the proper remedy. And now comes Doctor Verduin, and suggests that the patient needs a shot of "common grace" in the arm. The trouble with the patient is that he always emphasizes election and reprobation: "A distorted doctrine of divine sovereignty can stifle the missionary spirit and program. Such distortion occurs when we say that election and reprobation are equally ultimate. To say that God is as much pleased, or, that He is pleased in the same way, with the spectacle of the reprobate on the way to perdition as He is with the sight of one of the elect on the way to glory — this is to bind the feet of missions. To say that God loves the elect and that He hates the reprobate and to let it go at that is to put hobbles on the missionary spirit. For then we must conclude that we cannot love a man until he gives evidence of election. And with that, attitudes and policies spring up that will doom our missionary activity to perpetual barrenness. To say that God loves the elect and hates the reprobate and to let it go at that is to make it impossible for us to manifest a prevenient love for men. Where this caricature of the Reformed Faith is regnant, there men get the impression that we are prepared to love them if and when, and to the extent, that they give evidence of a state of grace; they find us unable to love men anteriorly, prior to the beginning of their movement towards Christ" . . .

This, then, is, according to Doctor Verduin, the character of the malady from which the Christian Reformed Church suffers. It consists in an over emphasis or a wrong emphasis on the truth of election and reprobation.

To me this is sheer nonsense. It is quite contrary to fact. And I do not believe a word of it.

But let this be for the time being.

The trouble is that the doctor that examined this patient and made this diagnosis of his disease is so filled with the love of the false doctrine of common grace that he does not understand and cannot believe the truth of predestination.

Do not say this to him, for he would most vehemently deny it. Just listen to what he writes: "This article is not a plea for the relinquishment of the doctrine of election in order that missions may flourish. It does not propose a single step in the direction of an Arminian theology" . . .

But what then does this doctor propose? He writes: "So it is with the various elements of Christian truth: not a single creedal item may usurp the air. For ourselves we prefer to seat the several items of Christian truth at a round

table, so that not one of them will assume an air of superiority above the rest."

Just imagine this conception, if you can.

All the doctrines of the Christian truth are sitting at a round table, and all are of equal value, absolutely coordinate. No doctrine is subordinate to any other. There is the doctrine of God, His attributes, Persons and works, including the doctrine of predestination, election and reprobation; there is the doctrine of creation, of man and the fall; there is the doctrine of Christ, His virgin birth, death for our sins, His resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God; the doctrine of the Spirit of Christ and His work of applying the salvation of Christ to our hearts: the work of regeneration, calling, faith, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification; the doctrine of the Church with the preaching of the Word and the sacraments; and, finally the doctrine of the last things and the creation of the new heavens and earth.

All these doctrines are sitting in equal positions at a round table and none of them may assume an air of superiority over any other!

Did you ever read anything more absurd and that, too, from the pen of one who calls himself a Reformed theologian?

But, of course, we can easily understand why this doctor writes thus. Fact is that although he claims to believe the doctrine of election and reprobation, he must have nothing of it, and he surely does not understand it. He wants to give "common grace" a place of honor at that round table of his, and that is impossible if you really mean to maintain the truth of predestination. At any rate, the doctor does not want to give the doctrine of election and reprobation a place as the heart of the truth and as the foundation of our salvation. Hence, when he claims to believe the doctrine of election, the rest of his statements made in this connection give that claim the lie.

But let us now attend to the question of the remedy which this doctor wants to administer to this sick patient, the Christian Reformed Church which has, according to him, failed rather miserably in its efforts at evangelism.

The remedy is, in one word, "common grace."

You see, we must love all men and from the motive of that love to all men we must and can do mission work. Only when, such is the thought, when men can feel that we are motivated by the love of them, can we expect to draw men to Christ. "It is wrong for us to be selective in our love for men; we must love in all directions... And this indiscriminate love, when practiced, is but a creaturely reflection of a similarly indiscriminate love on the part of God, the God who sends sunshine and rain upon saint and sinner alike. If we are to be children of God, that is, if we are to emulate God, then we will love indiscriminately and anteriorly. That is *the* point in this item of Christ's teaching. Granted that this promiscuous benignity on our part is on the common grace level — for it deals within the commodities of com-

mon grace. But this only shows that the doctrine of selective grace must be supplemented by the doctrine of non-selective grace... Common grace is called common precisely because it is common, that is, non-selective, indiscriminate, promiscuous. And common grace is prevenient grace, that is, a grace that antedates any movement toward the Christ."

This, to me, is pure Pelagianism and Arminianism. "Common grace" is prevenient grace? This means, if anything, that it comes necessarily before saving grace, or, as the doctor here expresses it, before any movement towards Christ. It also means that "common grace" can be used as a means to come to Christ. Of course, personally I do not believe in any sort of common grace, as the reader well knows. But this "common grace" of the doctor here is far worse than what is usually called common grace. The sinner is totally corrupt and incapable of doing any good. There is no grace that he can use as a movement towards Christ. This doctrine of the doctor is literally condemned by our Reformed fathers in Canons III, IV, Rejection of errors, V, where we read: "The Synod rejects the errors of those Who teach: That the corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (by which they understand the light of nature) or the gifts still left him after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, viz., the evangelical or saving grace and salvation itself. And that in this way God shows himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men, since he applies to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to conversion."

This is virtually identical with the prevenient common grace of Verduin, who wants to give his patient, the Christian Reformed Church, a shot of common grace in the arm.

But let me go on, for I am not through yet.

After the doctor has observed still another symptom of the patient's condition, namely, that of a prayer policy that is virtual denial of common grace, he tells a story of a minister who said in his prayer: "Heavenly Father, bless all that Thy hand has made." The doctor was, evidently, utterly surprised, considering that this was a very heretical statement. (I wonder if he might not have heard this prayer in the First Protestant Reformed Church, for I used to pray this frequently: there is no common grace in it whatsoever). But when the doctor thought about it, he came to the conclusion that it was correct. And mark you, from that time on dates "the success the present writer has had with outsiders."

Mirabele dictu!

Is it possible?

In conclusion, the doctor left a prescription at the bedside of the patient which reads as follows: "Let the patient stop paying mere lip-service to the doctrine of common grace, that is, to a grace that is both prevenient and promiscuous. Then a love for men in their unsaved condition will become possible for him. Let him begin to love all, love them

fervently, love them anteriorly and as they are, so that if and when they embrace the Gospel they will experience a higher love at the hand of their benefactors — just as they at that point experience a subsequent and higher love at the hand of God. This should make the patient's pallor depart, color will return to his cheeks, and a sense of joyous well-being will course through his frame as he leaps to the task that awaits him."

And now my own conclusion.

It is this: there is literally not a word of truth in the whole article by the Rev. L. Verduin. To substantiate this rather strong statement I will point to the following facts:

1. It is not true that the Christian Reformed Church is a sick patient, or rather feels sick, because of a lack of common grace so called, but rather because she does not understand why she has so little "success" in her work of evangelism. As soon as she understands two things she will be cured of her feeling of sickness. These two things are: (1) That she must understand that her whole task is that she must simply preach and witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and be satisfied to leave the fruit to God. She must not be tempted to fill in the "common grace prescription" of Verduin, but know and trust that the fruit of her labors is up to the sovereign grace of God and is rooted in predestination: God calls whomsoever He will. (2) She must not and cannot expect too much fruit among those that once, perhaps in former generations or even recently, belonged to the Church and have departed. It is simply a rule that God gathers His Church in the line of continued generations, and although there are, no doubt, exceptions, He does not often return to those that once were of the Church and have left her. It may seem as if the work of men like Sunday and Graham contradicts this statement, because they seem to be able to create much enthusiasm for the gospel, but more than mere appearance this is not. Time will show that by far most of this what I would call mob-enthusiasm will soon die down and that there is little or no permanent fruit left of the labors of these men.

2. It is not true that: (1) According to Scripture, we may love all men. (2) That the love of men, so-called common grace love, may be or can be the motive for mission work.

As to the first, the Bible teaches very plainly that we may not and cannot love those that plainly reveal themselves as enemies of God and of the gospel of Jesus Christ. With a holy hatred, which is essentially love, the love of God in Christ, we must hate them. "Should I not hate them that hate Thee?" Ps. 139. Nor did Jesus love all men with the "common grace love" of Verduin. He certainly did not love the hypocritical Pharisees as we may learn emphatically from Matthew 23. Besides, listen to what Jesus said to the Jews who first pretended to believe on Him: "Ye do the deeds of your father . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is

no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

And as for the second, only the grace in Christ, and not so-called common grace, can be the motive for the work of mission or evangelism. For, first of all, the missionary must preach Christ and the cross, and that is always foolishness to the natural man: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God," I Cor. 1:18. And again: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," I Cor. 1:23, 24. And in II Cor. 5:14, 15 we read: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." This is and should be the only motive for missionary labor, and not a certain common grace and love for all men.

3. We may notice, too, that the Lord Himself does not hesitate to emphasize strongly, in His preaching, the truth of election and, in connection with this, the truth that man of himself is wholly incapable to come unto Him and be saved. This is evident from the context of that well-known gospel-call and promise in Matthew 11:25, 26: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it was good in thy sight." And in John 6:36, 37: "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And in v. 44: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." And once more, in John 10:26-30: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." This is the truth concerning salvation as the Lord proclaimed it. This is the truth which the apostles preached. And this is the truth which also the church must preach, whether it be to its own members or in its missionary labors. There is no other gospel.

4. Hence, my final conclusion is that the article of Rev. Verduin in the *Reformed Journal* is not Reformed but Pelagian and Arminian. He avows, indeed, to believe the truth of predestination, but this does not mean a thing: in his whole article he never applies it and, on the contrary, he presents "common grace," which, according to him, is prevenient grace, as the motive for mission-work. Such is my opinion.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER IV

Revelation 8:1-6

The Presentation of the Prayers of the Saints

We know that Gabriel is one of them. For according to the Gospel of Luke, ch. 1:19, he says to Zacharias: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings." It is not impossible that Michael is another of these angels, but this is not specifically stated in Scripture. And that they are seven in number shows that they have to do with the covenant and kingdom of God, of which Christ is the head. That they stand before the throne indicates that they are called and always are ready for special service unto the completion of the kingdom of God.

To these seven angels, then, there are given seven trumpets. The trumpet occurs frequently in the Word of God. The people of Israel were instructed to use the trumpet in time of war. Before they went to war against the enemy that oppressed them in their land, they had to blow the trumpet. It seems, therefore, that the trumpet is a symbol of war for the kingdom of God. In the second place, it also indicates the downfall and the destruction of the enemy of the kingdom, as is evident from the downfall of Jericho. For thus we read in Joshua 6:2-5: "And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." It also indicates evidently judgment and authority, as is plain from God's appearing with the law under the sound of a trumpet on Sinai. For thus we read in Exodus 20:18: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off." Further, the trumpet was used with the people of Israel for the convocation of the assembly in connection with their sacrifices and festivals and for the crowning of the theocratic king, as, for instance, in the case of Jehu and of Solomon.

And therefore, it also denotes in general any activity in the kingdom of God proclaiming God's gracious presence over His people, but at the same time destruction and judgment over the enemy. In connection with the seven trumpets mentioned in our passage it is especially the latter element that is on the foreground, as we shall observe later. The trumpets signify especially that God through Christ Jesus is coming to inflict judgment and destruction upon the enemy of the kingdom of God. When therefore our text informs us that the angels that stand before the throne receive the seven trumpets, it thereby indicates that these servants of the Most High receive power to execute judgment over the world of evil.

Before, however, these angels sound their trumpets, or even prepare to sound, they stand in silence, watching what takes place in heaven, namely, the presentation of the prayers of the saints. For we read in our passage: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." It is very evident that the all-important element here is the prayers of the saints. To understand the entire scene it is undoubtedly necessary to understand and to emphasize that these prayers that are here presented with the incense to God are the prayers of *saints*. They are not presented as mere men, nor even as believers; but they are pictured from the point of view of their being saints. Who are these saints? They are not merely people that are already in heaven, as is the view of those who make the church of God go to heaven at the time that is mentioned in the first verse of the fourth chapter. They claim that the people of Christ have gone to heaven before the seals are opened, and that henceforth the Book of Revelation speaks no more of a church upon earth. And therefore, when our text speaks of saints nevertheless, they claim that naturally they are people that are already in heaven, and that the prayers of these people are also actually made from heaven. However, we cannot agree with this. Saints are not only those that are already in glory, but just as well the people of God on earth. Scripture calls believers saints time and again. Only think of the manner in which the apostle Paul is accustomed to address the church in his epistles. All the people of God are saints because they are members of the body of Christ. They are of Christ, and they are in Him. They are in Him as their head, first of all in a juridical sense of the word, so that all their sins are forgiven them and they are justified. And therefore, from this viewpoint they are saints in the most perfect sense of the word. They have in Christ Jesus no sin whatsoever. But they are also in Christ Jesus in the organic sense, that is, they are ingrafted into Him. They are living members of His body. The life that is in Him is also in them. There is one body, with one head, and with one and the same Spirit of life. That one

body is the body of the church. All believers are members of that body. Or, if you please, in the strictest sense of the word, all that are regenerated by the Spirit of God are members of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. And of that body Christ is the head, and the Spirit that is given to Him is the life of that body. That Spirit dwells in Christ as the head, and in the saints as members of His body, and causes their faith and hope and love, in fact, causes all their life to be one, one in Christ. By that Spirit of Christ they are controlled. By that Spirit of Christ they are sanctified, and walk in newness of life. When our text, therefore, speaks of saints, it refers to that entire body of Christ and to all its members.

We must remember, in the second place, that they pray exactly in their capacity of saints. Not every prayer that rises from the lips of believers is here referred to, but merely the prayer that rises from their hearts as saints of Christ. Here upon earth our prayers, or so-called prayers, are often very imperfect. We do not always pray as members of Christ's body. Our requests are often sinful. We often send petitions to the throne of grace that are never heard because our prayers are often controlled by the lust of the flesh. But of those prayers our text does not speak whatsoever. They pray only in the capacity of saints. It speaks of prayers that actually rise to the throne of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and which are surely heard. Perhaps they arise to the throne of grace only in the form of the groanings of the Spirit that are mentioned in Romans 8:26, 27. When we do not pray, or cannot pray, as we ought to, the Spirit of Christ that dwells within the body of Christ and in the hearts of all the saints prays for them with groanings that cannot be uttered. The Spirit knows the needs of the saints. That Spirit also knows their deepest longings as members of the body of Christ. And that Spirit presents these longings now through their own consciousness, teaching them how to pray, and now praying within them, outside of their consciousness, with groanings that cannot be uttered. And it is of these prayers of the saints, as they rise from their hearts, controlled by the Spirit of Christ that is in them, that our text speaks. Thus conceived, it is not difficult to guess what these saints pray for. What is their highest purpose? And what is the deepest longing of the saints in Christ? It is the perfect fellowship with the God of their salvation, the Sovereign of heaven and earth; and it is the desire that He may be glorified. And as they know that this God of their life shall never reach His glory except through the completion and perfecting of the kingdom of Christ, the prayer of the saints is that the kingdom may come and quickly be completed. Moreover, since they also know that the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ cannot come otherwise than through the judgments that must come upon the wicked world, their prayers include also these judgments. Not only the saints whose blood has been shed for the Word of God and the testimony which they had, but all the saints, the entire body of Christ, prays for judgment upon the world.

H.H.

SOCIALISM

The following is an old lecture which I here publish instead of the Rev. Ophoff's article, who is unable to write at present. H.H.

It is a well-known fact that Socialism is a name that is applied to one of the most remarkable and widespread movements of the present age. For although in recent times the term has been frequently replaced by that of Bolshevism, it should never be forgotten that Bolshevism is after all nothing else than Socialism in principle and practice. Bolshevism may have revealed itself of late as being rather anarchistic in character, in the first place it must be remembered that all Socialism is ultimately anarchistic, and cannot rest satisfied with anything less than the total abolishment of the present order of society; and in the second place, that the circumstances under which Bolshevism arose especially in Russia were highly conducive to exactly such anarchistic programs as have been enacted in the old world. Whether, therefore, you speak of Bolshevism, or simply of Socialism, or again as they love to call it in Germany and in the Netherlands, of Social Democracy, in principle it makes no particle of difference, — all these movements are closely allied, and to them all the name of Socialism is applicable. This movement has of recent days made tremendous strides toward the realization of its ideal. Under the pressure of the world-war that has now practically come to its official termination Socialism found fertile soil for its development in the stress of the times and the miserable conditions under which especially the lower classes had to suffer. Insufficient nourishment, the enforced authority of regularly instituted government to call its subjects to arms, the suffering and bloodshed and sacrifice, the destruction of homes and property, — in short, all the misery caused by the war naturally was conducive of much dissatisfaction and grumbling, and dissatisfaction in the minds and hearts of the masses is a very favorable condition to the growth of socialism. No, indeed, we do not mean to leave the impression that these miserable conditions and this dissatisfaction with them is the real principle and cause of socialism, — this lies of course far deeper. But granted that this principle does exist, poor social conditions will serve as an impetus to its manifestation and development. And, therefore, it need cause no surprise that especially of late socialism has had a grand opportunity to develop. Rising as a dark cloud at the eastern horizon of Europe, it soon spread over the old world and more than we are probably as yet aware of has gained a foothold also in our own country. And, therefore, a few words on the subject of socialism cannot be called out of date in our day.

It must be confessed from the outset, that it is rather difficult to give a satisfactory answer to the question: what is socialism? For in the first place, it is a fact that economical experts widely differ in their description and definition of the principles of this system and movement, and consequently, the definitions that have been given of Socialism

are so numerous that it would be of no benefit to enumerate them all. Just because they vary so considerably, they would not help us. And in the second place, though socialism may remain the same in principle thruout the history of the modern world, it must be confessed that it is very pliable and adapts itself readily to circumstances. Socialism is not always the same in external appearance, it does not always publish the same platform, it does not always come with the same program to be carried out. And thus it also differs in form at least in various countries. In our country, for instance, it does not assume the same form as in Europe. Much of our Socialism here offers itself on the market as Christianity, or social Christianity. And again the Bolshevism of Russia, though essentially nothing but Marxian socialism and that of a rather moderate type, reveals itself different from German socialism or from the socialism of any other country in the old world. It assumes many different forms, reveals itself under various aspects, according as time and circumstances demand. And, therefore, it would be extremely difficult, if not actually impossible to offer a definition that would embrace in its scope all the different forms of socialism as they exist in different ages and climes. And, hence, would we obtain some conception nevertheless of what socialism really is, we will have to look for some kernel, some principle, some program all the different classes and groups of socialists have admittedly in common.

And then, I wish to state in the first place that Socialism is by no means the opposite of individualism. Literally the term socialism would seem to imply that it stands diametrically opposed to all individualistic views of society. And many socialist scholars and leaders come with this contention. They maintain that only socialism offers the true conception of society and, therefore, is able to come with the only possible solution of the social problems, as over against individualism. The latter considers society as a mere mass of individuals, a collection of persons that exist side by side in the world without any mutual and organic relation between them. It refuses to consider society as an organism, and hence, as a whole, and rather represents it as a mechanical institution. Of course, this view is directly opposed to every true conception of society. For the true conception is not that society is like a heap of sand, the grains of which simply are heaped upon one another, but between which there is no relation whatsoever; but that it is an organism, the members of which are organically related, are mutually interdependent, each of whom has his own definite place, and all of whom are laboring together in harmony for the welfare of the whole. Regardless now of the question in how far such society can actually exist and be realized in a sin-scarred world, where elect and reprobate live together, it must be granted in the abstract that this is the only possible, the only correct view of society in general. And it is this view of society, upon which according to many writers, socialism is actually based, and from which it proceeds. This, however, we deny from the outset. For it is exactly

peculiar to socialism to divide society from the outset, both in theory and practice, into two classes, that of the capitalists on the one, that of the proletarians on the other side, and that pictures to itself the relation between these two social classes as continual antagonism and warfare. It is not true that socialism looks upon society as one whole; it divides society. It is not true that socialism is anxious to seek the welfare of the whole, or, as it has often been alleged, of the greatest possible number; it seeks the welfare exclusively of a certain class, of the proletariat, regardless of society as a whole.

The real character of all socialism can be expressed no better, perhaps, than by the well-known term: "Communism." Communism, it may be asserted, is the real essence of all socialism, under whatever form, at whatever age, in whatever country it may appear. It is characteristic of communism to find the root of all evil in the fact of private property, and therefore, the cure, the only remedy for all the misery in the world is the abolishment of the present system, and the inauguration of a dispensation in which all shall share equally in the material blessings of this world. The present system, under which most all the land and all the capital of the world is in the hands of a few, inevitably leads to the degradation of the working classes, that must labor hard for a bare living. And on the other hand, while the present system sends the masses of people to the slums, and condemns them to mere animal existence, or to the life of a slave; the same system is the cause of vice and immorality and all kinds of debasement among the rich that grow wealthy while sleeping, and reap the fruits of the labor of their fellow-men. Socialism, like communism, holds that private property must be changed to common property. We are all equal. We have an equal right to all things. We must live as brothers upon earth, children of a common Father, and share in the Father's bounties, even as we all equally enjoy the light of the sun. In this respect, at least, all socialistic schools may be said to be fairly well agreed though they differ in regard to the question of application and the realization of their program.

In order, however, to express a correct judgment upon socialism as a system, it must be considered in the light of its history. To do this we must concentrate our attention first of all upon that form of socialism which was called the Utopian, or that form of socialism as it appeared directly after the French revolution, and at the dawn of the industrial revolution in England. According to two French writers of the time, St. Simon and Fourier, the French revolution had by no means accomplished what it promised. It had sounded the beautiful trumpet of "Liberté, égalité et fraternité" but in actual fact it accomplished nothing. A little more political freedom was all it brought about. Equality was still far from being realized in France, and liberty was still a relative term, while fraternity one must not look for at all. True, the nobility and clergy had been deprived of some of their outrageous privileges, but the greatest privilege, the root

of all other privileges, and at the same time the root of all the social evils of the time—private property—had remained untouched. The revolution was the triumph of the liberal party, of the higher bourgeoisie, but the lower classes had been left in their degradation. And, therefore, the fight must be continued. Not, however, by another bloody revolution would these men carry out their program, but by the simple preaching of the gospel of communism. The new light must be liberally spread, the seed of the new gospel must be freely disseminated, the coming revolution, which would be the triumph of communism and the ultimate defeat of all private property, must be gradually prepared by this new gospel in the hearts and minds of all the people. And the change in the social order would follow spontaneously.

A third writer of that period was the famous Englishman, Robert Owen. He had grown up in a period when the industrial revolution in England was in full sway. The blind power of the machine replaced the skill of the mechanic and thousands upon thousands were gradually drawn from their small workshops into the large factories. Owen had been witness of the change and was deeply conscious of the abuse of the factory system. The workingmen had to labor mercilessly long hours for starvation wages. Many women and children, anxious, or rather compelled by the very system to do their share for the upkeep of the family, were employed, the latter even as young as five and six years of age. And these had to work the same number of hours, had to do practically the same work, and for still smaller wages. Untold misery existed in England among the lower classes. According to Owen, the causes of this misery were in the first place, marriage, that causes men to be tied down to large families and compelled them to bow under the new industrial conditions; in the second place, religion, which kept men satisfied with existing conditions, or at least made them reconciled to the present with a view to the compensation a future world offered. But in the third place and above all, also according to Owen, private property was the chief cause of all the existing misery in society. It was because the land and the capital were in the hands of a few capitalists, and because of the resulting competition between these few, that the laboring class had to suffer. And, therefore, the gospel of communism would have to take the place of the gospel of Christ, all property had to be placed under control of a socialistic state, and presently the misery would cease and the dawn of a new and better era would soon gladden the hearts of all.

There you have in brief the views of three of the most prominent writers of that time. All three were materialistic at bottom, and as you will have noticed, all three found the only possible solution of the social problem in the communistic program. In France this was an outgrowth of the revolutionary philosophy of Voltaire and Rousseau and others, while at the same time it was an attempt to complete the revolution. In England communism may be called the legitimate child of the industrial revolution. All have a view for

the things of the world only. All discard the tremendous fact of sin in their account of evil conditions, all find the salvation of men in a change of the existing social order.

An enormous change was brought about, however, by Karl Marx, the well-known German socialist philosopher, who succeeded by his theory of social evolution to give a new meaning to socialism and to guide it in entirely different channels of action. Marx was born at Treves and studied at the universities of Berlin and Bonn. He soon revealed a remarkable interest in the study of history and philosophy. At an early date he developed his own philosophy, which may be characterized as historical materialism. Being a disciple of Hegel, the pantheist, he practically reversed his teacher's view. For Hegel the Idea, the absolute Spirit was all. But for Karl Marx matter was everything, the idea nothing. And this basic view constitutes the principle of his entire philosophy of historical evolution.

What is historical evolution? It is a philosophy arrived at by viewing all history thru materialistic spectacles. It is, of course, based on the theory of evolution. In his earliest stage of development man was but a highly developed animal. As long as private property did not exist, this man-animal was relatively happy and tame. But private property was introduced and this constitutes the fall of man. Peace was disturbed, happiness destroyed. For, the private property holders became great beasts of prey, who desired nothing less than to gain control over all things, and the non-possessors became a mass of slaves groaning under the yoke of oppression. But these non-possessors could not passively submit themselves to this state of affairs. They rose in rebellion. They struggled for freedom. They demanded equality. War broke out, a bitter war, a war which from earliest days may be traced thruout the history of the race. And now it is the law of historical evolution, according to Marx, that the non-possessors gradually prevail and conquer. Gradually they improve their own condition. Gradually the position of the few possessors will become more and more untenable, until according to the same inevitable law of historical evolution the new era shall dawn in which all private property shall have been abolished and all things shall be enjoyed equally by all. This progress to the socialistic state of things Marx traces thru history. In the old Asiatic form of society, at the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the husband was even the absolute owner of wife and children, and could dispense with them according to his sovereign good pleasure. In the Roman Empire we do not see this any more, but the institution of slavery flourished. In the middle ages slavery was practically abolished to be replaced by the feudalistic state of things, under which the tenant labored for his feudal lord. And finally in our own time the feudalistic state has vanished to make place for the capitalistic form of society. But this cannot be the last stage of historic evolution, for the highest and most perfect form of society is not yet reached. And, therefore, as inevitable as the old Asiatic form was replaced by the Roman, the Roman

by the Feudal and the Feudal by the Capitalistic state of things, just as inevitably will the present give birth to the socialistic age in which all private property will be abolished and men shall have all things in common. According to the law of historical evolution the Socialistic era is sure to come even though there were not a single socialist!

Marx also makes bold that he has found the law according to which the capitalistic state of things will inevitably give birth to the socialistic form of society. This law he has developed in his theory of "surplus value." The implication of this theory is briefly as follows. The only standard by which the value of any commodity can be measured is labor. It is labor that gives any commodity on the market its real value. But of this value the laborer that does the work, and who, therefore, is the rightful owner of the entire value of the article receives but a small portion, while the rest goes to the capitalist. Now, if you subtract from the real value, the market-price of any commodity that part which the laborer receives for his work, the remainder is what Marx calls the "surplus value." This remainder goes to the capitalist. And since the capitalist puts this remainder in his pocket, capital is nothing but an accumulation of surplus value, or if you please, capital is simply an accumulation of money that rightfully belongs to the working-man. But just because of this fact, the capitalist will in the end accomplish his own destruction. He does not exert himself for his possessions. He grows rich while sleeping. He grows wealthier and wealthier in idleness, but thus he becomes morally and physically weaker. He will wax more careless as time goes on. Moreover on account of keen competition in the industrial and business world, the smaller capitalist will gradually be swallowed up by the larger and more powerful, so that they will gradually decrease in number. This state of affairs must continue for a while, must become still worse. The accumulation of capital has to assume greater proportions still; concentration of trade in the few must develop further; the oppression of the proletariat must become more unbearable. All this will continue, till at last there will be but very few capitalists who have all the world in their control, and who besides, having grown rich in idleness are morally degenerate and physically weak. But this is the very dawn of a new day. For this will be the moment, when the toiling and suffering proletarians of all the world, will rise as one man, snatch all power and wealth away from the hands of their oppressors, and take the control of the world into their own hands. Then private property shall be abolished forever, and peace and bliss shall reign in the world during this socialistic millennium, for there will be beasts of prey no more.

And, therefore, also according to Marx no great, bloody political revolution is necessary to accomplish the change. All that is necessary is that the gospel of socialism be preached to all men, and the hearts and minds of the people, especially of the proletariat be prepared for the new and surely coming order. Religion must be silenced, and art

must take its place to satisfy the desire of man's inmost heart. Meanwhile we must keep calm and abide the right moment. For the socialistic state of things will surely constitute the climax, the ultimate termination of all history, the consummation of all things! It will surely come according to the inevitable law of historical evolution.

Such is the theory that is commonly known as Marxism. It is an exposition and criticism of capital and a prophecy of its certain doom. And since historical evolution by natural and material laws, it is no less an exposition of socialism. For according to these laws the inevitable tendency of capitalism is towards socialism. His theory has been severely criticised, and as a matter of fact it is at least nominally rejected by many modern socialists, especially because of its advocacy of a passive attitude. But in spite of all this, modern socialism is still deeply influenced by Marxism, and in principle Bolshevism is nothing but this very Marxism. And after all the definition may not be so far from being correct, which would hold that Socialism is nothing but communism as it has been influenced and molded by Marxian philosophy.

It was not our purpose to pass criticism on the tremendous movement. Especially of late socialism has been its own condemnation in the eyes, at least of all Christian people, because of the manner in which it reveals itself. Neither do I think that rank socialism is our greatest danger. Whenever the devil reveals himself as plainly as he does thru manifest socialism in the world, he is easily recognized, and no child of God is apt to shake hands with him and make common cause. And therefore, a few words will suffice. In the first place, then, it may be asserted that from a mere economic point of view there are some elements in socialism which may readily be approved, but which ought never to blindfold us to its real character. We too must absolutely condemn the greedy accumulation of wealth on the part of the rich, at the expense of the laborer; we too must protest against the concentration of business and industry, which leaves no standing room for the smaller man; we too may labor for improvement of social conditions in this world, according to right and justice. And never should we become such blind antagonists of socialism as to be mere defenders of sinful capitalism. The one is as sinful as the other. But as I have already said, this admission must never close our eyes to the real character of all socialism. For in principle socialism is a denial of all that is dear to us according to God's Word. It involves a denial of God and His Sovereignty, who assigns to each one his place in the economy of this dispensation, and has instituted government to punish the evil-doer. It is a denial of the fact of sin, and seeks to find the origin of all evil in outward conditions, especially in private property. It is a denial of the spiritual at the expense of the material; it is an emphasis on the present at the expense of the future; it maintains that man's only happiness must be found in this dispensation, and that

(Concluded on Page 445)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

IV.

(Matthew 24:9-14)

Jesus, we will remember, is uttering a prophetic discourse in which he answers the question of Peter, James and John concerning the time when the destruction shall be upon Jerusalem, and, therefore, upon the whole world. For judgment must needs begin at Jerusalem, from the "house of God," I Peter 4:17; Ezekiel 9:6; Jeremiah 25:29; II Thessalonians 1:8. There where the Gospel is known, and yet not obeyed, judgment begins. From the center out in ever widening circles. For Jerusalem of the Old Testament and the Temple are the center of the revelation of God. When this is destroyed one sees a picture, a type of the end of the world. And the prophets always see this within the perspective of the final judgment of the world.

History will be one continued series of wars and rumors of wars. What is happening even in our day, in the life of the "nations," should not cause us surprise nor should it cause us undue concern. For all these things "must come to pass," Daniel 2:28, Matthew 24:6. And the Mystery of God in it all is that the center of this history is the great fact that God is declaring from the Decree, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Psalm 2:7, 8. History is full of "birthpangs." It is the "begetting of the Son" so that He may be the First-Born of all creatures, as the First-Born out of the dead, and may have the pre-eminence in all things! For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Colossians 1:15-20.

Hence, when we hear the would-be saviors preach of a different kind of world, we must not be deceived. We must give heed to the more sure prophetic word which shines as a light in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star of the eternal hope arise in our hearts! II Peter 1:19.

It will ever be wars and rumors of wars!

In verses 9-14 of this chapter the Lord depicts and exhibits the effects of this universal "beginning of sorrows" in its special effect and application upon the entire Christian church.

The *key-note* in these passages is that the church shall have *affliction in the world!* She shall be "delivered unto affliction" by these nations. And that is only because it is necessary for the trial of the faith, which is far more precious than gold which perishes; it must be found to be unto the honor and praise of this faith, as the work of God, in the

day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, I Peter 1:6, 7. The approved character of faith must be demonstrated. For the victory that overcometh the world is "faith" — faith in God, trusting in his deliverance not simply *from* afflictions, but *through* afflictions. For affliction worketh patience, and patience approvedness, and approvedness hope, and hope does not put to shame because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, Romans 5:6. If any man hath an ear let him hear. Here is the patience and faith of the saints! Revelation 13:10b.

In verse 14 we read, "then" shall they deliver you unto affliction, tribulation! The term "*tote*" in Greek is an adverb of time. The question is whether it here refers strictly to time, or whether it refers to a *kind* of time. In the Gospel of Matthew the term "*tote*" often refers to time as a special or general occasion. When there are wars and rumors of wars the nations try to overcome the "wound" of Babel. That was a deadly wound in the plan of the people for "one world." See Genesis 11:1-9; Revelation 13:3. And in so doing they "make war on the saints," Revelation 13:6; Daniel 7:21. The initiative is from these nations, the beast which cometh up out of the sea of the restless life of "nations" and the second beast, which stands in the service of the "first beast." This second beast is the false prophet. Together they are the antichristian world-power.

"Then" shall they "deliver" you to tribulation. The way of life and obedience will be exceedingly difficult. The road which leads to life, which is very "narrow" will be a way of extreme hardship. The enemies of the Christ of God and of His exaltation will press hard upon the church.

They will go "the limit." And the limitation of the world's torture-rack is that they can only *kill* the body. However, they cannot *destroy* the soul! Hence, we need not fear them. Rather we are to fear God who can "destroy" (*apolusai*) both body and soul in hell. The term employed in the Greek for "they shall kill" you is "apoktenousin." This does not simply mean to "kill" but it means to "kill off." The German renders this "abschlachten"! It refers to murder on a grand scale without reference to right and wrong. That will be the lot of the church. Here is the patience of the saints!

And the motive? They shall be constantly hating you. It is the hatred of the godless for the godly. It is Cain against Abel. The Greek emphasizes that there will be a constant hatred without let-up! The term in Greek is *esasthe misoumenoi*, a paraphrastic future passive. It will simply be the order of the day. Such is the ever repeated prediction of Jesus. See Matthew 10:16, where we read, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among the wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." And in John 16:33 we read, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

And why does the world hate God's people? We read in John 15:18-19, "If the world hate you, ye know that it

hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, *but I have chosen you out of the world*, therefore the world hateth you."

Clear language, isn't it!

This is not the ill-treatment which one receives for his faults. That is possible too. Of this Peter speaks in I Peter 3:17, where we read, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing"!

Simply because the church is the "peculiar treasure of God," His chosen generation, His royal priesthood, His holy nation—therefore is she hated by the world, killed off, afflicted. But it cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

When the heat of affliction is brought to bear upon the church it will show who has "depth of earth," and who are like the seed sown on stony ground, on hard-pan ground. Of this verse 10 speaks. Here is an implicit warning too. It is not mere prediction, but a call to be watchful unto prayer. Then (*tote*) shall many be offended.

The term offense comes from the Greek: *skandalon*. This is properly a *trapstick*, a bent stick on which bait is fastened, and so springs the trap. Hence, anything that is a trap, or snare! It is anything which one stumbles or strikes against. Here it must be offense because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. It is for this Word of God and testimony of Jesus that the world hates and persecutes the church. And when this hatred is experienced the real character of faith comes to manifestation. But it then is also manifested who do not have *true* faith, who do not bring forth fruit in patience, a hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold. For let us remember that we enter the kingdom of God through much affliction.

"Many" shall be offended. The fact is that this exhibits the truth that "many are called" but "few are chosen"! All through history "many" were offended at the straightness of the "gate" and the narrowness of the "way"! And few there are that find it! Few are ever the number that find it in proportion to the "many" who do not.

It is these "many" which are offended who become the enemies of the church. They are the "foe within"! They are the evil fish in the net of the Kingdom of heaven. Here one has the great persecution. Here is the hatred, the killing off of each other. The reason? It is hatred for God, His Word, His Christ. They will think to do God a service.

It will be an abundance of lawlessness. And this shall arise especially out of the bosom of the church. It will be the great apostasy. Always there are apostates. The measure of sin will become full. The *mystery* of iniquity will become evident. The secret nature of sin will reveal itself. And the effect will be that many will reveal this sinfulness of sin against God because of and through the trials of afflictions. There will be much religion but no power of godliness! The

fruit shall not be found on the tree which looks so promising.

The term employed by Jesus in the Greek for "iniquity shall abound" is worthy of note. The term is "*to plethunthcenai*," that is, shall be made full. The infinitive here used may be constative, simply stating a fact, or it may be durative, that is, expressing a degree of action which increases over a period of time until it reaches a climax of lawlessness. One will see this in the parallel of the days of Noah! The ungodliness of the men of the church in Noah's day was its amalgamation with the world. The difference between church and world must be erased. The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful. Athens must be wed with Jerusalem. Secularization of all things. God is not in all their thoughts—while they profess to know Him!

And then the "love of many will have the cold breath blown upon it." This love was not really present in them who perish. In those who endure to the end it may wax cold for a bit, but it will surely revive. But in the case of the many we see that they are filled with the spirit of delusion. It will be like a contagious disease. Departure from the truth will be seen in great proportion. Indifference to God, His Word, His Christ, His church will be seen on every hand. The church becomes very small in number. And it becomes really a very terrible place for the church.

But there is a note of hope. Some will "endure to the end." The Son of God defends, gathers and preserves to Himself a church. And He will preserve her right through this great "lawlessness," keeping the flame of love for God, hope for eternal life alive in her heart!

When will the "end" be? When all this beginning of birthpangs has reached its ultimate, when the last tear has been shed, when the last prayer has been uttered, and when the last sermon has been preached.

For the Gospel of the Kingdom shall continue. The Word shall not fail the church. The means of grace shall be constant to the end.

Thus this prediction of Christ ends in a note of hope, and tells us when the end shall be. It will be when the history of the church has come to its end. Then there shall be no more night, unrighteousness.

It will be the parousia of Christ, to be forever with us and we with him, when the tabernacle of God shall be with man!

G. L.

SOCIALISM

(Continued from Page 443)

it must be realized thru material things. It is, in short a denial of all that is dear to our hearts. It is a terrible red monster, dangerous to the state, dangerous to society, dangerous to the church and to the people of God's kingdom. And every child of God should stand diametrically opposed to all that calls itself socialist. A Christian-socialist is a contradiction in terms.

H. H.

IN HIS FEAR

Spiritual Bifocals

The younger generation of our readers will not be in a position to appreciate to a very great extent the above title. The wearing of glasses is either an experience which they have not had yet; or else they have not yet been introduced to the additional excitement(?) of wearing bifocals.

The above title does not fully express, either, that which we have in mind and concerning which we would write at this time. But it will serve to introduce the matter.

Bifocals are an ingenious device which enables those who require it the ability to see clearly far into the distance by means of the upper lenses in their glasses and to read with ease the fine print at close range with the lower lenses of their glasses. One who needs bifocals will have to choose, otherwise, if he prefers to have only the one type of lenses set up in the frame of his spectacles, whether he wants a pair of glasses which will help him see clearly into the distance but be unable to read his newspaper without eyestrain, or else to be able to read with ease and to have his vision blurred as far as the distant scene is concerned. There comes a time in the lives of those who need the aid of corrective lenses when their eyes are no longer able to focus correctly at both the distant scene and the fine print of his reading material. The muscles of the eye lose their tone. Age has made itself known and the body finds that it needs help from without in order to be able to live a somewhat normal life.

Spiritually you find people also who need bifocals and whose eye of faith is not always clear. Usually it may be said of these people that their distant vision is good. It is very clear; and that which they see is definite and set forth with clearly defined lines. But that which is close by they see in a very blurred and distorted way. Do you know such people? Are you perhaps one of them? Let me explain.

With the eye of faith some of God's people see the promises of God and see them as definitely and clearly as a man with perfect vision sees the distant mountain top and the brightly shining morning star. He sees the day of Christ. He sees the joys, the glory, the blessedness of the New Jerusalem in the new creation. He sees himself in that New Jerusalem. He sees Christ coming upon the clouds of heaven. He sees Satan and all his followers cast into the lake of everlasting torment. He has no trouble at all seeing the end of all God's promises. It all stands out clearly before his eye of faith.

But what is just before him, the things that happened to him today, the things that appear about to happen to him tomorrow, that which transpires during the time that he passes his sojourn here below is blurred. It is out of focus

for him. It just does not harmonize with what he sees in the distance so clearly. He cannot see, in other words, that all these present things belong to that which is so clearly before him in the future. He cannot see that all these present things work together for good and actually serve the purpose of his glory in that New Jerusalem which he sees so clearly by faith.

The disciples were to a great extent afflicted with that. Oh, they saw Jesus' kingdom — so they thought — very clearly. They saw Him as the promised Messiah and they loved Him as that Messiah. But His capture, His surrender in the Garden, His crucifixion and death were all out of focus and did not fit into the picture at all. They could see clearly into the distance but the things right before them were blurred, confused and distorted. They did not seem to belong to the same world.

Often God's people today are afflicted with this same evil. They have the eye of faith. They can see God's promises. Yea, with the eye of faith they can already see them fulfilled. But God's work with them in this life they cannot see in the right light. The pains and afflictions they suffer, the losses and griefs they endure seem to look to them as evident tokens of His displeasure and wrath. They cannot see with the Apostle Paul that "our light afflictions which are but for a moment work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things that are seen for they are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal," II Corinthians 4:17, 18.

Another example of such distorted vision we find in Asaph's personal observations in Psalm 73. He saw the wicked and was envious of them. Seeing all their prosperity and joy while he saw God's people suffer reproach and shame, persecution and ridicule, he was ready to say that he had cleansed his heart in vain and washed his hands in innocency. Oh, he still had that far-off vision that he saw the things which God promised. He still believed in God and in His promises. That is why even though his vision was so blurred he still went up to God's house. Then his vision of the things nearby cleared and he saw in what peril ungodly men stand. Then he saw the things of this life with its sufferings and sorrows in the proper light. He saw the near and the far clearly. All things were in focus for him.

Be sure to put on your spiritual bifocals when trials and distresses come your way, when wickedness seems to triumph and prosper round about you. If clean hands seem worthless and pure hearts seem vain, if it seems as tho crime pays and that those who oppose the truth and maintain with stubborn tenacity the lie are blessed of God and have things their way, put on your spiritual bifocals. You are not looking at these things correctly. You may still see the distant scene clearly, but your vision of the present matters is out of focus. Begin with Abel in Paradise and trace the history of the Church through the Scriptures and then through the history of this world. Do not overlook the abuse and bondage of

Egypt. Be sure to stand at the cross of Christ. Take a good look at Paul in all his trials as he mentions them in II Corinthians 11:22-33. Spend some time with John on the Isle of Patmos for the witness of Christ. Then look again at your lot and at that which befalls the Church of God in this life. Be sure that material success and earthly prosperity are not taken by you as an undeniable evidence of God's grace. Never mind the opinion and judgment of men. Forget not likewise that Job's friends (?) accused him of terrible sins and with vigor insisted that God was punishing him because all his material and physical possessions were taken away from him. Job had clear vision for the distant and for that which was nearby. He blessed God although he lost all his material possessions. And with an eye to the far-off future, with beautiful clarity of vision he stated, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand upon this earth at the latter day; And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another; though my reins be consumed within me," Job 19:25-27. He sees the future very clearly and can tell you in detail what will take place. But he also sees the present; and though his friends (?) would have him see it out of focus and see all things wrong, Job says also of the present things, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He knows that he has one who will redeem him out of all that present woe, one who controls and rules all these things and that these present things do not deny God's grace and love to him but rather he *still* has a living Redeemer.

Then again, there are those who live in the present and see the future very dimly. The distant scene is out of focus for them. The things that shall be in the last days they see but faintly. Nothing stands out with the definiteness that it should. Near at hand they see very clearly. What they see is gold and silver, houses and land, abundance and plenty. Or as the Pharisees of old they see their own works and are very satisfied with them. Are they not esteemed and revered of men? Have they not a large place and great influence among men? Have they not acquired fine buildings, financial assets? Can they not claim a large following and have so much that the eye can clearly see of this earth's goods? My, how God has blessed them! Oh, how good He has been to them! Who needs any special lenses to see that? Who needs spiritual bifocals to see that these indeed are the elite, the chosen of God, His favored people?

Such also speak loudly of God's blessing upon them. They utter prayers with high-sounding phrases of thanksgiving to Him for all His manifold blessings which He has(?) bestowed upon them. And then they mean material things. That they no longer have the truth in those fine, spacious and beautiful buildings; that they stand for many increasing evil practices which are loathsome in God's sight, they do not see. And therefore because they have deceived themselves by the material things close by, they see but

dimly and out of focus that appearance before the great white throne, which stands so big and clear in the future. Because they have opposed their consciences — which at first did smite them — until they have hardened themselves in their wickedness to the point where they find peace in it and actually look to the future with such distortion of fact and reality that they expect God to express His approval of it all before the judgment seat of Christ. What they now see close at hand stands out as something very good and righteous in God's sight. And that they must stand one day before the Judge of heaven and of earth is a thing way out of focus for them.

Do not forget that Jesus speaks also of such. Much, very much of the present joy and reasons(?) for thanksgiving to God today will in the day of Christ be turned to great, everlasting sorrow. That is not philosophy or an out-of-focus observation. Jesus says that to many God will declare in that day, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you." In feigned amazement they may say, "But did we not cast out devils in Thy name? Did we not do much good? Were we not an influence for good upon the whole religious world? Were we not a mighty people, strong in number and universal in our witness of Thee?" Yet in all that for which they gave thanks(?) in prayers without number, in song and speech, the judgment of Him Who presides over The Supreme Court will remain unchanged.

Let us be sure that both the present and the future stand out in clear focus and that we see both aright. Live close to the Word of God. Let it explain the present as well as present the future to your mind's eye. And do not judge God's grace and favor by material standards. For then His grace is for the evildoer and a rare thing for His people.

Rest in the Lord with quiet trust,
Wait patiently for Him;
Tho' wickedness triumphant seem,
Let not thy faith grow dim.

J. A. H.

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.

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.

In his zeal against his old enemy Philip had called, probably as early as 1305, for the canonization of Coelestine V. A second time, in 1307, Boniface's condemnation was pressed upon Clement by the king in person. But the pope knew how to prolong the prosecution on all sorts of pretexts. Philip represented himself as concerned for the interests of religion, and Nogaret and the other conspirators insisted that the assault at Avignon was a religious act, *negotium fidei*. Nogaret sent forth no less than twelve apologies defending himself for his part in the assault. In 1310 the formal trial began. Many witnesses appeared to testify against Boniface — laymen, priests and bishops. The accusations were that the pope had declared all three religions false, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Christianity, pronounced the virgin birth a tale, denied transubstantiation and the existence of hell and heaven and that he had played games of chance.

Clement issued one bull after another protesting the innocence of the offending parties concerned in the violent measures against Boniface. Philip and Nogaret were declared innocent of all guilt and to have only pure motives in preferring charges against the dead pope. The bull, *Rex glorie*, 1311, addressed to Philip, stated that the secular kingdom was founded by God and that France in the new dispensation occupied about the same place as Israel, the elect people, occupied under the old dispensation. Nogaret's purpose in entering into the agreement which resulted in the affair at Anagni was to save the Church from destruction at the hands of Boniface, and the plundering of the papal palace and church was done against the wishes of the French chancellor. In several bulls Clement recalled all punishments, statements, suspensions and declarations made against Philip and his kingdom, or supposed to have been made. And to fully placate the king, he ordered all Boniface's pronouncements of this character effaced from the books of the Roman Church. Thus in the most solemn papal form did Boniface's successor undo all that Boniface had done. When the Ecumenical Council of Vienne met, the case of Boniface was so notorious a matter that it had to be taken up. After a formal trial, in which the accused pontiff was defended by three cardinals, he was adjudged not guilty. To gain this point, and to save his predecessor from formal condemnation, it is probable Clement had to surrender to Philip unqualifiedly in the matter of the Knights of the Temple.

After long and wearisome proceedings, this order was formally legislated out of existence by Clement in 1312. Founded in 1119 to protect pilgrims and to defend the Holy Land against the Moslems, it had outlived its mission. Sapped of its energy by riches and indulgence, its once famous knights might well have disbanded and no interest been the worse for it. The story, however, of their forcible suppression awakens universal sympathy and forms one of the most thrilling and mysterious chapters of the age. Dollinger has called it "a unique drama in history."

The destruction of the Templar order was relentlessly insisted upon by Philip the Fair, and accomplished with the reluctant co-operation of Clement V. (The Templars were a military order founded in Jerusalem in 1119. They formed under the Augustinian rule one of the spiritual orders of chivalry that owed their origin to the Crusades, a knightly society on a spiritual basis and for spiritual ends. The Templars in France were a formidable obstruction against centralization of power in the hands of the king. This explains the opposition of Philip the Fair against this order and why Clement V was so reluctant to accede to the demand of the king.—H.V.) In vain did the king strive to hide the sordidness of his purpose under the thin mask of religious zeal. At Clement's coronation, if not before, Philip brought charges against it. About the same time, in the insurrection called forth by his debasement of the coin, the king took refuge in the Templars' building at Paris. In 1307 he renewed the charges before the pope. When Clement hesitated, he proceeded to violence, and on the night of Oct. 13, 1307, he had all the members of the order in France arrested and thrown into prison, including Jacques de Molay, the grand-master. Dollinger applies to this deed the strong language that, if he were to pick out from the whole history of the world the accursed day, — *dies nefastus*, — he would be able to name none other than Oct. 13, 1307. Three days later, Philip announced that he had taken this action as the defender of the faith and called upon Christian princes to follow his example. Little as the business was to Clement's taste, he was not man enough to set himself in opposition to the king, and he gradually became complaisant. The machinery of the Inquisition was called into use. The Dominicans, its chief agents, stood high in Philip's favor, and one of their number was his confessor. In 1308 the authorities of the state assented to the king's plans to bring the order to trial. The constitution of the court was provided for by Clement, the bishop of each diocese and two Franciscans and two Dominicans being associated together. A commission invested with general authority was to sit in Paris.

In the summer of 1308 the pope ordered a prosecution of the knights wherever they might be found. The charges set forth were heresy, spitting upon the cross, worshipping an idol, Bafomet — the word for Mohammed in the Provencal dialect — and also the most abominable offences against

moral decency such as sodomy and kissing the posterior parts and the navel of fellow knights. The members were also accused of having meetings with the devil who appeared in the form of a black cat and of having carnal intercourse with female demons. The charges which the lawyers and Inquisitors got together numbered 127 and these the pope sent through France and to other countries as the basis of the prosecution.

Under the strain of prolonged torture, many of the unfortunate men gave assent to these charges, and more particularly to the denial of Christ and the spitting upon the cross. The Templars seem to have had no friends in high places bold enough to take their part. The king, the pope, the Dominican order, the University of Paris, the French episcopacy were against them. Many confessions once made by the victims were afterwards recalled at the stake. Many denied the charges altogether. In Paris 36 died under torture, 54 suffered there at one burning, May 10, 1310, and 8 days later 4 more. Hundreds of them perished in prison. Even the bitterest enemies acknowledged that the Templars who were put to death maintained their innocence to their dying breath. At the trial before the bishop of Nismes in 1309, out of 32, all but three denied the charges. At Perpignan, 1310, the whole number, 25, denied the charges. At Clermont 40 confessed the order guilty, 28 denied its guilt. With such antagonistic testimonies it is difficult, if at all possible, to decide the question of guilt or innocence.

In accordance with Clement's order, trials were had in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and England. In England, Edward II at first refused to apply the torture, which was never formally adopted in that land, but later, at Clement's demand, he complied. Papal inquisitors appeared. Synods in London and York declared the charges of heresy so serious that it would be impossible for the knights to clear themselves. English houses were disbanded and the members distributed among the monasteries to do penance. In Italy and Germany the accused were, for the most part, declared innocent. In Spain and Portugal, no evidence was forthcoming of guilt and the synod of Tarragona, 1310, and other synods favored their innocence.

The last act in these hostile proceedings was opened at the Council of Vienne, called for the special purpose of taking action upon the order. The large majority of the council were in favor of giving it a new trial and a fair chance to prove its innocence. But the king was relentless. He reminded Clement that the guilt of the knights had been sufficiently proved, and insisted that the order be abolished. He appeared in person at the council, attended by a great retinue. Clement was overawed, and by virtue of his apostolic power issued his decree abolishing the Templars, March 22, 1312. Clement's reasons were that suspicions existed that the order held to heresies and other offences, that thereafter reputable persons would not enter the order, and that it was no longer

necessary for the defence of the Holy Land. Directions were given for the further procedure. The guilty were to be put to death; the innocent to be supported out of the revenues of the order. With this action the famous order passed out of existence.

The end of Jacques de Molay, the 22nd and last grand-master of the order of Templars, was worthy of its proudest days. At the first trial he confessed to the charges of denying Christ and spitting upon the cross, and was condemned, but afterwards recalled his confession. His case was reopened in 1314. With Geoffrey de Charney, grand-preceptor of Normandy, and others, he was led in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Molay then stood forth and declared that the charges against the order were false, and that he had confessed to them under the strain of torture and instructions from the king. Charney said the same. The commission promised to reconsider the case the next day. But the king's vengeance knew no bounds, and that night, March 11, 1314, the prisoners were burned. The story ran that while the flames were doing their gruesome work, Molay summoned pope and king to meet him at the judgment bar within a year. The former died, in a little more than a month, of a loathsome disease, though penitent, as it was reported, for his treatment of the order, and the king, by accident, while engaged in the chase, six months later. The king was only 46 years old at the time of his death, and 14 years after, the last of his direct descendants was in his grave and the throne passed to the house of Valois.

As for the possessions of the order, papal decrees turned them over to the Knights of St. John, but Philip again intervened and laid claim to 260,000 pounds as a reimbursement for alleged losses to the Temple and the expense of guarding the prisoners. In Spain, they passed to the orders of San Iago di Compostella and Calatrava. In Aragon, they were in part applied to a new order, Santa Maria de Montesia, and in Portugal to the Military Order of Jesus Christ, *ordo militae Jesu Christi*. Repeated demands made by the pope secured the transmission of a large part of their possessions to the Knights of St. John. In England, in 1323, parliament granted their lands to the Hospitallers, but the king appropriated a considerable share to himself. The Temple in London fell to the Earl of Pembroke, 1313. The wealth of the Templars has been greatly exaggerated. They were not richer in France than the Hospitallers. Thomas Fuller, the English historian, quaintly says, "Philip would never have taken away the Templars' lives if he might have taken away their lands without putting them to death. He could not get the honey without burning the bees."

H. V.

DECENCY and ORDER

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction

The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis and the General Synod over the Particular." Article 36, Church Order.

"Dit artikel is van beteekenis," write Van Dellen and Keegstra in their "Kerkelijk Handboek."

With this the half is not said for the article quoted is not only significant but it is of the most fundamental importance. Its principle is the groundwork upon which the structure of our Reformed ecclesiastical system is erected. The truth of this principle strikes a death-blow upon ecclesiastical anarchism and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Perhaps it would not be saying too much if we compare the thought in this article to the mortar which seals and binds the bricks in a stone wall. Such is the importance of the principle of proper ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

However, we must add one more thing to this.

Of special, very special importance is this article to us, *The Protestant Reformed Churches, of America*, because of the historic role it occupied in connection with the origin of our churches.

In the "Manual of Church Order" by W. Stuart and G. Hoeksema we find this appendage to Article 36.

"In a concrete case, and in answer to protests received questioning the right to depose a Consistory, Synod upheld this right on the following grounds:

1. *Article 36 of our Church Order gives the Classis jurisdiction over the Consistory.*
2. *Articles 79 and 80 of the Church Order, and the Formula of Subscription state plainly that censure of office-bearers shall be suspension or deposition from office. (Acts 1926, Art. 104, I, b, 1 and 2, p. 142)"*

From the Acts of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, 1926, we quote the following decision:

- a) *Synod thanks the Pre-advisory Committee on Deposition of Consistories for its excellent work, and decides that the report be taken up in the Acts, (Bijlage XVI)*
- b) *In connection with this report, and in answer to protests received, Synod upholds Classis Grand Rapids West in its action of deposing the consistories of Kalamazoo and Hope. Grounds:*
 1. *Article 36 of the Church Order gives the Classis jurisdiction over the Consistory.*
 2. *Articles 79 and 80 of the Church Order, and the Formula of Subscription state plainly that censure of office-bearers shall be suspension or deposition from office.*

It is obvious that this decision of the synod, interpreting Article 36 of the Church Order, deals particularly with the history of the deposition from office of the Revs. H. Danhof and G. M. Ophoff, with their respective Consistories. Because this matter, together with the adoption of the well-known "*Three points of Common Grace*" adopted by the Synod of 1924, constitutes the occasion of the existence of The Protestant Reformed Churches in America, it is of such importance that it may never be forgotten by the present or future generations. The Christian Reformed Church committed a gross sin in this matter and is responsible to this present day for it as well as the subsequent evils that have developed from it. From this sin we must continue to call her to repentance for it is only in the way of true repentance that the breach between us can be healed.

We do not, therefore, consider it redundant to rehearse the church political questions of 1924 in our rubric even though these matters have been much spoken of and written about in the past. The present generation will be rendered an invaluable service through such a rehearsal and the generation that lived through the history and is now in the eventide of their earthly pilgrimage can also profitably reflect upon these annals of the past.

Before we do so, however, there are a few things we must mention in connection with Article 36.

Firstly, the crux of the whole article centers about the word that in our English redaction is translated *jurisdiction*. Other terms have been suggested here. The original Latin Church Order did not use the word *jurisdictio*, but *auctoritas*, from the word *auctor*, which signifies an author, founder, originator, etc., or an advisor, counselor, promoter, pattern. *Auctoritas* indicates the right to act, order, rule, advise, or exhort. Our English word *authority* comes close to this idea. The Dutch has *zeggen* — 't Zelfde zeggen heeft de Classe . . . enz. This, too, is a strong term. Hence, others have suggested in addition to *jurisdiction* or *authority* that we speak in this connection of *the rights* or *supervision*.

Secondly, in this same connection it is interesting to note that in the Proposed Revision of the Church Order, the Committee of the Christian Reformed Synod offers the following:

"The Classis has the same control over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis, and the General Synod over the Particular Synod."

(We have been informed that the Chr. Ref. Synod of 1958 did not adopt this proposed revision as yet but that the matter will come again before later Synods.)

Now regardless of what specific term is used here, there are questions that remain and will have to be answered to arrive at an interpretation of the article. For example, whether we use *jurisdiction*, *authority*, *power*, *rights*, or *control*, it must be determined what is the nature and scope of that *jurisdiction*, *authority*, *power*, *rights* or *control*. The answer to that question will determine whether we agree or

take exception to the Christian Reformed position that asserts that the Classis has the right to depose a consistory. We will have to inquire into the problem with much care and in doing so we should not lose sight of the careful formulation of Article 36. That is very instructive and gives us a definite directive. Notice that this article says nothing about the *jurisdiction* of the Consistory over the congregation. It compares the relation of Classis to Consistory, Synod to Classis, and the General Synod to the Particular Synod and stressed that in each instance this relation is the same but it does not say that these relations are synonymous with the relation of the Consistory to the congregation. It does not say that the Classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the consistory has over the congregation, and the obvious reason it doesn't do this is because this is not true. They are not the same. There is a very important difference in the *nature of the jurisdiction* and only when this is seen can we arrive at clarity with respect to the problem. This point is very helpful in arriving at the truth of the matter.

In light of this the literal definition of the terms suggested above does not prove to be too helpful. From Webster's unabridged dictionary, we quote the pertinent parts of these definitions:

I. Authority: 1. *Legal power, or a right to command or to act*; 2. *The power derived from opinion, respect, or esteem; influence of character or office*; 3. *Testimony, witness, or the person who testifies*.

II. Jurisdiction: 1. *The legal power or authority of doing justice in cases of complaint; the power of executing the laws and distributing justice*; 2. *The power or right of exercising authority*. 3. *The district or limit within which power may be exercised*.

III. Right: *To do justice to; to relieve from wrong*.

IV. Power: *Ability, material or moral; force; influence; strength; command; legal authority, warrant*.

V. Control: *To exercise such an influence over as to guide, direct, manage or restrain; to have under command, to check*.

We stated that these definitions are not too helpful. Any one of them or all of them might conceivably be used but if nothing more be said than this, it is inadequate and may even be misleading and in some instances positively wrong. For example, in the definition of these terms mention is made of *legal power and legal authority*. This is unquestionably true when the terms are used in application to government or offices in the civil sphere but it is not the case when applied to the major ecclesiastical assemblies. In the church, *authority or jurisdiction* is not juridical or legal but rather it is always moral and spiritual since it has its derivation in the *law of God* which is spiritual (Rom. 7:14).

Then it must be evident that the Synod and Classis are vested with a *spiritual power* that is indeed a *power*! These bodies have *authority, jurisdiction, etc.* This is more than a

capacity to give advice. The Synod and Classis are more than informal conferences. They are ecclesiastical bodies that deliberate and decide in the Name of and upon the authority of Christ Jesus, the spiritual Head of the Church!

However, this jurisdiction must be carefully distinguished and never identified with the jurisdiction the consistory has over the congregation. This is evident from Article 36. The consistory, maintaining the offices of elder and deacon as instituted by Christ Himself, has sole authority to do all that Christ has commanded; to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, exercise the power of the keys of the heavenly kingdom, including and excluding from that kingdom, etc. The Classis and Synod, on the other hand, derive their *jurisdiction* from the mutual agreement of the individual churches that comprise the denomination and, therefore, in the exercise of their authority they are limited by the act of agreement to those matters "*that cannot be finished in the minor assemblies or such as pertain to the churches of the major assemblies in common*." (Article 30, D. K. O.)

We may, therefore, conclude by noting first of all that no Classis or Synod has jurisdiction to exercise the key power, to depose from office and to excommunicate from the Christian Church. To do so is to violate the *nature and scope* of their jurisdiction. Secondly, as to the differences between the jurisdiction of these assemblies and that of the particular consistory, we may cite the following five points from "The Church Order Commentary," though space forbids a full quotation:

1. *One is derived, the other is original jurisdiction.*
2. *One is limited, the other general.*
3. *One is smaller in measure, the other is higher in degree.*
4. *One is ministering, the other is compelling.*
5. *Both are conditional, i.e., valid only if in agreement with the Word of God.*

It is of further interest to note that the authors of this commentary apparently also do not agree with the action of their Synod in 1926 for they wrote in connection with this article:

"The practical import of this brief consideration is illustrated by the decision of the Synod of 1926, which ruled that major assemblies had the right to depose a Consistory inasmuch as Art. 36 attributed jurisdiction to Classes over Consistories. Now aside from the question whether or not a Classis has the right to depose a Consistory, Synod should not have based its decision on the use of the word *jurisdiction* in Art. 36, inasmuch as the use of this term is really a mistake, out of keeping with the fundamental principles of the Church Order."

G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US

Free to Celebrate Christmas in the Future?

Recently a brother gave me a printed report issued by the Committee on Un-American Activities in which they consulted a certain Dr. F. C. Schwarz, executive director of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade. The consultation took place in the office of the United States House of Representatives on Wednesday, May 29, 1957. The report is the clearest and most vivid description of the threat of Communism we have ever read. The complete title of the report, written in large letters, is: Will You Be Free To Celebrate Christmas In The Future?

The report is too long to quote in its entirety. We quote therefore the most important and interesting parts. The reader will understand that because the report is a consultation it appears in question and answer form. The director of the Committee on Un-American Activities, Richard Arens, does most of the questioning, while Dr. Schwarz provides the answers. We may add here that Dr. Schwarz, who has offices both in Australia and Long Beach, Calif., is perhaps the best informed individual in the western world on the subject of Communism. Here follows the report in brief without further comment.

Mr. Arens: May I pose this general question to you as a point of departure in your consultation with us today: How would you characterize or describe the ideology and morality of communism, and how, in your judgment, can that ideology and morality be countered or met in this world struggle?

Dr. Schwarz: The ideology of communism is applied Godless materialism. The problem that perplexes many people is the overwhelming appeal that communism apparently exercises for the student mind.

Mr. Arens: What is the nature of that appeal, Doctor?

Dr. Schwarz: The nature of that appeal is a promise that the student can achieve two things by association with the Communist Party. He can participate in the conquest of the world and, following the conquest of the world, he can then participate in a program to change human nature, perfect human character, and populate the entire earth with a new quality of personality infinitely superior to any that history has ever known. The appeal that attracts the young student is almost a religious appeal that his life can be utilized for the regeneration of all mankind.

Mr. Arens: Would you care to elaborate on that theme, Doctor?

Dr. Schwarz: When you ask the Communist a simple question: "How are you going to change human nature?" they would answer with one word, and that word is "science." "We are scientists. Science has changed the material world. Science has changed the world of animal husbandry. We can use science to change human nature itself."

This sounds very appealing. You can understand how this sounds to a young student infatuated with the techniques of science. To participate in using science for its greatest achievement is a seductive vision.

However, to be scientific you must follow scientific laws, and Communism then proceeds to give its three scientific laws. These laws are as follows:

The first one is "There is no God." They are proudly, unashamedly atheistic in theory and in practice. When they deny God, they simultaneously deny every virtue and every value that originates with God. They deny moral law. They deny absolute standards of truth and righteousness. An entire civilized code of moral and ethical values is destroyed so that they are free to erect in their place new moral and ethical standards as the occasion demands.

The second law of Communism is that man is a material machine. He is matter in motion and nothing more. Man is a body, and he is completely describable in terms of the laws of chemistry and physics. Man has no soul, no spirit, no significant individual value, no continuity of life. He is entirely an evolutionary product, the specie *Homo sapiens*, and subject to modification, adaptation, and transformation by the applied, established laws of animal husbandry.

William Z. Foster, chairman of the American Communist Party, expresses it in his book, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, which he wrote in 1949. In the last chapter, "The Advent of the Socialist Man," he writes:

"Henceforth, the evolution of human species must be done artificially by the conscious action of man himself." Their second law, therefore, is the material animal nature of man.

The third law of communism is economic determinism. It states that the qualities of human intelligence, personality, emotional and religious life merely reflect the economic environment; that in the last analysis what we think, what we feel, what we believe, whom we love, and whom we worship is simply an expression of the environment in which we are raised, and since that environment is primarily concerned with economic forces, in the first analysis, man is a determined economic being.

Mr. Arens: I can hardly restrain myself at this point from posing this question, even at the risk of breaking the theme: If the Communists' major premise is correct, that you and I are not morally responsible, then why would the Communists in the same breath turn around and try to assess moral responsibility against what they describe as the capitalists?

Dr. Schwarz: In the final analysis they do not do that. They consider themselves as superior to the capitalist as the farmer is superior to his animal. Moral responsibility is not involved. They understand capitalist motivation as the automatic outcome of the capitalist economics. Since the root is evil the fruit must be so. It is their duty to destroy the root and frequently the fruit. The concept of his moral guilt does not enter into it any more than when a farmer destroys an animal giving a positive tuberculin reaction. You do not

consider that animal morally responsible. He belongs to a certain class which by reason of its association, has developed a certain potentially dangerous character, and no matter how splendid the animal, its destruction is obligatory.

Communism rests on a class concept. They believe the proletariat class is the progressive class of history and that the capitalist classes, the degenerate classes, are discarded by history and must be destroyed. To them this is the law of historical development. To argue on a bourgeois moral basis merely reflects degenerate class origin.

Economic determinism is the third law of communism.

Applying these laws, communism asserts that the environment of capitalism is a degenerative environment and it creates degenerate people. The responsibility for individual evil, for vice and crime, for selfishness and greed in all its manifestations is not that of the individual. It is the projection of the capitalist environment into the individual.

The Communist believes that if you are going to change the individual, if you are going to change mankind, it is foolish to think that you can do it while the degenerative capitalist environment exists. First, you must conquer the world and, having conquered the world, you must destroy the capitalist environment which is built on profit, selfishness, and greed. You must replace it by socialism which is built on service, co-operation, and unselfishness, so that from birth the experiences of the environment will build into the character unselfishness, co-operation, and service, and as these children mature to adolescents and adults everyone will work because they love to work; everyone will give because it is better to give than to receive; the hand of no man will be raised in anger against his brother; there will no longer be any need for government and government will wither and die. There will be no need for a police force; there will be nothing for police to do. There will be no need for an income-tax department because everyone working, according to his natural impulses, gives of his best for the general well-being, and out of the abundance thus created retains only his own personal needs. Farewell anger, lust and greed, envy, malice and strife, pestilence and war; enter golden, companionable, co-operative brotherhood; mankind will live together in the glorious day of Communism that has dawned on the earth.

Mr. Arens: How do you account for the fact that this ideology of communism, which is contrary to all that you and I as Christians — and I say it in the broadest term — people who believe in God and believe in spiritual values, how do you account for the fact that this force called Communism, evil as it is, unappealing as it is to those with any sense in them of goodness, is sweeping across the world with a speed that is hitherto unknown in the history of the world, that it now encompasses about one-third of the population of the world from a start of about 50 years ago? How do you account for that?

Dr. Schwarz: First, the reason is their recruitment of the student intellectual, who is susceptible to the appeals of Com-

munist by reason of his educational conditioning. He accepts that materialist foundation on which Communist ideology and morality is built. He is recruited in terms of his ideological pride. He is more intelligent than the average man, and he sees the opportunity to mold man and create history, whereas the dull, brutally driven herd sweeps on unaware of the forces that create it and drive it forward. He is one of the elite, the chosen, and the intellectual aristocracy. In combination with this intellectual pride, the religious nature of man demands a purpose in life; they find in this vision of human regeneration a religious refuge for their Godless hearts . . .

Mr. Arens: Doctor, with this record reflecting your comments on the ideology and morality of Communism, we would be very happy to have you proceed to give us your views on how the free world can meet and defeat the ideology of Communism.

Dr. Schwarz: The first step of Communist conquest is the ideological conquest of the student mind. That is always the first step. Our first step should be the immunization of the student mind against that conquest by the Communists . . .

The first thing is to educate young people who believe in their God, their country, their family, their Constitution, their liberty under law and who are proud of their heritage. They then will not easily be swayed by Godless, materialistic concepts . . .

When we want people of the world to resist the Communist idea and to embrace the idea of freedom, we think that if we give them material benefits this will automatically come to pass, and so the idea is to give economic aid and military assistance in the expectation that Communism will lose its appeal and freedom will triumph.

The foundation is wrong. Materialistic measures do not control the minds and the hearts of the people. This must be done in a more direct fashion. We need a scientific approach that will utilize the moral, cultural, and spiritual values in each of these countries. We need a loving, friendly, co-operative spirit and a direct approach to their minds and hearts to mobilize them against communism . . .

Rev. M. Schipper.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby expresses its sincere sympathy with one of its members, Mrs. H. Veldman, in the loss of her brother,

BERT VAN DYKEN.

May our Heavenly Father comfort and sustain the bereaved in their sorrow.

Rev. H. H. Kuiper, President

Mrs. H. Sawyer, Secretary

REVELATION BY DREAMS AND VISIONS

In the June issue of *THE STANDARD BEARER* there appeared an article under the title "Revelation" written by the Rev. Herman Hanko. As was stated at the time, it was the first of two articles treating the general subject of the revelation of God through means of dreams and visions. If, therefore, one wishes to receive full benefit from this article, it would be well for him to go back and peruse once more the article of Rev. Hanko.

There is, perhaps, no one of us who is not familiar with the reality of that which is called a dream. Dreaming is a rather strange phenomenon of thought and imagination which often takes place within the hours of our sleep. In our dreams we are apt to find a very great variety of thoughts and images passing before our minds, often in rather strange and confusing relation to each other. Occasionally, however, we may have a dream that corresponds so closely to everyday experience that it almost seems to have been real. In either case our dreams appear to have little significance for us other than perhaps to point out certain aspects of life which weigh heavily upon our minds.

There was a day, however, when at least certain dreams were used for a much higher purpose than this. It was in the old dispensation of sacred history. In that day God often used the phenomenon of dreams to make known the counsel of His will to His people. Such dreams took on a more profound and significant pattern than any which we ever experience. Often, to be sure, on the surface these dreams appeared to be as unreal and strange as any,—for example, the dreams of Joseph, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar; yet, underlying them there was a unity and significance of very great and beautiful proportions. Those dreams were designed with a purpose, to reveal the will of God. That purpose they served in a very fitting way.

Striking among the revelatory dreams of the old dispensation were those that appeared to men that were evidently unbelievers and enemies of the Church. This is especially true in light of the point established by the article of Rev. Hanko, "that revelation is only for the elect." This would seem to be contradicted by the revelatory dreams that appeared to Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and the Midianite prior to the attack of Gideon. Surely it would seem that such are instances of God's revelation being made known to men who were not chosen and elect of God.

Concerning this there are especially two points of which we should take note. 1) These dreams, although they were made known through the agency of unbelieving men, were nevertheless made known through them to children of God,—that is, to Joseph, Daniel, and Gideon respectively, and furthermore were recorded in Holy Writ for the benefit of the church of all ages. 2) These dreams, although they had a direct meaning which was understood by the world, also had

a deeper significance in regard to the church. So Pharaoh may have been pleased to discover a way in which a crisis within his kingdom could be prevented, and the Midianite might have trembled in his foreknowledge of the outcome of the impending battle; but, in reality they saw only the more temporal and superficial aspect of the revelation. To the children of God much more was revealed. Joseph undoubtedly understood that the hand of the Lord was working in Canaan and in Egypt, intending the evil of famine to work for the good of the promised seed. Gideon saw that God was working to the salvation of His people before a wicked enemy.

Therefore, we may well conclude that such dreams had ultimate significance only for the Church. Special revelation is always and only through Jesus Christ the Word, and His Spirit. It is the Word of God concerning His promise and His people in Christ Jesus. Such truth can be grasped only by the regenerated heart; for "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Wicked people may seem to grasp certain superficial aspects of the truth, but only the elect people of God, as they are touched by the Spirit of truth, can hear and know with a knowledge that touches the heart.

Especially beautiful in this respect are the dreams that were given directly to the people of God. Outstanding among them are those in which God Himself appeared in the dream to speak to His covenant people. We are reminded of the beautiful dream that appeared to Jacob on the road to Padanaram. There as he slept with stones for pillows, he saw in a dream a stairway built up to heaven with angels of God ascending and descending, while the Lord God stood above it. There in a dream, he heard the voice of God repeating to him the glorious promises which had been given to his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, before him. One can hardly imagine the consolation received by a lonely traveler on hearing such words of truth. Another beautiful instance of dream was that which was had by Solomon in Gibeon. In I Kings 3 we find this dream recorded as an intimate spiritual conversation between Solomon and his God. In it Solomon not only heard the Word of God directed to him concerning the way in which he was to be blessed in his position as king of Israel, but he also took a very active part in the proceedings himself. He spoke giving accurate evaluation of his own spiritual attitude toward the office, consciously and with responsibility. In instances such as that we find the revelatory dream in its most beautiful form. The Lord spoke directly to the recipient of the dream and in turn the recipient consciously received the Word of God and made reply to the Lord. In this form the dream approaches the vision in significance.

We should note at this point that it is not always possible to maintain a clear and absolute distinction between dreams and visions. There are different degrees of revela-

tion in each, and, although at times they may seem very clearly distinct, at other times the difference between them is so little that they seem very much the same. So, we may clearly see a difference between the dreams of Joseph in his youth and the visions that appeared to John on Patmos, but it is not nearly so easy to find a distinction between the dream of Solomon at Gibeon and the visions of Peter at Joppa. We find in the prophecy of Daniel that the two are practically identified. We read in the first two verses of chapter seven, "In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night..."

Nonetheless we may generally note this rather evident distinction between the vision and the dream. The dream took place while the recipient was in the state of sleep. God revealed His will to such a person by controlling the thoughts and images of the mind which constituted the dream. In the vision, on the other hand, the recipient was fully awake and conscious. The revelation took place by God opening the eyes and the ears of the person to behold spiritual realities. This makes of the vision a higher type of revelation than the dream. John prefixed his record of the visions which he received on the Island of Patmos by saying: "I was in the Spirit." It was as though the individual was for a time released from the limitations of his human body and allowed to see spiritual realities and to hear spiritual words which ordinarily the human eye cannot perceive and the human ear cannot discern. That which was seen and heard in vision was not merely subjective and imaginary, something within his own mind; rather, for a time he was given a spiritual perception which transcended the earthly and could behold that which is spiritual and heavenly.

In the visions of Scripture those that beheld them were conscious at the time of the fact that they were receiving revelation from God. Such was almost necessarily so because of the very nature of visions. A person receiving a vision was allowed to behold spiritual realities, the distinctiveness of which he could hardly be unaware. It was almost as if the division between heaven and earth was momentarily bridged and the favored person was allowed to see that which ordinarily the human eye can never distinguish. Before such glorious revelations the saints were struck with the consciousness of their own unworthiness so as to cry out as did Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Hence, the recipient of a vision was at all times fully conscious and mentally alert. While the dreamer was often a passive observer of that which he saw and heard, the visionary person felt himself present and often took part in the proceedings or asked questions concerning them.

Such were brought through the vision into very intimate contact with God and His Word.

The most outstanding fact about the vision, however, is to be found in the depth of the truths that it was used to reveal. A brief perusal of Scripture might surprise some as to the frequency with which visions were used. It was by vision that God appeared to Abraham and revealed to him many of the truths concerning the promise. God spoke to Moses through the vision and revealed to him the law. It is not unlikely that the history recorded by him in Genesis was also revealed to him in this way. Isaiah and Ezekiel received the words of their prophecies through visions, to say nothing of the other prophets. A study of Paul's writings seems to imply that he was instructed through visions during the years that he was in Arabia. John, of course, received the contents of the book of Revelation through visions. Besides this, who can tell what other portions of Scripture were not received directly from God through the means of visions? Sufficient we know to judge that some of the most profound, the most doctrinal, the most heavily weighed, the most significant portions of Scripture were revealed through this medium of revelation. It would lead us to conclude that the vision was the most exacting means of revelation through which God revealed the truths concerning Himself, the promise, His people, and Jesus Christ His Son. By it He spoke to His prophets and holy men of old that His Word might be given to His people.

We should, perhaps, not conclude an article on this subject without making at least brief reference to the prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter on Pentecost, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." The question is sure to be raised: what has happened to the phenomena of dreams and visions? Why are they now silent?—But rather, should not the question be asked, "Are they silent?" We know, of course, that God no longer speaks to His people directly through dreams and visions. Revelation in that sense is silent. But the prophecy of Joel still stands also in reference to us, "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." We should remember that the essence of both dreams and visions was always to be found in the fact that God was making known to His people the truth concerning His Christ. We may not wake in the morning to say that God spoke to us while we slept. We may not be caught up in a trance to look directly into heaven beholding heavenly truths. Yet the fact remains that God speaks to His people also now. He pours forth the spirit of prophecy that the truth of Jesus Christ may be seen and understood, even more clearly than it was by the prophets of old. To rephrase the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "The man that is born again surely sees the kingdom of heaven."

B. Woudenberg.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Missionary Notes

The Dutch have a proverb which goes as follows: *onbekend maakt onbemind*, that is, "unknown is unloved"!

Such is the case also when the Home Missionary does not keep the churches a bit informed about his whereabouts and labor. Not that I feel any particular guilt in this respect. That I did not write the last while in Loveland was simply because the official secretaries of Classis and Synod were keeping the people informed as to the status of Loveland. However, now we are in the Forbes-Isabel district. And, I believe, our people in our Protestant Reformed Churches are desirous to hear about our labors and experiences, our joys and sorrows also in this field.

We intimated the last time that we are spending five days in Forbes, N. D., and nine days in Isabel, S. D., every two weeks. The reason for this arrangement is that these two churches are approximately 180 miles apart. However, that distance is not as far as it might seem to be. With a good car one can drive this distance in three and one half hours without breaking the speed and traffic laws. And the road is excellent. Forbes lies approximately one hundred and fifty (150) miles east from Isabel and about thirty miles north.

In Forbes the congregation meets in a little white school-house, rather centrally located in the group at that place. Generally we have about 16 people in church on Sunday during the services, although we are happy to report that the past two Sundays two more families have worshipped with us, so that our number was twenty-two. And the past Sunday with relatives from Michigan visiting, the number was thirty.

Here in Isabel we have our little home. It is a small house. But it has all the modern conveniences that one finds in an average home here. We have lived here for three months now; we have a beautiful and productive garden, the house is neatly painted and all is very pleasant here at our "cottage home." Flowers bloom at the corners. A good brother from Michigan, while here, remarked that it was an "echt oud-'country'-sche tuin."

Isabel has its own church. It is a little church, possibly a white school-house moved on to the large lot here in Isabel. Although it is rather primitive in design, it serves and has served the purpose for many years. In fact, Isabel was a congregation as early as 1919. Through many trials and vicissitudes the congregation continued to exist. It was especially since 1953 that Isabel began once more to experience a more vigorous life under the sound preaching of Rev. H. Mensch. Today Isabel numbers six families or 26

souls. These six families purchased a home for the minister in November of 1957. They make a payment of \$30.00 per month, so that in ten years it will be paid. This symbolizes their faith in view of the future, we believe.

The Forbes-Isabel churches contribute the amount of \$145.00 in cash toward our Mission fund per month, plus the \$30.00 per month for our home in Isabel. And some of the brethren have expressed that they feel that possibly they could do a bit more. This means that to all practical extent our Mission fund receives enough money from these churches to put two programs per week on the radio for one year. This is a fact which possibly even all the members of the past Synod were not informed of. The undersigned was not requested to speak on his present field of labor. Synod evidently did not feel any need of this. However, the undersigned believes that our people are interested. And this interest should not wane! For when interest is on the downhill trend, grumbling and criticism (sometimes wholly uncalled for and ethically unfair) are on the upgrade! And evil communications corrupt good manners!

The question may well be asked: why do these people seek the fellowship and church affiliation with the Protestant Reformed Churches? Do they do this because their "bread is buttered on that side"? Let us not be unrealistic. These brethren need our financial help too. Is that a sin? But what is a virtue, is, that they love the Reformed truth, and were willing to sever connections with the Eureka Classis *without knowing whither to turn*; whether they will be received by the Protestant Reformed Churches!

They passed through a "Sturm und Drang" period of transition. Not all hearts were equally brave. But the pillars in the church stood and others rallied about them. And they have no regrets, I am sure. They rejoice in the truth.

Next time we shall, D.V., tell you about the meetings which we conduct here and about the wonderful "field day" which these two groups enjoyed together at the Lake Hidden Wood Park near Selby, South Dakota. The latter was on the fourth of July.

May our motto ever be: *ora et labora!*

G. L.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to two of its members, Mr. G. Bylsma and Mr. L. Looyenga, in the loss of their brother and brother-in-law respectively,

MR. GEORGE BYLSMA.

May our God abundantly comfort the bereaved by His Word and Spirit and strengthen them in the hope of the saints.

P. Decker, Secretary