

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

COMFORTING SPEECH

"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

ISAIAH 40:1, 2

My text places us in the midst of the Babylonian captivity.

Isaiah is the prophet of the Lord, and, as such, he stands in a shaft of light which enables him to see the future. At the time of his writing there was some form of prosperity, rather than affliction for the people of God. When these words would be read in their full application, the people of God would be in Babylon, and consequently in the midst of suffering.

Yes, there was prosperity at the time of the writing of my text, but it was only outward prosperity. Spiritually it was dark. The people of God are described by him in chapter one. They are in a sorry plight: "A sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." And as far as their subjective condition is concerned: "From the sole of their foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

That was the state and condition of Israel, the church of the living God.

And all they could expect was that they would be turned upside down and destroyed as Sodom, and burned with pitch and sulphur as Gomorrah.

But!

There is a small remnant in Israel.

Oh that remnant!

There is a heart in the nation of God. And that heart is the work of Jehovah!

It is the shaft of light from heaven which ever shines in the very midst of Jerusalem, of Zion, of Israel-Jacob, of the Church of God.

But in spite of that remnant, rather, because of that remnant, they would be visited by Jehovah: they would be cast out of the Holy Land, and brought with great cruelty to Babylon in order to become a slave people for seventy long years.

And Isaiah beholds the Church in captivity, many years hence.

And he has comfortable words for that Church, for the Heart of Jerusalem.

These words of comfort comprise the chapters 40 to 66.

And my text is the very introduction of these words of comfort.

Isaiah is bidden to comfort that Heart; he is told to tell others to cry unto that Heart, for he would be long dead.

Neither is that all.

In every age and in every clime, these words of comfort are heard, and others are continually instructed to cry unto the Heart of Jerusalem, telling it to dry their tears, for God has remembered His people.

* * * *

I was asked once: What really is the mandate of the ministry? Tell me, in a few words, what we have to tell the Church of the living God!

My answer was this text.

And now, after so many years, I would give the same answer: It is our mandate to ever tell the church to be comforted; to cry unto her that all her warfare is accomplished, that all her sins are pardoned, on the basis that she hath received double of the Lord's hand for all her sins.

Comfort ye, comfort ye!

What is comfort?

To tell a man, a great number of men of God, the church of God, that their present evil and suffering is offset by a great good?

No.

Shall we, then, tell them that all the good salvation of God conquers all their evil?

No.

What then? This is comfort: the evil which we suffer now is necessary to bring about the good. That is comfort.

I bless God that we have the text in II Corinthians 4:17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

And so it is the whole of Scripture.

Attend to this: Blessed are those that hunger! Blessed are those that weep! Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake! Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake!

And so it was in the case of Isaiah's Israel.

Yes, they had to suffer; they had to be driven from the Holy land; the Temple of God and the Holy City had to be destroyed; they had to become a slave people for 70 years; they had to hang their harps on the willows in the midst thereof!

But it was all to the good of that *remnant*!

Here is what Jehovah would do through all this suffering: "And I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin!"

All the chastisement which the Church of God endures is unto sanctification.

It's all to the good.

* * * *

Why is this?

How is it that this thrice blessed remnant are in such a happy estate that their very affliction works unto their everlasting glory?

The answer is in the text.

They are My people!

And He that speaks this comforting message is "thy God!"

Oh yes, God has a peculiar people in this wicked world. In fact, they and they alone comprise the true world.

All the rest is dross and tin, which will be ultimately purged, separated from the remnant.

Those two phrases, "My people," and "thy God" tell a wondrous story.

It tells of eternal love and lovingkindness.

God has chosen this remnant from all eternity. And He has looked at them from everlasting. And they are graven in the palms of His hand.

And all this remnant He has given from all eternity to His Son Jesus Christ.

And it has been His eternal purpose to glorify this remnant through Jesus Christ unto such beauty as this sorry world has never seen. They shall be as the Bride of God's Son, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

It has been His eternal purpose to lead that remnant through pain and trouble throughout all the weary years of history. But the end would be glory, a glory as of the First-begotten of the Father.

This remnant would be organically united with a reprobated shell of flesh, world and devils, but instead of destroying the remnant through this horrible contact, it would make them ripe for heaven's bliss.

Afterwards, Zion would ever say: it is good for me to have been afflicted.

The deeper the misery, the higher the glory.

Be still, my heart!

* * * *

I read of warfare, iniquity, and sins.

That is our portion here below, all through the weary years.

We have warfare all our days.

As soon as the shaft of God's light strikes your heart, the warfare begins. Then it seems as though everything is against you. When the flesh, the world and the devil smell that light in you, they set themselves against you, and begin to fight you all the day long. Did you ever read Psalm 44:22, quoted by Paul in Romans and II Corinthians? Here it is: "Yea, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

It is all for God's sake, or, as Paul has it in II Cor.: "We are given over unto death for Jesus' sake," which is the same thing.

The church always bears within itself the dying of the Lord Jesus.

The Psalms speak the same language elsewhere. Attend to Psalm 126:6: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed (and that is Jesus), shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

If ye were of the world the world would love its own. That's what Jesus said. But now you are of Christ. Well, they hated Me, said Jesus, and so they will hate you.

There you have the story of the suffering of the remnant according to God's election.

* * * *

But speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem. That is the way you should read the text. I will never know why our English fathers translated Isaiah 40:1, 2 the way they did. It plainly reads in Hebrew: Speak to the heart of Jerusalem.

And all the others, all the prophets, evangelists, apostles, and ministers of the Word of God must unceasingly comfort the Heart of the Church of God.

And they must tell that remnant that she has received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.

Why double?

Furthermore, does Israel-Jacob, Jerusalem, Zion, the Church of all the ages pay for her sins, pay double for her sins, in order to go into the glorious new world?

How must that be explained? Is it then after all because of *our* satisfaction to God's outraged righteousness that we are redeemed?

No.

But here is the answer.

There is in the very Heart of the Church a Man, the only real Man, who is the Redeemer, and yes, He pays and pays and pays.

In the midst of Israel is Jehovah-Salvation, and that is Jesus.

And He is called to account for all the sins which the remnant have committed.

And He paid double for her sins.

What means that double payment? Is not God just?

How can He ask for double payment?

Here is the answer: The form of payment which Jesus paid is double. He suffered both the wrath of God, and also the wrath of the devilish world around about Him.

And in a sense that is also true of the Church of God.

Oh we know that God has loved us from all eternity, and that we do not pay in the sense that Jesus paid, sustaining the wrath of God.

But listen to this. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer!" Isa. 54:7, 8.

Be still, my heart!

G.V.

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EDITORIALS

About The Three Points

As to the answer of the committee of the Christian Reformed Church in regard to Point III, we can be brief. They simply state that the schismatics agree with them and they with the schismatics. The answer reads as follows:

"3, with respect to Point III:

"a. Both committees are agreed that the natural man performs 'civic good.'

"b. The expression is warranted in view of II Kings 10:29, 30 and Luke 6:33 and in light of the fact that the Confessions speak of 'spiritual good,' and 'saving good,' and 'truly good,' which implies another good which is not to be so characterized.

"c. It is further agreed that this 'civic good' in as far as it is not done from the root of faith, neither according to the law of God, nor to God's glory, is sinful."

We remark the following:

As to b above, it is evident that neither the schismatics nor the committee of the Christian Reformed Church are original in referring to the statements from the Confessions: "spiritual good," saving good," and "truly good." They, evidently, consulted the pamphlet written by Prof. L. Berkhof: "De Drie Punten In Alle Deelen Gereformeerd" (The Three Points Reformed In All Parts). He writes the very same thing on p. 54.

However, they do not agree with Berkhof when they simply call this so-called civic good sin. For in the same pamphlet referred to above, he writes (I translate from the Dutch):

"Nor does one have any right, on the ground of Rom. 14:23, to call all the works of the unregenerate simply sin, without any qualification. For many people it appears a settled matter, when one simply says: 'all that is not of faith is sin.' But when you read Rom. 14:23 in its entirety, it soon becomes evident that the truth one seeks in it is not found there." And then Berkhof continues to explain this verse in his own way. From this, as well as from other passages, it is evident that Berkhof does not agree with the committee of the schismatics or of the Christian Reformed Church when they declare that the "civic good" is sinful.

Besides how is it possible to call these works of the natural man sinful in view of the fact that they are performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit or of "common grace"? Does not the Second Point teach "that God by the general operations of His Spirit, without renewing the heart of man, restrains the unimpeded breaking out of sin, by which human life in society remains possible"? And is not the same thing taught in the Third Point when it declares "that God, without renewing the heart, so influences man that he is able to perform civic good"? Is what God does, even though it be through the unregenerate man, ever sinful?

Is what man does through the general operations of the Holy Spirit, even though the heart of man is not renewed, ever to be called sinful? Is, then, after all, God the author of sin. To be sure, it is the teaching of the theory of "common grace" that not man of himself but God is the ultimate Author of the "good works" which the natural man performs. If then these so-called good works are sinful, it follows that God is the Author of these sinful works.

And this is blasphemy.

Let us not camouflage the "Three Points" as both committees evidently attempt to do.

A work is either good or sinful: it cannot be both.

Hence, we must either royally retract the Third Point or let it stand the way in which the Synod of 1924 formulated it. And this holds true also for the First and Second Points.

As far as we are concerned, i.e. the Protestant Reformed Churches, we reject them with all our heart as fundamental errors.

* * * *

In conclusion, the committee of the Christian Reformed Church states the following:

"It may be stated in conclusion that the committees have come to this position through careful consideration of one another's expressed convictions, the deliberate weighing of arguments, and exhaustive discussions.

"The committee believes, in view of this fact, that this same method should be employed by all our people and that these conclusions should be carefully examined in the light of the Word of God and the Confessions, and judged in that light.

"The committee makes the following recommendations to Synod:

"1. That the conclusions of the committee be approved.

"2. That the committee, or a committee, be continued with instructions.

"3. That the Synod exhort our people to make a careful study of these matters in view of the facts that have been brought to light by the work of the committee."

I understand that the report and its conclusions have been approved and adopted by the Synod.

We will now await the results.

H.H.

Evolution, Long Periods, or Days

We still have to call attention to the creation of the woman.

After the account of Gen. 1:1-3, which speaks of the finishing of the work of creation by God and of His rest on the seventh day, there still follows an account of various details of creation on the sixth day. These details include: 1. A brief repetition of the creation of the plants and herbs. This was made especially with a view to the statement that God had not caused it to rain on the earth but that a mist went up to water the face of the earth. 2. The creation of man

from the dust of the ground and the breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. 3. The planting of the garden of Eden, the placing of man in the garden to dress and to keep it, the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil and God's command concerning it. 4. The bringing of the animals to Adam to see how he would name them. 5. And, finally, the creation of the woman. All this took place on the sixth day. This is evident, as far as the creation of the woman is concerned, from Gen. 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Also the creation of the woman, therefore, was accomplished on the sixth day while in Gen. 2 we have a more detailed account of the way in which she was created.

Of this we read in Gen. 2: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and he brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man."

On this we briefly make the following remarks:

1. Evidently, the text is intended to be understood in the literal sense of the word, as is the entire chapter. The mist that rose up from the ground, the creation of man from the dust of the ground and the breathing into his nostrils of the breath of life, the planting of the garden of Eden and the two special trees, the naming of the animals by Adam, — all this leaves the simple impression of a literal narrative of facts that occurred just as they are told in the narrative. There is nothing allegorical in the entire narrative. If we depart from the literal sense of the words and make it all allegorical, there is no end to possible speculations and one interpretation is as good as another and — as bad. The same is true of the creation of the woman. It is literally true that, in distinction from the animals, man was first created alone, that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, that He took one of man's ribs, closed up the flesh thereof, and made a woman out of it. All this is a simple description of a literal fact or it means nothing.

2. The deep sleep which God caused to fall upon Adam was, of course, not a natural sleep. It was a "deep" sleep, that is, such a sleep "in which all consciousness of the outer world and of one's own existence vanishes" (Keil). We might, perhaps, say that it was a complete anaesthetic which caused Adam to be wholly insensible. The purpose of this deep sleep was, of course, that God might be able to perform the operation by which He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the flesh thereof, entirely without pain.

3. From the rib which God had taken from Adam He made the woman and brought her unto the man. The word that is translated for rib in the Hebrew means literally "side." However, the correctness of the translation "rib" is evident from the fact that we read: "and God took one of his ribs" showing that there were several of them in the

human body. The woman, therefore, was not created out of nothing by the powerful Word of God; nor out of the dust of the ground as Adam was; but out of man. The meaning of this is twofold. First of all, it signifies that the woman was designed to stand in relation to the man in the marriage bond of natural love. And, secondly, that in that relation of marriage, the man is first and he is the head of the woman. And as such it is at the same time a picture of the relation between Christ and His Church. As Paul writes in Eph. 5:22-33: "wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

The basis of this marriage bond in all its implications lies in the fact that the woman was created out of the man.

It needs no proof that the theory of evolution can have nothing to do with this beautiful truth of Scripture. That man is directly created by God out of the dust of the ground, the evolutionist cannot accept. He prefers his own philosophy that man is evolved from the lower animal. But how utterly it must be to him that God created the woman out of the man!

But the same thing applies, as far as the creation of the woman out of the man is concerned, for those that hold that the creation days were long periods of millions or, perhaps, billions of years. They certainly cannot maintain the biblical narrative of the creation of the woman as it is found in Gen. 2. How long did it take God to create the woman? How long was Adam sunken in that deep sleep? How long was God operating on Adam to take one of his ribs and close up the flesh thereof? And how long was God busy to build a woman out of the rib he had taken from man? Five hundred thousand, a million years? You say: that is absurd. And I agree. But the absurdity is not mine. It is of those that teach that the days of creation consisted of long periods and wish, nevertheless, to leave the impression that they believe the biblical narrative of the creation of the woman.

This is not only absurd.

It is also downright dishonesty.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

The Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:14-19

What these judgments are we must see in due time. It is not told us here in detail. But notice that also the seventh trumpet is full of comfort to the faithful, while at the same time filled with threats and woe to those that oppose the kingdom of our God. When that seventh trumpet shall have been finally revealed, we shall stand in our reward, small and great, the mighty and the weak, as many as fear the name of our God. It shall do the people of God no harm, but will bring their complete salvation. On the other hand, the wicked, those that love not God and His precepts, that despise His covenant and trample under foot the blood of Christ, may also surely know that not one of God's words shall fall to the earth. It shall all be realized. The glory of God's children shall bring woe and judgment to them. And their end shall be in the pool that burns with fire and brimstone.

CHAPTER TEN

The Two Signs in Heaven

Rev. 12:1-6

1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:
2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.
3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.
4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.
5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.
6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she

hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

As we have remarked more than once, the eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation reveals to us an outline of the general history of the church in this dispensation, and that with a view especially to her final struggle and ultimate victory and the condemnation of her enemies. It pictures the church in her actual condition as false church and show church and true church. It tells us in general of the calling and work of the church in the present dispensation in the picture of the two witnesses in sackcloth. It shows us the church in her battle against Antichrist, in her apparent defeat and shame, but also in her final glorification and victory.

The same chapter, so we noticed, also gave us a general, prophetic view of the seventh trumpet and its accomplishment. It did not reveal to us the detailed work and effect of that trumpet, but merely gave us a general glimpse of it. It showed us the seventh trumpet from the point of view of the great voices that shouted in heaven and that proclaimed that now the kingdom of the world had become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Besides, the seventh trumpet was brought to our attention from the viewpoint of the elders, representatives of the church triumphant, who fell down on their faces and worshipped and thanked God Almighty. They thanked Him because He had revealed and assumed His great power. He revealed that power in the destruction of the enemies that came in wrath against Zion and against the Anointed of God. But He revealed that power also in the reward He gave to His servants the prophets and to the saints and all those that feared His name, the small and the great. And finally, we saw that seventh trumpet once more from the point of view of the earth. The inhabitants of the earth might see the temple in heaven opened and the ark of the covenant in the temple,—something that signified, as we showed, that God is about to proceed out of His temple into all creation as the Holy One, to make of all the world His temple and to realize His covenant and make His law of effect over the length and breadth of the earth. And this opening of the temple and issuing forth of the Holy One to make of all the world His temple was necessarily followed by judgments upon the wicked world, that loves not God and tramples under foot the blood of Christ.

We must remind you once more of the fact that in the future chapters you may expect individual pictures of the general facts revealed in chapter eleven. In the chapter we are about to discuss we find a revelation of the real spiritual agency that is back of the opposition and enmity against the church. In chapter eleven we noticed that there was a bitter enmity against the church, an enmity finally revealed in Antichrist, who came out of the abyss. But the question arises: what is that power? Whence comes this bitter enmity? Where is its origin? And our chapter gives us to understand that the great battle of the world is after all not simply one

between the church and the world, that it is not even one principally between Christ and Antichrist, but that in the last instance it is one between God and the devil. And we cannot understand the situation unless we grasp and appreciate this fact. And since in the future the book will more fully reveal the power of opposition that rises against the church of God on earth, we must first have an insight into the spiritual powers that are back of this bitter force of opposition. This spiritual power back of the enmity against the church is pictured in the chapter before us and is introduced in the passage we are now discussing, and which speaks of the two signs in heaven.

John beholds, according to our text, two great wonders, or signs, in heaven. In the first verse of our text he mentions one of them, when he says: "And a great sign was seen in heaven." And in the third verse he makes mention of a second sign: "And there was seen another sign in heaven." What John sees, then, is signs, or wonders. And by saying this he indicates at the same time that in the chapter before us we must not expect a literal description of something real, but symbolism, and that the passage must be explained accordingly, namely, in the symbolical sense of the word. If he had not told us, the contents of the chapter might have been sufficient indication that it must be explained in this sense. But now we know all the more certainly that here we have no literal description, but the presentation of some reality in symbolical language. A sign is something that has no significance and no reality in itself, but that is indicative of something else and that has meaning only as it stands connected with the reality which it symbolizes. And also in this connection I wish to call your attention to the fact that the Book of Revelation in regard to its symbolism explains itself. There is no one that makes the mistake of taking this chapter in the literal sense, so that the woman is a woman clothed with the real and literal sun and with the real moon under her feet. There is no one who interprets the dragon literally, as a dragon in heaven with seven heads and ten horns and a tail that draws a third part of the literal stars. Here we have symbolism, and every reader of the chapter knows that it is nothing else than symbolism.

The first wonder, or sign (we prefer the translation "sign" rather than "wonder," as also the Revised Version does), which John beholds in heaven is that of a woman. She is, on the one hand, of great and glorious appearance: for she is arrayed with the sun. In what way we must conceive of this concretely, so that we can form a picture of it in our minds, we know not. Nor does it matter, if we only remember that the sun in all its glory of light must serve to deck and adorn the woman, serve her as apparel. Under her feet she has the moon, and on her head she has a crown of twelve stars. In general we may say, therefore, that this woman as to her appearance is mighty and glorious, of so great importance that even the heavenly bodies of light must serve to add to her splendor. Even as a woman in beauty and significance is far above the apparel she wears, even as

the clothing she wears must only serve to bring out the beauty of a woman, so this woman is far above the sun and moon and stars of heaven. And these must serve to bring out the beauty and significance of the woman. On the other hand, it must also be said that with all her glory she has not yet reached the purpose of her existence and is not perfectly happy and blessed. For she is described as being pregnant and in pains and travail of birth. She lives in the expectation of motherhood and evidently is about to be delivered. A woman, therefore, of high station in life, of great importance, exalted above the heavenly bodies of light, but a woman also at the same time in distress and in helpless condition,—such is the woman that is described by John.

The second sign which is seen in heaven forms a terrible contrast with this glorious, yet helpless, woman. It is a dragon. And a dragon in Scripture seems to indicate not one of God's own created animals in its natural appearance, but rather a monster. It is an animal departing considerably from the usual type in size and shape and number of limbs, an animal that is greatly deformed, as it exists only in the imagination of man. Such a monster is here pictured. Its main feature is that of a serpent. For in the ninth verse of this chapter the great dragon is called the old serpent. And therefore we do best to picture him as a great serpent. But it is a serpent of strange appearance. In the first place, it is of a red color, the color of blood and war and destruction. In the second place, it is a serpent of tremendous proportions, as is indicated, in the first place, by the fact that the text calls him a great dragon, but, in the second place, also becomes plain from the fact that with his tail he can draw a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them down to the earth. It is therefore a great and powerful and blood-thirsty monster in the main form of a serpent that is here pictured to us. And that it is a real monster of very unnatural appearance is plain from the fact that in distinction from all other serpents this one has seven heads and ten horns. The question as to the relative position of the seven heads and ten horns is certainly irrelevant. Attempts have been made to make a picture of this great dragon with his seven heads and ten horns, some placing two horns on three of the heads, others placing the horns all on one head, and still others preferring to have three of the horns between the fifth and the sixth heads of the dragon. But John tells us nothing about their relative position, and hence we have nothing to do with it. A still further peculiarity of the dragon is that on each of his heads he carries a diadem, a royal crown; and therefore he is also a dragon with royal power and authority. And as has already been said, with one stroke of his tail he carries away the third part of the stars of heaven, and therefore reveals great power. It is a monstrous serpent of prodigious dimensions, of terrible power, with royal authority, of hideous appearance, and with a blood-thirsty and destructive nature.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Jacob's Departure from Haran

"And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee..."

Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." GENESIS 31: 3, 17, 18

With ever greater longing Jacob's heart was yearning for the land of his fathers. For this there were good reasons. Although in earthly wealth he was prospering, this only served to make his sojourn in Haran more wearisome and difficult. Seeing Jacob's wealth so rapidly increasing, his brothers-in-law were fired with bitter jealousy. He overheard them denouncing him with contemptuous complaints, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory." Furthermore, also the favor of Laban toward him had turned away. In former years when Jacob had labored diligently without receiving any real wages, Laban had always had for him a pleasant, although hypocritical, smile. But now that Jacob was receiving a just reward, he received from the covetous face of his father-in-law only acrid frowns. More and more Jacob felt himself alone, a stranger in the land. Repeatedly Jacob found his thoughts returning nostalgically to his father's home and to the vow which he had made at Bethel, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." The Lord had blessed him and increased him, and Jacob longed to return to keep his vow. Finally the angel of the Lord appeared to him and spoke, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." With this the desire of Jacob became a determination.

Nonetheless, although determined, Jacob did not immediately leave Haran because he was afraid. He was a peaceable man who always avoided open conflict. This was with him at various times both a virtue and a weakness. At certain times it enabled him when wrongfully afflicted to bear it with Godly charity and meekness. But there were other times when this same inclination led him into sin. When the truth called for him to give a bold and clear testimony, he often faltered, seeking rather to gain his ends by subterfuge and deceit. So was it at this time. Jacob was afraid of Laban. Laban was becoming increasingly dissatisfied because of

Jacob's growing wealth. It irritated him no end. Still there was for Laban a certain consolation in the fact that Jacob was his son-in-law, dwelling in his house, under his sphere of influence. This afforded Laban the opportunity to maintain a certain feeling of possessiveness over all that belonged to Jacob. Thus Jacob was afraid to inform his father-in-law of his intentions to leave. He could anticipate that Laban would become very angry and even violent. Laban might easily resort to force to make Jacob remain, or to drive him away without his family and possessions, or even to slay him. Honesty should have compelled Jacob to inform his uncle openly of his intentions, trusting in God to preserve him; but because of fear Jacob refrained.

Finally, however, the time approached for Laban to shear his sheep, and Jacob saw his opportunity. This was the one time of the year when Laban allowed Jacob to take exclusive control of his own herds, for Laban did not trust Jacob to the gathering of his valuable wool. This task he and his sons performed alone. In this Jacob saw an opportunity to escape unnoticed because Laban still kept his herds a three days' journey away from Jacob's. Still Jacob was concerned whether his wives would be willing to leave their father's house without farewells. He called them to him in the field lest his plans should be overheard and reported to Laban; and he told them of his thoughts. He told them there of the displeasure of their father which was becoming so evident, of the dishonesty of their father in always changing the term of wages to his own advantage, of the loving care of God which enabled him nonetheless to prosper, and finally of the command of God that he should go again to Canaan. Earnestly Jacob sought to persuade his wives; but soon he found that very little persuading was needed. They too had felt the sting of their father's selfishness. The fourteen years of labor which their father had extracted from Jacob for them, they saw as being nothing more than a bill of sale. Laban had not asked it so as to be assured of Jacob's ability to care for his family. He had not saved the increase that came to him through Jacob's labor so as to insure his daughters against future want as was expected of a loving father. No, he had taken all and devoured it for his own gain, returning to them not a thing. A father's love for them quite evidently did not exist. Let Jacob do what God commanded; they would willingly follow.

So it was that, while Laban sheared his sheep, Jacob gathered his family and possessions and stole silently away.

Three days later the news was brought to Laban — Jacob was gone. As was to be expected, Laban became furiously angry. Now, unless he made haste, the wealth which Jacob had gathered would be forever escaped from his power and could never be regained. Moreover, because Jacob had not had the courage to make a clean and open break, he now had an excuse for his anger. He could feign that his love for his daughters had been badly used and wounded. Gathering

together his friends, he set out in hot pursuit. Although Jacob had a six days' advantage, three days having passed before Laban learned of the departure plus the three days' journey which had originally separated their flocks, Laban with forced travel was able in seven more days to narrow the distance between them. Surely a violent and even bloody scene would have followed, for Laban undoubtedly intended to force the return at least of Jacob's wealth, had not God intervened. In the night before Laban came upon Jacob, God appeared to him and warned him to speak nothing bad to Jacob.

Although cowed by the warning of God, Laban would not turn back from confronting Jacob. He dared not bring the railing accusations and plotting treachery which he had planned; but still he could feign that his fatherly love had been wounded; and there was the matter of his idols. He had noted that his idol gods were missing from his house and concluded that Jacob had taken them. If he could discover these idols among Jacob's possessions and expose Jacob as a thief and an idolater before his God (Laban was too superficial to understand that Jacob's God knew all that had taken place) then perhaps he would still be allowed to wreak his vengeance upon him and retrieve the lost possessions.

As a man whose feelings had been deeply wounded, Laban entered Jacob's camp in mount Gilead. "What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" Touching words it would seem, almost pious, did we not know that every syllable dripped with hypocrisy.

Jacob had learned to know his uncle too well to be deceived by his words, as filled with feeling as they might have seemed. He realized full well that it was not his farewell that Laban had missed but the wealth, not the kisses of his daughters for which he longed, but the cattle. It would not have been with mirth and song that Laban sent them away, but with anger and possibly even violence. With an unexpected boldness the nephew who had always before been quietly submissive, lashed back, "Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me." Jacob would no longer bow before Laban's hypocrisy, but told him exactly what he thought. Moreover, concerning the idol gods of Laban, his conscience was clear. "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and

take it to thee." The very thought that he would steal, and a man's idol gods at that, was deeply offensive to Jacob. Little did he realize that the images were within his camp and the possession of the wife whom so dearly he loved. Had he known, how it would have hurt. Even today we look back and are shocked. It makes us to wonder, if not about Rachel's salvation, at least about the extent of her sanctification.

Confidently Laban began his search; vainly he continued it. In each and every tent he hunted, but the images were not to be found. Some of the ingenious trickery which he had so often practiced was had also by his daughter. With a clever guise she kept him from searching the camel's saddle in which the idols were hidden and upon which she sat.

Once Jacob had been justified in the eyes of all that were present, he challenged Laban with boldness. A more eloquent and forceful defense we can hardly imagine. "What is my trespass?" he demanded of Laban. "What is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

Before these accusations Laban could not stand. All that he could do was to plead, rather plaintively, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all thou seest is mine." So long had he thought of Jacob's possessions as being his own that even now he would not admit it not to be so. But he dared not push the point for there began to arise within him a fear. Reminded of the injustice that he had inflicted on his nephew and of the God who had caused Jacob nonetheless to prosper, he began to imagine that in years to come Jacob would become yet stronger and might return to Haran to bring upon him his just reward. He asked of Jacob to establish with him a covenant of friendship. There in the mount of Gilead, Jacob and Laban erected a monument of stone between them, and there they swore, "This heap of witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm."

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 14, 15

VI.

(Romans 15:7-9a)

In the section of Romans 15 beginning with verse 7 and ending with verse 13 Paul sums up the argument, giving the Theological-Christological reason why the saints in the New Testament church at Rome should receive each other; the weak in faith are to receive the strong in faith and the strong in faith are to receive those who are weak.

The first ground and incentive, as well as the pattern of such receiving of each other we have in Christ, the Servant of God, who came not to be ministered to but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Thus Paul teaches in verse 7 where we read in part “. . . even as the Christ received us (you?) unto the glory of God.”

Paul further elucidates upon this subject of what Christ did to receive us, pointing out exactly the relationship in which Christ stood to both the Jews (Circumcision) and the Gentiles, as this was necessitated in the dispensation of God! Here is the wisdom of God in Mystery! Christ became a *minister* of the Circumcision, he was made under the law, being born from a woman. For salvation is *out of the Jews*, John 4:22b. Compare further Romans 9:3-5 and Rom. 3:1.

The reason why Christ must thus become a minister to the Circumcision is that the promises of God contained in Moses, the Psalms and all the Prophets may be made steadfast to the Seed. For all God's promises are yea in Christ and in Him Amen to the glory of God the Father, II Cor. 1:20. Thus the Jew has the truth of God made sure to him in the Cross of Christ and in His resurrection. He was delivered for her offences and raised for her justification, that is, for those who are not merely out of the Circumcision, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, Rom. 3:12, and 3:24, 25.

And thus salvation comes to the “Gentiles”! It comes as pure mercy which God sovereignly gives to whomsoever He will. Thus it comes to the Gentiles through the promises made steadfast to the Circumcision. The one is not without the other! And since these are thus inseparably connected in the design and counsel of God, in the coming and ministry of Christ, let not man make a separation over “adiaphora” of meat and drink, but patiently wait for the perfecting of the work of Christ, when all shall be one, even as God and his Son are one!

We need not receive this great and crucial point in Paul's argumentation from Paul himself, but we must receive it from the clear teaching of Moses, the Psalms and all the Prophets, which for faith are the end of all contradiction, the sole rule of faith! For whatsoever was before written was

written for our teaching, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope in God! (See verse 4.) It is by the operation of the Spirit and through the clear and perspicuous teaching of the Scripture that God grants us patience and consolation! God conveys this grace through admonitions! (Canons III, IV, 17.) Let it not be forgotten!

It is, therefore, that Paul refers the readers to the Old Testament Scriptures, the accepted Canon!

And the passages which Paul selects, at first glance, seem to be taken rather at random. Yet upon closer study we notice that they are rather carefully selected and outstanding and representative passages from the Old Testament. They show that the people to whom the *Oracles of God* were entrusted (Rom. 3:1), had they understood the Scriptures, certainly could not read the Scriptures but what they would always have to ask with the Ethiopian Eunuch, when reading these Scriptures, “I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?” And does not Jesus say to the Jews in John 5:46, “For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me: for he wrote of (*peri*) me”? The *subject* of all that Moses wrote is Christ, his office, that in Him the promises are sure! And thus Paul reasons here from the Scriptures!

The passages which he quotes are Psalm 18:49 (II Sam. 22:50), which contains the Song of David. Verse 9b. This passage reads: “For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.” The second passage quoted by Paul is found in Deut. 32:43 in the Song of Moses which he sang prophetically, just before he ascended Mount Nebo to die, seeing the promised land from afar! This passage reads: “Rejoice O ye nations with his people.” Further, we notice, that the third passage is quoted from Psalm 117:1 where Israel sings in the songs of ascent, “O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him all ye peoples.” And lastly, but not the least clear passage Paul quotes from Isaiah 11:10, where the prophet foretells the blessed coming of the Christ in the words, “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek,” or as Paul quotes it from the Septuagint translation, “There shall be a Root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall they hope (trust).”

To this all Paul adds a prayer that the God of hope fill the saints with all joy and peace, causing them to abound in the hope through the power of the Holy Spirit! Verse 13.

When we look at the wealth of material here, the great scope of these quoted passages from the Old Testament we notice that they elucidate upon the entire plan of salvation, the mystery of God! And each passage quoted by Paul does so in its own milieu of the history of salvation (Heilsgeschiedenis). And each passage does so in a *critical period* of the history of God's people of the Old Covenant (Circumcision), when it becomes obvious that shall the people of the Old Testament have meaning and a mission in the realization of

the promises of God, it can only have such a mission in the promise to Abraham: "In thee and in thy Seed shall all nations be blessed." Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth! When this is clear then also the question of "meats" and "days" will be seen from the vantage-point of our relationship to this Christ, who is Lord of the living and of the dead!

It will, therefore be necessary for us to proceed rather slowly and carefully, and point out the genius of the history of Israel as here taught by Paul.

Let us then take notice, first of all, of verses 7-9a, where we read: "*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the father: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy . . .*"

Concerning this passage I would point out the following salient points:

1. That Paul here draws an inference, the only possible *spiritual-ethical* alternative from the foregoing phrase, ". . . in order that with one accord in one mouth ye should glorify God, even the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ." Such is the likemindedness which Paul prays the God of patience and consolation to give to these churches. And such likemindedness will manifest itself in singing and glorifying God in one accord. When this fruit of the lips is a continual burnt-offering unto the Lord, then the end of God in Christ is attained in the saints, his own work perfected in us. The term "in one accord" (*homothumadon* in Greek) is a beautiful word-picture. It really means with one ardor and glow, with one spontaneous impulse of the ten thousands and thousands of hearts, as wrought by the Holy Spirit and led by the "sweet singer in Israel," Christ! This term "in one accord" is employed in Scriptures both for the sinful impulse in which the wicked act in unison, and for the good, spiritual-ethical impulse of the righteous in their spiritual unity. For the former see Acts 7:58, 12:20. And for the unity of the saints in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, see Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 8:26; 15:25, etc.

2. We should notice that this inference is put in a spiritual-ethical injunction: *receive ye one another*. Incidentally, we should notice that, although it is true, and as we have pointed out earlier in this series of essays, that *dogmatics* and *ethics* are not identical, it is equally true that there is no foundation for *Christian* ethics, unless it be founded on the dogmatical truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ! Even in philosophic ethics metaphysics determines one's ethics, the question concerning right and wrong, good and evil! And thus it is ever too in Scripture. Because Christ is and does what the Scriptures teach therefore as Christians we are to live a life which is spiritually-ethically accordingly. In this case it means that we *receive* one another. The term to receive employed here in the text really means in the original Greek: to take to one's self, to take as one's com-

panion, to grant one access to one's heart! (Thayer.) Only thus will they be able to praise God in one accord, out of one mouth! Singing together, if it proceeds from faith, is spiritually-ethically possible only when we receive each other in the fellowship of saints! Behold, how pleasant and how good! (Psalm 133:1.)

3. Shall this be a reality in us then certainly it must be according to the *standard*, the measuring-rod of Christ's having tenderly and lovingly taken us to his heart, both in his labors in the state of humiliation and now in his state of exaltation! Wherefore Paul writes, ". . . as Christ also *received us* to the glory of God." Christ *received us*. There is also a reading which has "Christ received *you*." To our mind it makes really no essential difference which reading we choose. There are those who interpret the reading "you" as indicative of referring to the Gentiles in distinction from the "Jews," including Paul. We fail to see this. Paul is here not distinguishing Jew and Gentile, but includes both in this exhortation. Both are received by Christ, each in his own way dispensationally. And that, too, whether we read "you" or "us"! Now if Christ has "received" both tenderly in love, who are we to act contrary to this very unifying work of Christ?!

4. In receiving both Christ must needs do one thing, first of all. He must confirm the promises made unto the fathers. And this promise(s) is, "In thee and thy seed shall all nations be blessed," Gen. 12:18. However, *historically-covenantally* the Circumcision was "in the commonwealth of Israel." And when Christ came he came to his own things. He is born a Jew, under the law! He is circumcised on the eighth day, Luke 2:21. And he is a *minister* in the things of the house of His Father, Luke 2:49. And He is not sent but for the lost of the house of Israel. See Matthew 15:24; Acts 3:25. For only thus does Israel have a peculiar purpose in the Old Testament as a people and nation. And, therefore, Christ became a minister to the Circumcision that the promises made to the Fathers might be established. When Christ comes he takes the place of (*huper* in Greek) the promise. He is the promised one. He is the Seed! In Him all nations are blessed, and we really see Israel in its theocratic nature, that is, we see the Root of David. He is what makes Israel "Israel." He conquers, being valiant with God and man.

5. And thus *mercy* comes to the Gentiles. Thus Pentecost can fully come. The promise of the Spirit is upon all *flesh*. And the Gentiles receive a *new* song. And the Circumcision sings its old Psalms in a *new* manner. Both are led by him who sang the Psalms in humiliation, and now places these songs upon our lips in faith, singing the mighty works of God in Christ.

6. Thus all is to God's "glory." The splendour and majesty of God's virtues, who calls out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

And this all Paul will demonstrate from the Scriptures.

D.V. we will continue this in the next issue.

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

The Fear That Removes Fear

It has been said that "Man has nothing to fear but fear itself."

That is a nice piece of philosophy, but it is not the truth.

And therefore no man's fear is removed by such a nice sounding but utterly empty statement.

Scripture does not speak that way. And such a statement does not issue forth, therefore, from the spiritual principles that reside in a regenerated heart. Scripture says that the natural man has everything to fear and every reason for fear. Adam and Eve were afraid and hid under the trees of the Garden. God does not rebuke them for that fear but gives them to understand that because of their sin fear is and will be their lot. Angels with a flaming sword were placed to guard the tree of life and to fill man with fear lest he seek to return to that tree and eat again of its fruit. Every time an angel appeared to man, he trembled in fear. God sends His lightning flash and deafening thunder. Shall we stand and say to each other that we have nothing to fear but fear itself? Wars break out! Threatenings of war multiply! Bombs fall! Shells burst! Swift and gruesome death is to be seen on every side. Blood flows freely and the moaning of the dying fills the air. Shall we say to the untouched that their only danger is that they become afraid?

It were wiser far to tell man not to be afraid of being afraid.

He is afraid. Fear is never removed even when no danger seems near. The world speaks also of the survival of the fittest. And these survive only because they are constantly alert to the danger around them and in that fear of what might happen to them they are ever on their guard against the enemy. It is the beast that has not learned to fear the trap set by man who is caught. Fear can be a wonderful thing. The fear of the Lord IS a wonderful gift of His grace. Rather than to tell man that he has nothing to fear but fear itself, tell him not to be afraid to fear the Lord. That is the fear that removes fear.

Do not be afraid to live by that fear!

We say this and we write these lines at this time because of the voice of God on the one hand and the voice of wicked, godless, depraved man on the other hand. And whether we have freedom from fear will depend on whether we listen to this voice of unbelieving man, or by God's grace listen to the voice of God. Let me explain.

In the stillness of what appeared to be an ideal summer night the earth began to quake violently. A mountain top in Montana was cast into the river valley. Trees and rocks, tons of sand and debris came sweeping down the mountain

side with the sound of deafening thunder. Voices cried out in stark terror. Where would they flee? What solid ground would prove to be solid ground the next moment? The earth opened its mouth. Huge crevices appear. The road to which one would resort as an avenue of flight is heaving, buckling, cracking and being swept away. Where shall we go? Where can we go to get away from this thing? Yea, where shall we go to get away from GOD? He seems mighty omnipresent at a time like that. Just where will you stand and say, Now I have nothing to fear? And shall we rush in with a public address system and call to our fellowmen in their terror for their own lives and for the lives of their loved ones: "You have nothing to fear but fear itself"? Ah, the folly of it all. God speaks with the voice of thunder!

Did we hear it?

Was our first thought one of faith? Did we say to ourselves and to each other, God is keeping His promise? He has given us another sign of the times in which we live and of the certain coming of His Son. And then when the following week He sent another earthquake in a place diverse from this one, in Old Mexico, did we hear His voice then? How many does He need to send and how dreadful must they be before we hear Him speak? And if we did hear Him speak, did it fill our breasts with hope of the new creation which He promises after He has removed this present one? Did we in the fear of the Lord say within ourselves: This is our God forever and forever; He will be our guide even unto death"? Psalm 48:14. Do not be afraid of that fear. It will remove all your other fears and give you peace.

There is another side to this picture to which we would call your attention. In the midst of wars and rumors of wars — new ones every week — one of the most outspoken enemies of God, an avowed atheist who expresses his unbelief in the bluntest speech, the leader of a nation that is known for its society of the godless, a man whose word is not worth the paper on which it is written, a man known for breaking his promises, will this month visit our shores in a time when all men fear war, terrifying, dreadful, global war with weapons that threaten to annihilate the whole human race. Millions and millions will flock to get a glimpse of this man. O, he will be well-dressed, neat and clean and a smile will be spread over his face. There will be no evidence of the blood of countless thousands who have crossed his path and have ruthlessly been brushed aside for him. There will be nothing to show of the blood and death of our pilots whose planes have been lured over his land and shot in cold blooded murder and for amusement. He feigns not to know anything of these things.

To his words — as worthless as they have proven to be in the past — men will cling in their fear of war. To conferences with him they will look. And they will be told that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. We must not get panicky about the present cold war. Things will all come out all right if we just keep our heads and do not let fear

run away with us. Men have new hope and this visit and these conferences have reflected themselves even on the stock market. A brighter future is promised. O, cautiously men say that this cold war may last another five or ten years, but we must not let our fear get the best of us. Our power to wage war is growing by leaps and bounds. We will impress this upon the leader of this nation that threatens us. We will show him that he has every reason to fear us. It's all right that he and his nation have fear. We, in our country, must be those who have nothing to fear but fear; but our enemies better fear us. Our freedom from fear depends on their enslavement to a fear of us and our military might. (Do not forget that we were told that we had nothing to fear but fear itself at a time when we were engaged in World War II.) And in what does our nation place its confidence, in avoiding this dreadful war that looms on the horizon: an arms race of producing the most dreadful weapons in the largest amounts at a greater speed than the enemy. And while it looks as though the enemy might have an edge over us for the time being, we must have conferences and visits to show the enemy that we have that whereof they ought to fear provoking a war.

But what shall we do?

Shall we listen to this voice of God? Or shall we listen carefully and with bated breath to the words of a man who does not keep his word? Who ever has found God to be unfaithful to His word? What promise has He failed to keep? What then is wrong when man would rather listen to the words of an untrustworthy man than to the words of the unchangeably faithful God?

Let us attend to a few of the words that proceed from His mouth. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isaiah 57:21. "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given to him a great sword," Revelation 6:4. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," I Thessalonians 5:3. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division," Luke 12:51. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword," Matthew 10:34. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold: even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of

His fierce anger," Isaiah 13:9-13. And just two more passages, "For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows," Matthew 24:7, 8. And, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain," Hebrews 12:25-27.

All this shall come to pass. Listen to this word and take hold of it. Listen to the voice of God in these earthquakes in diverse places. Listen to Him in these wars and rumors of wars. Put your trust in Him and in His Word. Then you will have the fear of the Lord which removes all fear of man and of perishing in the just judgment of God. For to fear the Lord is to believe in His Son Who is THE PRINCE OF PEACE. Why run after a godless atheist who is dependent upon God for his every breath of life and whose promises have no value whatsoever? Why expect his visit to work a wonder, to change all that God in the verses above has declared shall come? Perhaps there shall be a brief thawing of the cold war; but it can only lead to and produce more war in the future. There is no peace except that peace which The Prince of Peace brings. He will not be riding in that welcome parade. He will not be at those conference tables. He is not wanted there. Prayers in His name will not be uttered. The peace the world seeks today is a peace that is rooted in the fear of the dreadful weapons of warfare man is able to make. It is a peace to be achieved by filling man with the fear of an utterly devastating war.

But seek the peace that The Prince of Peace has brought. Believe in Him and in the blood of Calvary with its justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. If God be for us who can be against us? That is the peace His fear gives us and is uttered by Paul in his letter to the believers at Rome. That fear removes all fear.

Let the recent earthquakes in diverse places and the rumors of war that come from every corner of this globe give you the right perspective, keep you looking for God to fulfill His promises and keep you from turning to men and the works of men for your peace. Listen to God when He speaks with the power of His earthquake and through the red horse that was given power to take peace from the earth. Then, and then only, can you receive the words of man in their proper worth and value. Be sober and waiting for His next word to His Church to assure her that "those things which cannot be shaken" are coming, the things of the everlasting kingdom of peace.

J.A.H.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

EXTREME UNCTION

Extreme Unction is one of Rome's minor sacraments. It is only to be administered to adults who expect that death is at hand and ask for it. One often hears of the administration of this sacrament when accidents or catastrophies occur. It is at such times that priests are seen going in and out among the unfortunates, administering this last rite of the Roman Catholic Church. What is this Roman Catholic sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The sacrament of Extreme Unction is not only administered in the Roman Catholic Church. It is also administered in the Greek Church. As far as the history of this sacrament as in the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, we read the following in the New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, and we quote: "Extreme unction is mentioned as the fifth sacrament by Peter Lombard who brings it into close connection with the sacrament of penance. He uses two passages as Biblical authorities, Mark 6:13 and James 5:14-15. These passages have, however, little to do with the sacrament as developed in the Church of Rome. Extreme unction is not often mentioned in the early Church. Augustine, Chrysostom, and Irenaeus speak of it, but do not treat it as a sacrament. Oil was, however, frequently used by Christians in private life, chiefly for the anointing of the sick. Tertullian, for instance, mentions the healing of Severus, the father of the Emperor Antoninus, with oil. Popular superstition soon exploited these experiences, and used the oil in the church lamps. Some bishops, e.g., Chrysostom and Decentius, did not object, but limited the employment to members in good standing. Innocent I also mentions the anointing of the sick, but not of the moribund (dying, at the point of death—H.V.); in case a priest was not available, laymen might perform the ceremony. Toward the end of the eighth century extreme unction entered upon a definite course of development, and was brought into relations with remission of sins; it received, consequently, a sacramental character in connection with penance. The question of the repetition of extreme unction was raised in the twelfth century. A popular superstition held that a Christian who, after participation, has been restored to health was to be looked upon as one departed: he was not to touch the ground with bare feet, eat meat, or cohabit with his wife. When Theodulf of Orleans recommended that the anointing should take place in the church, he had not in mind either exclusively or chiefly the application to the moribund. Hugo of St.

Victor was the first theologian to treat extreme unction systematically. He deals, however, only with two questions, the institution and the repetition of the sacrament. From that time on, extreme unction received more detailed attention, particularly by Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas. The latter treats it from two points of view: (1) the sacrament itself, its effect, matter, and form; (2) its administration and use, the recipients, repetition, and parts to be anointed. The principal features of the sacrament were thus fixed, and received ecclesiastical sanction at the Council of Florence (1439) through Eugene IV, and its final and definite form at the Council of Trent.

Before we quote from the decrees and the canons of the Council of Trent relative this Roman Catholic sacrament, we may say that extreme unction was administered with consecrating oil, with which the sick was anointed, and with audible prayers. The oil was to be applied to the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the lips, the hands, the feet, and the loins of the sick. By this sacrament it was supposed that the venial, not the mortal sins, were removed, while also physical relief and alleviation from suffering was effected by it, whenever this was not in conflict with the spiritual well-being of the sick (quote from Rev. Hoeksema's notes on History of Dogma).

On this sacrament of extreme unction the Roman Catholic Council of Trent has expressed itself as follows: "It hath also seemed good to the holy Synod, to subjoin to the preceding doctrine on Penance, the following on the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which by the Fathers was regarded as being the completion, not only of penance, but also of the whole Christian life, which ought to be a perpetual penance. First, therefore, as regards its institution, it declares and teaches, that our most gracious Redeemer, — who would have his servants at all times provided with salutary remedies against all the weapons of all their enemies, — as, in the other sacraments, he prepared the greatest aids, whereby, during life, Christians may preserve themselves whole from every more grievous spiritual evil, so did he guard the close of life, by the sacrament of Extreme Unction, as with a most firm defense. For though *our adversary* seeks and seizes opportunities, all our life long, to be able in any way *to devour* our souls; yet is there no time wherein he strains more vehemently all the powers of his craft to ruin us utterly, and, if he can possibly, to make us fall even from trust in the mercy of God, than when he perceives the end of our life to be at hand."

CHAPTER I

On The Institution of The Sacrament of Extreme Unction

Now, this sacred unction of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord, as truly and properly a sacrament of the new law, insinuated indeed in Mark, but recommended and promulgated to the faithful by James the Apostle, and brother of the Lord. *Is any man, he saith, sick among you? let him*

bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him. In which words, as the Church has learned from apostolic tradition, received from hand to hand, he teaches the matter, the form, the proper minister, and the effect of this salutary sacrament. For the Church has understood the matter thereof to be oil blessed by a bishop. For the unction very aptly represents the grace of the Holy Ghost, with which the soul of the sick person is invisibly anointed; and furthermore that those words, "By this unction," etc., are the form.

CHAPTER II

On The Effect Of This Sacrament.

Moreover, the thing signified, and the effect of this sacrament, are explained in those words: *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him.* For the thing here signified is the grace of the Holy Ghost; whose anointing cleanses away sins, if there be any still to be expiated, as also the remains of sins; *and raises up* and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by exciting in him a great confidence in the divine mercy; whereby the sick being supported, bears more easily the inconvenience and pains of his sickness; and more readily resists the temptations of the devil who *lies in wait for his heel*; and at times obtains bodily health, when expedient for the welfare of the soul.

CHAPTER III

On The Minister Of This Sacrament, And On The Time When It Ought To Be Administered.

And now as to prescribing who ought to receive, and who to administer this sacrament, this also was not obscurely delivered in the words above cited. For it is there also shown, that the proper ministers of this sacrament are the *Presbyters of the Church*; by which name are to be understood, in that place, not the elders by age, or the foremost in dignity amongst the people, but either bishops, or priests by bishops rightly ordained by the *imposition of the hands of the priesthood*. It is also declared, that this unction is to be applied to the sick, but to those especially who lie in such danger as to seem to be about to depart this life: whence also it is called the sacrament of the departing. And if the sick should, after having received this unction, recover, they may again be aided by the succor of this sacrament, when they fall into another like danger of death. Wherefore, they are on no account to be hearkened to, who, against so manifest and clear a sentence of the Apostle James, teach, either that this unction is a human figment or is a rite received from the Fathers, which neither has a command from God, nor a promise of grace: nor those who assert that it has already ceased, as though it were only to be referred to the grace of

healing in the primitive Church; nor those who say that the rite and usage which the holy Roman Church observes in the administration of this sacrament is repugnant to the sentiment of the Apostle James, and that it is therefore to be changed into some other; nor finally those who affirm that this Extreme Unction may without sin be contemned by the faithful; for all these things are most manifestly at variance with the perspicuous words of so great an apostle. Neither assuredly does the Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all other churches, observe aught in administering this unction,—as regards those things which constitute the substance of this sacrament,—but what blessed James has prescribed. Nor indeed can there be contempt of so great a sacrament without a heinous sin, and an injury to the Holy Ghost himself.

These are the things which this holy oecumenical Synod professes and teaches and proposes to all the faithful of Christ, to be believed and held, touching the sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction. And it delivers the following canons to be inviolably preserved; and condemns and anathematizes those who assert what is contrary thereto.

CANON I

If any one saith, that Extreme Unction is not truly and properly a sacrament, instituted by Christ our Lord, and promulgated by the blessed Apostle James; but is only a rite received from the Fathers, or a human figment: let him be anathema.

CANON II

If any one saith, that the sacred unction of the sick does not confer grace, nor remit sin, nor comfort the sick; but that it has already ceased, as though it were of old only the grace of working cures: let him be anathema.

CANON III

If any one saith, that the right and usage of Extreme Unction, which the holy Roman Church observes, is repugnant to the sentiment of the blessed Apostle James, and that is therefore to be changed, and may, without sin, be contemned by Christians: let him be anathema.

CANON IV

If any one saith, that the *Presbyters of the Church*, whom blessed James exhorts to be brought to anoint the sick, are not the priests who have been ordained by a bishop, but the elders in each community, and that for this cause a priest alone is not the proper minister of Extreme Unction: let him be anathema.

The Lord willing, we will criticize this "sacrament" of the Roman Catholic Church in our following article.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Article 12. This certainty of perseverance, however, is so far from exciting in believers a spirit of pride, or of rendering them carnally secure, that on the contrary, it is the real source of humility, filial reverence, true piety, patience in every tribulation, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering, and in confessing the truth, and of solid rejoicing in God: so that the consideration of this benefit should serve as an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as appears from the testimonies of Scripture, and the examples of the saints.

There is one small, but important, correction to be made in the above translation. The clause, "so that the consideration of this benefit should serve as an incentive . . ." ought to be: "so that the consideration of this benefit *is* an incentive . . ." The difference is quite clear, I think. In the former case there is room for doubt: the consideration of this benefit should be an incentive, but is not necessarily such an incentive. In the corrected translation you have a statement of fact: the consideration of this benefit *is* an incentive. And this translation is in harmony with both the original Latin and the accepted Dutch rendering. The importance in this article of this little correction is crucial. The Arminians said: "The certainty of perseverance excites in believers a spirit of pride and renders them carnally secure." In other words, the Arminians claim a fact, not a possibility. And therefore the only proper answer to this charge must also state a fact, not a possibility. If the consideration of this benefit merely *should be* an incentive for the practice of gratitude and good works, then the possibility still remains that it is not always such an incentive and that after all the Arminians were correct in charging that this certainty of perseverance is an incentive to a spirit of pride and carnal security. Hence, this correction is of no little importance.

When we consider the contents of this article, we notice immediately that it presents nothing essentially new. Substantially the same argument was faced in the previous chapter of the *Canons*, Articles 15-17. Still more clearly, in connection with the doctrine of sovereign election, this argument was answered in Canons I, 12, 13. And as we noted also in the latter connection, the same argument is raised and answered in our other Reformed confessions. It is the age-old argument that the doctrine of sovereign, efficacious grace

denies the responsibility of man (of the Christian) and renders him careless and profane. Were it not so often raised, it would not have to be so often answered. But it seems that Arminians never tire of the attempt to break down the bulwark of the Reformed faith with this old and worn-out weapon of calumny. Hence, we shall consider this answer once more rather carefully, especially since the article under consideration gives a rather detailed and forthright answer to the Arminian charge.

We may notice, in the first place, that while the general argument of the Arminians here is the same, namely, that this doctrine makes men careless and profane, this general argument is nevertheless made specific in this connection: the certainty of perseverance excites in believers a spirit of pride and renders them carnally secure. And the meaning of this charge is quite plain. The subject is, of course, the absolute certainty of perseverance of which the fathers have spoken in the preceding three articles. This certainty of perseverance, it is claimed, first of all, excites in believers a spirit of pride. The idea is that one who is filled with the joy and the certainty of his sure preservation is excited to exalt himself above others and from the heights of his assurance look down upon others. In the second place, it is charged by the Arminians, this certainty of perseverance renders believers carnally secure. Also this charge is well-known. It is claimed that because one has the certainty of perseverance he assumes the attitude that it is unnecessary for him to fight the spiritual battle of faith, that no matter what he does he is preserved in any case, that it is useless for him to walk in sanctification, and that, in fact, he should continue in sin that grace may abound. You may find a further description of this charge in this same chapter, the Rejection of Errors, Article 6, where the Synod rejects the errors of those who teach: "That the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance and of salvation from its own character and nature is a cause of indolence and is injurious to godliness, good morals, prayers and other holy exercises, but that on the contrary it is praiseworthy to doubt."

The quotation just given also sheds light on the purpose of this evil charge. The design is to present the truth of the certainty of perseverance as an immoral doctrine and thus to discredit it. God's truth and God's way of salvation, of course, can never be immoral. God is holy. And therefore to teach something concerning the way of salvation that is inherently immoral would be an attack upon God's own holiness. How could the holy Lord God provide an unholy way of salvation? And it is exactly the intent of this Arminian accusation to present the Reformed doctrine of the certainty of perseverance as a doctrine which leads inevitably to pride and carnal security, which is inherently injurious to godliness and good morals, to prayers and other holy exercises. We may say, therefore, that if the Arminian charge is true, it is certainly a powerful, yea, a compelling reason to discard the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance. We must certainly not hold to any doctrine that is inherently immoral. Such is

contrary to every Scriptural idea of godliness and of sound doctrine.

What may be said, then, in reply to this accusation?

Before we take up the contents of this twelfth article we may make a few prefatory observations.

And then, in the first place, we would point out that the strength of this Arminian argument may be destroyed by pointing to its origin. That origin is not Scripture, but sinful human reason. It has its origin in a mind and heart that is so bent on destroying and discrediting the truth of the Word of God in the minds of simple believers that it will not stop at anything to achieve its goal. What a simple matter it would be really, if the Reformed doctrine of perseverance was such a horribly immoral doctrine, to attack it and destroy it with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Is not that the Scriptural method? And is not that method simple? Take any false doctrine: is there a single error among them all that cannot be gainsaid by the literal quotation of Holy Scripture? But the Arminian, when Scripture fails him, must lay the Word of God aside and come with his own sinful reason, unenlightened by the Spirit of truth and not illuminated by the light of divine revelation. No, it is not wrong to use one's reason; and the use of reason is not rationalism. But it is wrong to posit the product of sinful, unsanctified, unenlightened reason over against the truth of God's Word. And this is what Arminianism does, along with all rationalism. In fact, the Arminian chooses in this instance an argument that is almost literally placed by Scripture upon the lips of the enemies of the truth in the apostle Paul's time. Cf. Romans 6:1, ff., Rom. 3:7, 8. This by itself should be enough to discredit the accusation of these enemies of the truth. This apparently pious argument is as to its origin nothing but a pious fraud!

In the second place, it cannot fail to strike one's attention that the argument presented in this article is entirely contrary to the whole tenor of this Fifth Head of Doctrine. Possibly the Arminian charge is true, but the doctrine of perseverance and the certainty of perseverance as it has been presented thus far has not sounded at all like an immoral doctrine. It sounds like the doctrine of those who are deeply concerned with the Scriptural principles of morality and godliness and who are above all mindful of the infinite perfection of holiness that is found in the God of their salvation and that characterizes all His dealings with the children of men. I ask you does this doctrine sound immoral as it is presented in Article 2, which speaks of the daily sins of infirmity and the spots that cling to the best works of the saints? Is it not the language of pious and holy men of God when this article emphasizes that these sins and spots furnish the saints with constant matter for humiliation before God, for flying for refuge to Christ crucified, for mortifying the flesh more and more by the spirit of prayer, for pressing forward to the goal of perfection? Is that immoral language? Does not Article 3 breathe an acute and deep consciousness of the reality of sin

when it emphasizes that by reason of these remains of indwelling sin those who are converted could not persevere in a state of grace if left to their own strength? Does such language sound proud and carnally secure? Does not Article 4 emphasize the responsibility of believers to be constant in watching and prayer and also warn of the dangers connected with neglecting these? Does not Article 5 strongly stress that these enormous sins highly offend God and teach that it is only in the right way of serious repentance that those who fall into these sins can again enjoy the light of God's fatherly countenance? And do not even Articles 6-8, which teach directly the Reformed doctrine of perseverance, after all emphasize very strongly the virtue of God's holiness as characterizing His very work of preservation? God is not unholy, so that He preserves people who commit the sin unto death; but He exactly in His holy mercy does not allow His own to commit that heinous sin. The holy Lord God preserves in His people the *incorruptible* seed of regeneration. He by His Word and Spirit effectually renews them to *repentance* and to a *sincere and godly sorrow for their sins*. He causes them henceforward more diligently to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. In His preserving work He manifests His own free mercy, His own immutable counsel, the merit, intercession, and preservation of Christ, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit. What, I pray you, is immoral and unholy about all this?

The same is true of the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance. This certainty springs from faith in God's promises. It springs from the testimony of the Holy Spirit. It arises from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience and to perform good works. It is the certainty of believers who struggle against carnal doubt, who face temptations, and who by the grace of God follow the way of escape from temptation, and who only in that way are inspired with the comforting assurance of persevering. Is this an immoral doctrine, a doctrine that is inherently opposed to true godliness and piety? The simple fact is that when one carefully and honestly reads these first eleven articles of Canons V, then the accusation raised and answered in Article 12 appears downright incongruous and ludicrous. One cannot imagine how anyone could have the evil courage to raise this argument against such a doctrine!

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

The wicked like the driven chaff
Are swept from off the land;
They shall not gather with the just,
Nor in the judgment stand.

The Lord will guard the righteous well,
Their way to Him is known;
The way of sinners, far from God,
Shall surely be o'erthrown.

ALL AROUND US

Editor Speaks on Matters Related to Labor.

The editor of *Christian Economics*, July 7th issue, presents two short but pointed editorials on two popular subjects related to the field of labor. With most of what he writes we find agreement. Because the editorials are brief, we quote them in their entirety. The first article appears under the title: "The Right to Strike."

"We uphold the right of a worker to strike but we do not believe he has the right to use force to prevent another from doing the work that he chooses not to do.

"A physician has the right to refuse to serve a client, but he has no right to use force to prevent the client from seeking the services of another physician.

"A milkman has right to strike but he has not right to use force to prevent another man from delivering milk to your baby.

"A teamster has a right to strike but he has no right to use coercion to prevent other men from delivering food and other essential commodities.

"The right to strike is not questioned; but if the striker has a right to use force to prevent others from doing the work which he refuses to do, that is equivalent to saying that he has a right to the power of life or death over his fellows.

"Should any individual have the right to force you to give him more of your money than you voluntarily agree to give, or if you refuse, should he have power to deny to you essential commodities and services without which your life cannot go on?"

Apart now from the question of whether or not it is always right for the worker to strike, we go along with the editor when he does not believe the worker "has the right to use force to prevent another from doing the work that he chooses not to do." We believe there may be just cause for the worker or group of workers to quit their jobs after all attempts to seek proper rectification of grievances with the management have failed. But when this situation obtains, the worker has no more claim to his job, and surely not the right to keep others from taking the job he quit.

We realize that this view is antithetical to the prevalent view of the average worker and unionist, including some who are associated with the union, C.L.A. The word "strike" in the accepted sense in which it is used in the sphere of labor today implies that the worker will use every means at his disposal to destroy the employer or anyone else who interferes with the worker in gaining his ends. No Christian, in our judgment, can go along with that conception nor with those tactics.

The second article to which we referred above is entitled: "The Right to Work." This has been a very popular subject recently, appearing even on the agenda at several polling places throughout the country, and it has found a bitter opponent in organized labor. Writes the editor:

"According to a report issued by Fortune magazine, Europe has strong labor unions but, with few exceptions, has avoided labor contracts requiring workers to belong to a union before they are employed or forcing them to join shortly thereafter.

"Even in labor-dominated Britain, the vast majority of workers are free to join a union or not, according to their own choice. Sir Charles Geddes, former president of Britain's Trade Union Congress has said:

'I do not believe in a closed shop . . . There is a fundamental issue here of the right of the individual to say whether or not he would become associated with other people . . . I want the right to exclude people from my union, but that cannot be done on the basis that everyone must belong or starve.'

"France has a strong group of labor unions but contracts are not written between labor and management requiring the former to join unions or lose their jobs.

"Germany and Italy also have powerful trade-union movements but the principle of the open-shop is recognized and practiced everywhere. This would seem to discredit the voices in America that proclaim right-to-work laws are 'union-busting' measures."

The Constitution of the United States contains several amendments in the Bill of Rights intended for the protection of our citizens and its Preamble purports to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, . . . promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity," but it makes no provision for the labor man who has religious scruples which forbid him to be yoked with ungodly and unscrupulous unions and who desires to work in the place and at the occupation of his choice. Nor does it provide for the rights of management to hire men of their choosing without intervention of the unions. We are aware that there are certain laws which the government has enacted relating to the sphere of labor and dealing with labor relations, but so far the pendulum seems to swing in favor of the unions. It also becomes increasingly apparent that the unions have gained such political stature that they dictate the policies relating to labor. But the above mentioned problem is one which could be and should be brought to the attention of our legislators for a fair solution. As the matter now stands, it would seem that the proposed liberty sought for all our citizens is not enjoyed by all.

"Union-Made Unemployment."

Most of the commodities we purchase today are labeled "Union-Made." With some the importance of the union

label is so great that they will not purchase any article unless it is so marked.

Well, there is another article which is union-made, though the union enthusiast is reluctant to admit it, and he refuses to acknowledge the label we put on it. That article is unemployment.

It is on this subject that Frank Chodorov writes in *Christian Economics* of August 4, 1959.

After Mr. Chodorov points up the great concern of "economists, politicians and humanitarians" in respect to the problem of unemployment and their serious attempt to discover the cause and the remedy, he makes this significant statement:

"Generally speaking, however, we can state categorically that when the price of commodities reaches a point when consumption is discouraged the producers will find themselves without jobs. And, insofar as organized labor, protected by the law, force prices up they do in fact disemploy themselves. They can do this by demanding wages that have no relation to productivity, and they can effect the same result by devising schemes for increasing their pay without producing anything.

"In the current discussion of unemployment and its causes, very little is being said about the upward cost-price push of what is known as featherbedding. This is the widespread practice of demanding pay for doing nothing or for doing less than what can be reasonably expected in exchange for the contractual wage. The mere listing of these featherbedding schemes would fill a sizeable book; the least we can do in our limited space is to give a few examples that conclusively prove that these practices have seriously reduced employment opportunities."

Mr. Chodorov then proceeds to produce these examples. He begins with the railroads and continues with the newspaper industry, the construction business, including the carpenters, painters and electricians. Regarding the construction business he writes:

"Economists generally regard the construction business as a barometer of the national economy. Only an affluent people buy homes, rent larger apartments or call for things made in factory buildings. A demand for buildings means a demand for steel, concrete, lumber, glass, paint and a thousand other things that go into the erection and equipment of houses. Therefore, the easier it is to acquire houses—that is, the cheaper they are in relation to earning power—the greater the number of them that will be erected and the more active the economy will be. And, the more active the economy the greater the number of people who will be profitably employed, from ditch digger to doctor.

"The unionist figures differently. He assumes that the more he can compel the contractor to put into the pay envelope, regardless of the services rendered by the construc-

tion worker, the greater the purchasing power of the worker and therefore the healthier the economy; furthermore, he assumes that regardless of price there will be only a static demand for houses and therefore only a given number of jobs. And so, he featherbeds. As a result of this attitude the cost of building is increased, according to the Associated General Contractors of America, by twenty percent. That means, roughly speaking, that a man who can afford to pay \$16,000 for a house must go without because it is priced at \$20,000, thanks to featherbedding. When he goes without, some construction workers must go without jobs. That is unemployment.

"How is this twenty percent overload accomplished? Well, the unions decree that the bricklayer who can easily lay 1000 bricks a day, as he used to, must cut the number to half; an electrician must not install more than a given number of outlets a day, even if he has to invent ways for idling away his time; carpenters must limit the number of doors they hang in eight hours; and so on. A paint brush must not be wider than four inches and the use of the more efficient paint spray is restricted. There are rules against using pipe threaded at the factory with efficient machinery and there are rules against using ready-mix concrete; slower on-the-jobs methods must be employed or construction will stop. Glaziers have gone on strike until interior fixtures had to be removed and replaced by workers on the job before the building could be completed. Hundreds of such featherbedding practices—some invented on the spot by capricious or grafting union agents—go into the twenty percent increase in construction costs."

The author of this article points out in conclusion what he calls "the rationale to support the featherbedding monstrosity." "It is known as the 'work load' theory. The theory holds that there is only a given number of jobs—regardless of what the workers may do—and it therefore behooves them to get as much as they can out of those few jobs. The fact that wages come from production, not from the capitalist, and that the greater the production the greater the consumption and the greater the number of job opportunities, is blithely overlooked. It is overlooked because it does not fit in with unionist economics."

Mr. Chodorov points out how it is possible for the unions to force featherbedding on the economy. He tells us the answer is to be found in the "monopoly power they uniquely enjoy." The unions are allowed to do what corporations and citizens are prohibited by law from doing. The Norris-La Guardia Act protects them. The author claims that unless this act is repealed, the situation will only worsen. At any rate, it becomes plain how unemployment is union-made.

M.S.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Sept. 5, 1959

South Holland has called Rev. C. Hanko from a trio which included the Revs. Heys and Vanden Berg.

Edgerton has called Rev. H. Hanko and Holland has called Rev. B. Woudenberg.

Randolph has named a trio which consists of the Revs. C. Hanko, G. Lanting and G. Vanden Berg.

Our children have gone back to school. From all our pulpits we have been admonished as to our covenant privileges and duties. In Lynden's bulletin we found this prayer: May our children be blessed of God their Covenant Saviour in the new school year, so that they confess not, as, sadly, some must: "I've *not* learned wisdom; neither have I the knowledge of the Holy One" (Prov. 30:3). May they be guarded by the truth, "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10).

Rev. C. Hanko has again taken up his duties at First Church after many weeks of recuperation. He is occupying his usual place in the pulpit, and had taken up a full schedule of family visitation.

Radio station K P U G is the Reformed Witness Hour's outlet in Bellingham, Wash. This station furnished additional opportunity for Prot. Ref. witness Saturday, Aug. 29. At that time Rev. R. C. Harbach, of Lynden, spoke on the theme, "What do we mean by the New Birth?" The next day Rev. Harbach addressed the patients in the local Christian Rest Home. Our little (membership 37) church in Lynden makes its presence known, and bears witness to the truth through every available means.

South Holland's farewell program for their pastor and his family did not mean farewell in the absolute sense of the word. Pending Classical appointments, Rev. Hoeksema shall continue to supply their pulpit the first three weeks of September.

Sept. 4, 1959 was indeed a highlight in the history of our denomination. Upon that date a Professor of Theology was formally installed into office for the first time. Rev. H. Hoeksema, Rector of our Seminary, preached the sermon which was based on II Tim. 2:1, 2, which reads, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men, who

shall be able to teach others also." The speaker developed his theme, "An Exhortation To Professors Of Theology," by explaining what they must teach, whom they must teach, and by what power they may do so. The Rector admonished the professor-elect that he must teach the Gospel in all the branches of study; that he must teach the Gospel to faithful men, while refuting the errors of faithless men; and that he can expect to do so only in the power of the grace that is in Christ Jesus through fervent prayer and diligent study. The entire service was spiritually moving to those in attendance, and impressed us of the necessity of praying for our seminary and professors in order that our churches may remain pure in doctrine through the instruction the ministers receive in that seminary. The situation was an analogy of that which prompted the Apostle Paul to write to Timothy. The professor-elect was Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, son of the Rector who had instructed his son in the doctrine of the church among many witnesses, and who was now being called by God to instruct others also in the same things that he had heard from his father. Rev. G. Vos, our next senior minister, read the form for installation and heard the responses of the professor-elect, and Professor H. C. Hoeksema closed the service by pronouncing the blessing. The evening of joy was not entirely unmingled with sadness because of the reason behind it all. Professor G. M. Ophoff has been led in ways of illness which necessitated his emeritation. Although our churches will miss his leadership in the future they also will remain affected by his leadership in the past. Emeritus Professor G. M. Ophoff, God go with you 'till we meet in the Church Triumphant; Professor H. C. Hoeksema, God bless you in the Church Militant!

Did you know that . . .

Our Missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers, and his wife were in a car-tractor collision on their way home last week. With them in the car were Mr. and Mrs. Herman De Vries from Randolph. The tractor driver turned off the road into the path of the car which struck it broadside. Both vehicles were damaged considerably, and the occupants suffered cuts and bruises. The "accident" happened near Richland Center, Wis., about 100 miles from Randolph. The Lubbers and De Vries families were taken to the hospital for treatment and x-rays. They then proceeded to Randolph and the next day Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers went home by plane. Our missionary plans to stay in the G. R. area for about a month filling preaching engagements until the Mission Committee decides his field of labor.

An Organizational meeting of the Prot. Ref. High School Society was held Sept. 15 at 8 P. M. at Southwest Church. All adult members of our churches are invited and urged to attend.

see you in church . . .

J.M.F.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Wednesday, October 7th, in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan, the Lord willing. Consistories will please take note of this in the appointment of delegates.

M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

Notice of

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE R.F.P.A.

To be held Thursday evening, Sept. 24, 8:00 o'clock at
HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH
1545 Wilson Ave., S. W., Grand Rapids 4, Mich.

Speaker: The REV. B. WOUDENBERG
of Creston Prot. Ref. Church.

Theme: THE STANDARD BEARER'S WITNESS

The Board of the R.F.P.A. invites all our Protestant Ref. members to join with us in this work of witnessing for truth and urges all to attend this important meeting.

Selection of three new Board members is to be made from the following nomination:

Messrs. G. Schimmel, G. Bol, J. King, J. Knoper, J. Dykstra, Jr. and H. Velthouse.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It has pleased our heavenly Father in His inscrutable wisdom to give to our beloved parents

REV. AND MRS. CORNELIUS HANKO

their thirtieth wedding anniversary on September 19.

Inasmuch as we are deeply grateful to our covenant God for the years they have dedicated their lives and their love for our spiritual training; and since this marks also thirty years of ministry for our father, we wish to share our gratitude with you. There will therefore be open house Saturday, September 19 from 2:00-8:00 P. M. at their home.

Rev. and Mrs. H. Hanko
Mr. and Mrs. F. Hanko
Mr. and Mrs. R. Bos
Alyce

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September 18, 1959 at 8:00 P. M.