

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

THE VOWS OF CHRIST

"My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: your heart shall live forever."

PSALM 22:25, 26

A Psalm of David!

Still, much of this Psalm cannot be attributed to David.

For instance: "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." And: "They pierced My hands and My feet."

Hence, we have in this Psalm the prophecy of the suffering and death of Christ.

But our text is taken from that part of the Psalm which speaks of Christ's victory over death and the grave.

My text speaks of the paying of His vows when He was in eternal distress.

A vow is a promise.

The Holy Scriptures often speak of the promise, but mostly of the promises or the promise of God to us.

But the Bible also speaks of promises that are made by the saints to God. Especially in the Old Testament. Almost all the patriarchs speak of their vows which they made to God. And also the prophets. But also in the New Testament we hear of man's vows to God. Remember how Paul travelled under a vow to Jerusalem.

And, strictly speaking, every Christian makes a vow at his confession of faith before the congregation, and no less, before God and His angels.

And, likewise, every Christian makes a vow when he stands up before the congregation, God and His angels, and holds his child for baptism.

Again, every Christian makes a vow when he marries the woman of his choice.

But, besides these "regular" vows, there are many other vows, which we make to God, especially when we are in distress.

Such vows are ageless.

They were uttered by David and his fellows; they are uttered by us.

Listen to this, and see if you do not find yourselves in it: "I will go into Thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, *when I was in trouble.*"

Now then, all such special vows are a weak shadow of what Christ experienced when He had His sojourn among us.

* * * *

The vows of Christ.

The vow is generally a promise to serve God, a promise to hate His enemies, a promise to fear and love Him, and a promise to praise Him forever and ever.

My praise!

Praise is to honor and to express the excellency of the object of praise.

Of Thee!

Christ promises to speak and to sing of the living God!

And, oh, how He knew Him!

He would sing of His wisdom, love, everlasting loving-kindness, and His great goodness.

Yes, but also of His righteousness, truth and holiness.

And there is no one in the whole universe who knows those virtues as Christ knows them. He experienced every one of them.

* * * *

And the sphere where these vows shall be paid is "in the great congregation."

The congregation means a number that are gathered together.

Here: the *great* congregation, that is, the whole Church of God from Adam to the last saint that shall be drawn into the bosom of God.

That congregation is a great congregation whose number is a multitude comparable to the stars in the heavens and the sand that is on the seashore.

And they are taken, gathered out of all nations, tribes, kindreds and peoples of the world.

They are in reality *the* new world.

And in particular they are those who fear Him, who seek Him, and the meek.

Those that fear Him.

It is not easy to express the content of this term. Especially since the word "fear" is also used for its very opposite. We all know that some people were rather cautious in drawing near to Jesus "for fear of the Jews."

There is the "fear" of the slave for his master and his whip.

There is the "fear" of God which is pure.

However, when we read the various places where the word "fear" is used in the good sense of the word, we can come to some definite conclusions as to its exact meaning.

First, the fear of the Lord is to love Him.

Second, the fear of the Lord is to know Him.

Third, and this comes closest to the exact meaning, the fear of the Lord is to tremble before Him, motivated by the awe which He inspires in His child.

Those that seek Him.

That follows from the fear of the Lord.

If you fear God, you know Him for what He is. And such knowledge is beyond description. It is described as the "light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is defined as "eternal life," John 17:3.

At any rate, if you have that knowledge of God, you want more of Him. You want to see Him, to have fellowship with Him, to listen to Him, to sing and to speak of Him all the day.

And so you seek Him.

And the meek.

They are a very special people.

That condition of heart and soul and life follows from the fear of God and from the seeking of God.

To be meek is to have a tremendous power to suffer.

If you are meek you are able to absorb all manner of maltreatment.

The meek are those whom Peter describes: "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered he

threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

To be meek means that you will pray for those who kick you around.

Now then, it is in the midst of those people that Christ pays His vows. In the midst of those that fear God, that seek Him, and that are meek Christ appears in all the ages.

I am thinking now of that wild, insane man, of whom everyone was afraid. But Christ came and made him meek. They found him, sitting at the feet of Jesus. He was very, very meek.

* * * *

There Christ exegetes God, which is the same thing as paying His vows. When Christ pays His vows in our midst, God is declared. There Christ tells the great congregation what and who God is.

There Christ is teaching the great congregation how we should behave before the great white Throne.

There Christ praises God, in order that we may sing along with Him.

Christ paying His vows in the midst of those that fear God, that seek Him, and that are meek, what is it but true religion and undefiled?

When you go to church on the Sabbath, you hear Christ paying His vows to God.

And that is better than life.

It is a beginning of the heavenly life.

Because heaven is nothing else but the everlasting paying of Christ's vows which He made when He was in the burning tornado of God's wrath.

Think of that when you sing Psalter Number 47, stanza 1, "My God, My God, I cry to Thee; O why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

And also stanza 11: "I live and will declare Thy fame where brethren gather in Thy name; where all Thy faithful people meet, I will Thy worthy praise repeat."

* * * *

And what is the fruit?

I will tell you.

They eat and they are satisfied.

That is more than the whole world can offer you. There you also eat, but as you eat, you die. You die by inches. You may take good, wholesome food; you may watch your diet; you may take all manner of correct vitamin pills: it will not avail. You grow old, that is, you are dying.

Neither do the things of the world give you satisfaction.

You are left destitute, hungry, unhappy, empty.

But the praises of God leave you satisfied, full to the brim, and very, very happy.

In church, at home, by the way, you eat of the heavenly manna, and that is Christ. You drink of the water of life, and that is Christ.

It is all comprised in two things.

First, the Word of Life. And that is the Bible, the written record of the hidden manna, and the water of life.

That is why we love to go to church.

Second, the Spirit of grace.

Without that Spirit of grace the Bible will not profit in the least. In fact, it were better if you never had read the Bible than to hear it without the Spirit of grace.

But when that Spirit enters your heart, all is well, for then you will take heed to the Word of God, even as Lydia, the seller of purple.

Then you begin to praise God, even as Jesus does.

And finally, their heart shall live forever.

Well, you cannot go deeper than your heart. Your heart is you. Yes, and then it is you such as no one can see it except you and God. It is the very depth of you.

If you see Jesus paying His vows to God, your heart will sing, being eternally alive to God. And that state shall continue forever and ever!

G.V.

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.

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to
Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E.,
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All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr.
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EDITORIALS

About The Three Points

The "Third Point" adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1924, reads as follows:

"Relative to the third point, which is concerned with the question of civil righteousness as performed by the unregenerate, Synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confessions, the unregenerate, though incapable of doing any saving good, can do civil good. This is evident from the quotations from Scripture and from the Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 4, and from the Netherland Confession Art. 36, which teach that God, without renewing the heart, so influences man that he is able to perform civil good; while it also appears from the citations from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology, that our Reformed fathers from ancient times were of the same opinion."

What does the committee of the schismatics that convened with the committee of the Christian Reformed Church for the purpose of discussing what could be done towards a reunion, have to say about this?

We will quote them.

"1. We agree that the natural man does at times that which is according to the letter of the law, in varying degrees shows regard for virtue and good deportment (Canons III, IV, 3). We are willing to call this civic or relative good. We do this in view of the fact that Art. 14 (its heading); Canons III, IV, 3, and also IV, B, IV use the terms 'truly good,' 'saving good,' and 'spiritual good,' thus evidently distinguishing saving good from other good.

"2. The difficulty lies here:

"a. That the good works of the natural man in Point III are lifted out of their qualifying context when Canons III, IV, 4 is not quoted in full. Hence, the antithesis between regenerate and unregenerate in respect to their works is not expressed. We do not doubt (judging from the appended Testimony) that the antithesis is presupposed, but we believe that Canons III, V, 4 ought to be quoted in its entirety to escape the danger of compromising the antithesis, especially when there is reference to the good that the unregenerate sinners do.

"b. Since the call of the gospel is not from a state of already doing good to a state of doing more good works, but from a state of disobedience to obedience (Tit. 3:3), from darkness to light (I Pe. 2:9), as well as from death to life (Eph. 2:1-6), therefore the relative good of the unregenerate is such that except he repent he shall fall into the judgment of Christ (Matt. 7:23).

"c. We repudiate the 'social gospel' which is content with an outward reform, and we hold that the natural man is neither able nor willing to dispose himself to reformation (Canons III, IV, 3), and only such works as proceed from the good root of faith are acceptable to God since they are sanctified by His grace (Art. 24, Lord's Day 33).

"3. Therefore, we propose a reformulation somewhat as follows:

"Concerning the so-called civic righteousness of the unregenerate, it appears from Scripture and the Confessions that such good is performed by them. This civic good, although acceptable to us and beneficial to society in various ways, and in certain instances characterized by Scripture as 'good' and 'right' (II Ki. 10:29, 30; Lu. 6:33), but 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. Moreover this does not in the least change the sinner's depravity, neither the need for repentance from dead works, nor does it enable him to turn to God."

On this we make the following remarks:

1. It is evident that the schismatics, although there is a good deal of confusion and, perhaps, attempts to compromise and juggling with terms in the above quotations, principally adopt the "Third Point." They, too, speak of "civic good." They, too, adopt the distinction between natural or civic and spiritual or saving good. They appeal even to the confessions for this distinction. Even to the heading of Art. 14 of the Netherland Confession they refer which speaks of man's incapacity to perform what is truly good. They draw this inference in spite of the fact that the article itself states very emphatically that the natural man is perverse and corrupt in all his ways and that all the light that is in him is darkness. They also refer to the expression "saving good" and draw the inference that the Confessions also knew of another good, although it is very plain from the context that this was not in the mind of our fathers at all: they simply opposed the Arminians. That this is true is clearly evident from a further reference to the Canons, namely, III, IV, 4, to which they also appeal. There we read: "Who teach: That the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good but that he can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life." From this it is evident that it was the Arminians that taught that the natural man could still do spiritual good, that our fathers opposed them, and that the distinction between natural and saving good was not before their mind at all. At any rate, it is evident that the schismatics principally adopt the "Third Point" and the distinction between natural and spiritual good.

2. This is also evident from their own re-formulation of the "Third Point." For there they refer to the same texts which also the Synod of 1924 quoted in support of this point. They refer to II Ki. 10:29, 30 and to Lu. 6:33. In these passages, according to them, Scripture characterizes

the works of the natural man as "good" and "right" although, according to them it is, nevertheless, sinful. Although this civic good may be acceptable to us, it is not such before God.

Let us look for a moment at these passages. How is it possible that something is right and good and yet sinful? In II Kings 10:29, 30 we read: "howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan. And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."

What do these words mean? They certainly do not mean, as the schismatics interpret them, that what Jehu did was acceptable to us or to man but not to God. The text expresses exactly the opposite. It was the Lord that said to Jehu, either directly or through a prophet, that he had done well, that he had done that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and according to all that was in his heart. What then? Do they, after all, signify that there was an operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart and mind of Jehu so that sin in him was restrained and thus he was improved so that he could do well and right? Also this is contradicted by the text in the strongest terms. For we read that Jehu did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He still worshipped the golden calves. And this he did in spite of the fact that he knew Jehovah and was well aware of the fact that the worship of the golden calves was an abomination to the Lord. And, therefore, the interpretation which the Synod of 1924 attached to these words, cannot possibly be right.

We must find an interpretation, therefore, that does justice to the entire text. We must explain, in other words, how it is possible that the Lord can judge that Jehu was a wicked man who lived wickedly and, at the same time that he did well and right in the sight of the Lord.

The answer is simple.

Jehu did neither spiritually nor morally nor ethically well and right, but he did well in executing the command of the Lord in extinguishing the house of Ahab and, too, not for the Lord's sake but for his own. Jehu had many talents and great ability. He was an able leader and general and, besides, he was very zealous, not for the Lord but for himself. He, therefore, saw in the command of the Lord an opportunity for his own exaltation. Many a wicked man has talents and ability which he uses in the service of sin. A man may be a good business man, so that he handles all his affairs well. In that case, not only we, but also the Lord judges that he does well and right. But he may, nevertheless, care only for his own advancement and nothing for the Lord. In that case, he sins while doing well. A man may be a good mechanic and even invent a new machine. Again, in that case, the Lord as well as his fellowman judges that he does

well. But if he employs all his talents and powers for his own glory or for some other sinful purpose, he sins while doing well. For all this no restraint or improving influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary at all.

This fits exactly the case of Jehu. He was, evidently, a wicked man, who cared not for Jehovah or His precepts. This, as we said before, is emphasized in the text. Moreover, he was also a very able man, a man that was fit to execute the command of the Lord concerning the house of Ahab. What he did, he accomplished quite thoroughly. But although, in this respect he did extremely well, yet in all this he sinned. That this is true is evident from the text itself which mentions that he did not depart from the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. But this is also clearly proved by the statement in Hos. 1:4: "And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel, for yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." In other words, for the very thing which Jehu did well he was punished as a matter of blood guiltiness.

As to the text to which also the Synod of 1924 as well as the schismatics refer, Lu. 6:33, that is no proof at all for either the restraint of sin or for any good that a sinner may do. The text reads as follows: "And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what reward have ye? for sinners also do even the same." It appears that the Synod of 1924 and also the schismatics were led astray by the very sound of the word "good" and concluded that here there was a clear proof that the sinner can do good works. But the text teaches the very opposite: it teaches very clearly that when sinners do good they sin. Only then we must not be led astray by the mere sound of the word "good." The term here, evidently, does not have the meaning of good in the moral sense of the word. It refers to good in the sense of benefit. Sinners do not do good, but they benefit others. Moreover, when sinners do good in that sense of the word, when they benefit others, they sin; they are influenced by sinful motives. The Lord very plainly expresses this: sinners do good to them that do good themselves. In other words, they do good in the expectation of a reward. Is this good in the moral, ethical sense of the word? Not at all. It is mere sinful selfishness. And the Lord warns His disciples not to do good in the same sense that sinners do.

But, I repeat: in principle the schismatics also adopted the "Third Point." H.H.

Announcement

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will resume its sessions for the 1959-60 curriculum, D.V., on September 15, 1959, at nine o'clock.

THE RECTOR

AS TO BOOKS

Philippians through the Revelation, by Kenneth S. Wuest, Published by the Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.50.

This is the last of a three volume work on what the author calls an expanded translation of the New Testament. It is not meant to be commentary, although, naturally, it sometimes partakes of the nature of an interpretation. I will refer to one rather striking example of this. In his remarks on II Thessalonians 2:3, the author explains the Greek word *apostasia* which in our version is rendered by "a falling away," as meaning "the departure." He then explains that "the departure" is referring to the "rapture." Accordingly, in the expanded translation the author renders vs. 3 as follows: "Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in any way because that day shall not come except the aforementioned departure (of the church to heaven) comes first and the man of lawlessness is disclosed (in his true identity) the son of perdition." Thus the whole doctrine of "the rapture" is introduced here on the basis of what is, to my mind, an arbitrary and also mistaken translation of the word *apostasia*. For this word means, indeed, a falling away, apostasy. Besides, the following context, with which the term *apostasia* must, no doubt, be connected, points to the same meaning: "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." It is evident that the *apostasia* leads to the revelation of the man of sin.

I do not mean to discredit the work of the author. All I wish to show is that the work is more than a mere expanded translation: it is also a commentary. Of this I could furnish many more examples than the above-mentioned. If the reader wishes to consult this expanded translation, especially if he does not know the Greek, he better study it critically and in the light of the context of every verse.

H.H.

The Praying Christ, by James G. S. S. Thomson. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.00.

This book I may recommend heartily and without reserve to all our readers. It is quite a thorough development of the theme "The Praying Christ." It is based from beginning to end on Scripture which, of course, is always commendable. Anyone that is willing, not only to read about, but to study this book on prayer, not only ministers and students but also the laymen, will find himself rewarded by so doing. In the first two chapters the author offers a study of the teaching and practice of prayer as our Lord taught about and practiced it. This is based on the four gospel narratives. Then follows a rather elaborate discussion of the prayer of the Lord which is recorded in John 17. (By the way, I doubt whether the author's interpretation of "I pray not for the world," etc. is correct.) Thereupon the author

gives a discussion of the Lord's Prayer. And the whole is closed by a discussion of "The Merciful and Faithful High Priest" and of the often occurring injunction in the Old Testament: "Wait on the Lord." This last chapter offers a very interesting study of eight different Hebrew words for "wait."

Heartily recommended.

H.H.

Prediking en Uitverkiezing (Preaching and Election) by Prof. C. Veenhof. Published by J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, the Netherlands.

This book is historical. It presents the history of the controversy in the Reformed Separated churches in the Netherlands about the place of election in the preaching of the Word and that, too, in the years 1850-1870. As such it is an interesting book and also instructive and informative. The main body of the book covers only 139 pages but there are almost a hundred and fifty pages of notes which the reader should not omit for they are important and, besides, they cover much more than the period between 1850 and 1870. The author even offers a brief sketch of our controversy here in America in 1924 and again in 1953.

Even though I do not agree with the viewpoint of Prof. Veenhof (as he certainly does not agree with the Prot. Ref. viewpoint) I recommend this book to our readers as far as they can still read Dutch. But do not fail to read it critically. The author, even though he writes history, nevertheless, writes with a tendency and that tendency is not only very extreme infralapsarian, but also condemnatory of supralapsarianism. Of this tendency I could refer to several examples, but I will only refer to one. It is found on pp. 80, 81. At the Synod of Franeker, 1863, an accusation of being un-Reformed was filed against Pieters and Kreulen who had written a book about infant baptism, and the Synod decided briefly as follows:

1. That the brethren could not be accused of being in conflict with the Forms of the Church.

2. That the Synod must not be understood to express hereby that the development of the doctrine of infant baptism as presented by Pieters and Kreulen is in every respect the best expression of the sentiment of the Reformed Church and is of the opinion that there is no need, at present, to declare anything more about the doctrine of the Sacraments than is already expressed in the Forms.

Now, Prof. Veenhof explains this negative decision (the brethren could *not* be accused) in such a way that the Synod declared:

1. That the sacraments seal, not anything that is present in the one that is baptized, but the promise of the covenant.
2. That the promise of the covenant is meant equally for all that are baptized.
3. That the promise of the covenant is conditional.
4. That the expression "sanctified in Christ" refers to a

(Continued on page 464)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

The Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:14-19

The sovereignty that had been announced by the voices is here, in the first place, acknowledged. They not only come down from their thrones. They not only kneel down before the Almighty. But they bow down, fall down in the dust on their faces, thus expressing that they are overwhelmed by the revelation of the sovereignty of God. O, surely, they knew that He was sovereign. They were aware of His great power. They felt assured that He would overcome His enemies to the last. But the reality of it is still so overwhelming that they all of a sudden fall down and bow with their faces in the dust. And they also place themselves on the same standpoint of that first great voice. Also they see the fulfillment, the full carrying out, of all that is implied in the seventh trumpet. And standing on that ground, from where they see the complete carrying out of the mystery of God, seeing how all is fulfilled, they are overwhelmed with the reality of the things that have happened. And they fall down and worship. So shall reality far surpass our boldest expectation. Now we are children of God. Now we have a revelation of the things that are to be, of the power of God and of His Christ that is to be revealed in the future, of the glory of the children of God that is to be revealed in them. Now we can speak, nay, stammer, about these things in imperfection; and joy fills our hearts when we speak of them. Now we fall down in humble worship and thanks whenever we obtain a glimpse of the glory of God's power and grace that is to be manifested; but it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. If these glorified elders, who at least know far more of the glory that is to be expected than we in the church militant, fall down at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when they saw all things realized, how much more will reality surpass our expectation while we are still in the period in which we are saved by hope.

That these elders actually do place themselves on this standpoint of the complete fulfillment of the seventh trumpet and of the entire mystery of God is evident too from what they say. We read that they give thanks to God Almighty, "which art, and wast." In our version there is also added: "and art to come." But this is a mistake. In the original we merely read: "which art, and wast." He has come already in the fulfillment of the seventh trumpet. And therefore they now do not make the addition which was made in a former connection, and they give thanks to God for the

fact that God has now actually assumed His great power: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Surely, they knew His great power; but now He has fully revealed it and taken it on. And this great power He has revealed in a two-fold way. He has revealed it in His wrath against the enemies of His kingdom in the first place: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, . . . and that thou shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Proleptically, once more, the elders have seen how, during the time of the seventh trumpet, the enemy made a last attempt, how they through all the history of this world warred against the holy city and trampled it under foot, how they allied themselves against God and His Christ and purposed to destroy His Zion. But He that was in the heavens laughed them to scorn. He has come to destroy them with the breath of His mouth. His power revealed itself against their power, and they were completely defeated. The devil, Antichrist, Babylon, Gog and Magog, all the enemies of the kingdom and the King have been destroyed. They that oppressed the people of God are no more. God has revealed His power and now reigns forevermore. The representatives of the church triumphant give Him thanks and worship because He has revealed His great power. But, in the second place, He has also revealed His power and the grace shown to His people, the oppressed and faithful: "And the time came to give the reward to thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great." Again, proleptically the elders see how all is accomplished. That same judgment that cast the enemies of the kingdom into the pool that burns with fire and sulphur brought the reward to the faithful. They see the new heavens and the new earth realized by the seventh trumpet. They see how God's temple is with men and how He spreads His tabernacle over them all. In that new creation they see the mighty prophets that have witnessed in the old dispensation and that have shed their lifeblood for the testimony of God. In that new creation they behold the saints of the new dispensation, they that have performed special service in the church of God. In that new creation they see the general mass of God's people, they that fear His name. And to be sure that they are not misunderstood they add: "the small and the great." Not only the prophets and the special servants, not only Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Israel and Moses and all the heroes of faith, not only the great saints of the new dispensation, the giants of faith, that shone like the stars already on earth, but also the small are among them. Those that were among the common of God's people, the little ones, the weak and the timid, but faithful children of God that feared His name, — they all have their reward, and not one is forgotten. Is it a wonder that at the sight of this the elders fall on their faces and worship and give thanks?

But this seventh trumpet is here shown also from the

viewpoint of the earth. We read in vs. 19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." The meaning of this is rather evident. It shows in general the seventh trumpet from the viewpoint of the earth at this time. For the fact that the heaven is opened and that the temple of God is seen plainly reveals that the viewpoint is on earth. And it tells us in general that the opening of the temple in heaven and the appearance of the ark of God's covenant spells woe and judgment to the inhabitants of the earth, as symbolized in the lightnings and voices and thunders and the earthquake and great hail. Let us consider these different elements for a moment.

The temple of God in Jerusalem was made after the pattern of the heavenly temple, as it was shown to Moses on the mount. The idea of the temple is that of a dwelling place of God. The temple was the house of God. It was the place where God dwelt in the holy place. But to this must be added that it was a limited place, where God dwelt in distinction from the world in general, in distinction too from the holy city at large. It speaks of the fact that in the world at large, as long as it is the kingdom of darkness, God, the Holy One, cannot take up His abode. But that distinction is only temporal. God shall not remain in His temple in distinction from the world. On the contrary, in the end that distinction shall be wiped away. God shall come forth from His holy temple in heaven, and He shall make of all the world His dwelling place. That shall be realized in the blowing of this seventh trumpet. And for that reason we here see the temple of God which is in heaven opened, symbolizing that the Holy One issues forth to make of all the world His dwelling. Somewhat the same idea is expressed in the appearance of the ark. Naturally, when the temple is opened, the ark is seen. For the ark stood in the holy place. It was in a most specific sense the symbol of the presence of God. It is called the throne of God in Scripture. It stood in the immediate presence of God, as symbolized in the cloud, and on its mercy seat the blood of atonement was sprinkled once a year. It contained the law of the covenant as well as the manna and the rod of Aaron. And therefore it is the symbol of God in His covenant greatness issuing His law to His people and blessing them with all the blessings of the covenant in the blood of atonement. That ark now appears. It tells us that the time is come that the law of God's covenant shall appear and issue forth over all the earth, that the full realization of that covenant is come, and that God shall have His throne in all the world.

But naturally, when the Holy One issues forth to make of all the world His temple, and when He is about to issue His law and realize to the full His holy covenant, this must be accompanied by the final destruction of His enemies. In the world into which the Holy One now issues forth, the enemy still reigns, and wickedness prevails. And before He can make of that world His temple, these enemies must be

destroyed. Judgments must necessarily follow the opening of the temple, judgments that will defeat the enemy and make of the world a fit temple of the Almighty. And so we actually find it. Judgments issue forth out of that open temple, as we shall see in the future. Out of that temple comes the angel with the sharp sickle, 14:17. Out of that temple come the seven angels that carry the seven bowls of wrath, ready to pour them over the earth, chapter 15, ff. Out of that temple comes the command to empty the vials that will bring the judgment of God over the enemies, 16:1. And out of that temple comes the voice that announces that all is finished after the seven vials of wrath have been poured out, 17:1. The opening of the temple spells judgment to purify the world and make it the temple of the Lord. And for that same reason we read also in the words of our text that the opening of the temple is followed by lightnings and voices and thunders and an earthquake and great hail, — all of them symbols of judgments that are about to strike the earth.

H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

(Continued from page 462)

covenant holiness and is given equally to all that are baptized.

I am quite sure that the Synod of Franeker declared nothing of the kind. Veenhof here introduced his own interpretation of the Baptism Form into the decisions of the Synod of Franeker. And this interpretation is certainly false.

Hence, I say: by all means read the book, but read it critically.

H.H.

De Ouderling en de Prediking (The Elder and the Preaching) by Dr. Ph. J. Huyser. Published by J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, the Netherlands.

This is, to my mind, a very good book which I recommend whole heartedly to all that still are able to read the Holland language. Especially do I advise our elders to read it. It does not only discuss the theory of the subject treated, but it is also permeated with many practical observations. Thus, for instance, I would call attention to what the author has to say about the prayer before the service in the consistory and especially about the length of that prayer. Writes he on p. 172: "Indeed, many prayers before the consistory enters the church, are so broad that the minister may well ask himself sometimes: for what must I presently yet pray in the church? Everything has already had a turn. For that reason, I give all the brethren elders in consideration to think once about a prayer that, during my vacation, I heard once out of the mouth of a serving elder. It consisted of not more than eight words: 'Lord, bless Thy servant and bless Thy Word.'"

But read the whole book. It is very instructive and it is written in a very clear style.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Jacob's Prosperity in Haran

"And the man (Jacob) increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses." GEN. 30:43

Fourteen years Jacob labored faithfully for Laban, and through his labors Laban's possessions prospered immensely. At Bethel God had told Jacob, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." God remained faithful to this promise; all through the years of Jacob's service for Laban in whatever work he engaged it flourished. But to Laban was all the increase. The terms under which Jacob worked had been that for fourteen years of labor he would receive the two daughters of Laban in marriage. Laban pushed these terms to the end. Though he increased beyond the greatest expectation, Laban relented from the harshness of his agreement not one iota.

Patiently and faithfully Jacob kept his contract; but, quite naturally, no sooner was this done, than his thoughts turned back to the home of his father and the promised land of Canaan. The loveless presence of Laban held for him no attraction; while, in the land of his fathers, the promise of God awaited. To Laban he said, "Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee." These words afforded no pleasure to Laban, for he could not escape the fact that all of his prosperity came through Jacob. It was a hard thing for him to admit, and surely he had never expressed it before. It would have satisfied him more if he could have ascribed it to himself. But the facts were perfectly evident; and, even more, he had consulted a magical oracle which guided by the hand of God affirmed it. Now, because he knew it was true, and hoping to regain the favor of Jacob, he, with tones of false benevolence, admitted it. "I pray thee," he said to Jacob, "if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience (*or* I have divined RV) that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake . . . Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it."

Laban having admitted it, Jacob was not one to let him forget. So as to impress the truth upon Laban, Jacob elaborated on what had been said. "Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming." Laban was a Godless man; that Jacob knew. Laban having admitted that all that he had was from God, Jacob did not neglect the opportunity to impress it upon his mind.

Jacob, however, was desirous of having some possessions

of his own with which he could provide for his family. He gave to Laban the terms under which he could continue to care for his flocks. It was a most unusual contract which he offered to make. He told Laban that he would pass through the flocks and separate from among them all the cattle that were not of solid color, all that were speckled and spotted. They would be placed in a flock by themselves and would constitute his possession. Thereafter, any cattle which were born as spotted and speckled in the flocks of Laban would constitute Jacob's wages. Furthermore, should any solid colored cattle be found in Jacob's flocks, they would be counted as stolen and returned to the flocks of Laban. This was a most unusual offer because it was known by Jacob as well as by Laban that the sheep and goats raised by them were never, with rather rare exception, anything but solid white or solid blackish-brown. A solid color was their dominant characteristic.

From a human point of view it was a rather foolish proposition which Jacob offered to Laban. There seemed to be little likelihood that he would receive sufficient payment for his work. Jacob realized, however, that twice before he had made contracts with Laban. Each time he had thought that the wages were sufficient, and each time Laban had pressed the terms to his own advantage. Jacob no longer trusted Laban, and he no longer trusted his own discretion. Jacob was beginning to learn the folly of relying upon his own wisdom. Remembering the promise of God at Bethel, and believing that God was the only one who could control the birth of the cattle, Jacob made his offer. By so doing he placed his future well-being in the hand of the Lord. It was a matter of faith.

No sooner had Laban heard these terms than very quickly he accepted them. He fully expected that under them he would prosper and Jacob would work for a minimum of wages. With liberal and benevolent tones he voiced his agreement.

Then, once the contract was sealed, Laban's avaristic nature began to work. He would not allow, as had originally been suggested, that Jacob should go out into the flocks to separate the spotted and speckled from the rest. He went himself. With himself deciding what constituted a mixed-color animal and what did not, he could keep Jacob's flock to a minimum. Neither after the separation was completed was he ready to trust his son-in-law. The flock which he had separated for Jacob, he did not give into Jacob's hands but into the hands of his own sons. These he separated by a three days' journey from his own flocks which were under Jacob's care. By this means he thought to insure his own prosperity. In prior times he had noted that always it was the flock which was under Jacob's immediate care which prospered the most. The blessing of God followed Jacob wherever he went. Laban misunderstood the power of Jacob's God. For he thought that by separating Jacob's flocks from the sphere of Jacob's care the blessing of the Lord would fall exclusively on his own. Further, from a more practical

point of view, by giving Jacob's flocks into the care of his own sons and by removing them far away, he made it impossible for Jacob to mix spotted sheep and goats with his own flock during mating time. Thus the spotted and speckled characteristic of Jacob's flocks could not be passed on among his own. Being himself an untrustworthy person, he had no confidence in the honesty of anyone else, not even his own son-in-law.

Nonetheless, in spite of the efforts of Laban, the blessing of God fell to Jacob. From the solid colored flocks of Laban, so carefully protected from the infiltration of speckled and spotted characteristics, God brought forth many sheep and goats of mixed color. Laban did not understand that the blessing of God was on Jacob personally and did not just go along in a magical sort of way with his presence. Learning that he could not manipulate the blessing of God to satisfy his own selfish desires, Laban became almost desperate. When the time came to divide out Jacob's portion of the newborn sheep and goats, he began to hedge on the terms of their agreement. Jacob was not to receive all those which were of mixed color, he said; Jacob was to receive only those with distinct spots and specks; the striped and ringstraked were to remain his own. With stubborn determination he clung to this until the next group of sheep and goats were born. These were in a large part striped and ringstraked with but a comparatively few of spotted and solid colors. Then he hedged again, the other way, claiming that Jacob was only to have the spotted while the striped were to remain his own. So with all the ingenuity at his command, Laban maneuvered. Ten times over again he changed the terms of contract trying to outwit the blessing of God. But all his efforts were in vain. God had promised to bless Jacob, and bless him He did. For fourteen years Jacob had labored without any just wage at all. Yet, in a matter of but a few years, God controlled all things so as to give Jacob the full and just wage that he had earned. God took the cattle which He had given Laban in the first place and gave them to Jacob according to his promise.

All through the maneuvering of Laban, Jacob, of course, did not remain unaffected. Having begun in faith, Jacob was first resolved to wait patiently on God. But as more and more he observed and felt the cheating dishonesty of Laban, he began to falter. It is a hard thing for us to return good unto our enemies. It was hard for Jacob too. Jacob was of a competitive nature, and his flesh cried out to meet Laban move for move. He saw Laban's ingenuity in attempting to thwart the promise of God and became worried. As so often before, Jacob began to plan how he could help God along in the keeping of His promise. At last he hit upon a plan. First, he took sticks and cut away pieces of bark to make them appear striped and spotted. These he put in the watering troughs where the flocks would be sure to see them. Secondly, he separated groups of the young sheep and goats which were spotted and striped, and made the older cattle to gaze on them. Finally, he did not do this all the time but

only when the best and the strongest of the cattle were conceiving. This all he did on the supposition, for many ages considered valid, that things seen by a bearing mother can leave an impression upon her young. Thus, instead of living by faith, Jacob with his own strength and wisdom thought to assist God in fulfilling His promise.

We can not help but be disappointed with Jacob; yet, we should not be too harsh. In Jacob we see that same weakness which is so real with us. Jacob was a child of God, but he also had his old nature of sin. His new heart of principle knew what was the way of faith and wanted to follow in it. But so often his natural mind would answer back that there was a wiser way and surer. For a time he would stand firm, but then when the temptation of his flesh became strong, he would falter and walk in the way of sin. Jacob would have appreciated so much the later confession of Paul, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." With deep meaning Jacob said at the close of his life to Pharaoh, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

But God is a merciful and longsuffering God; merciful and longsuffering was he also with Jacob. It had been so when Jacob deceived his blind father; it had been so when with self-willed determination he insisted on having also Rachel to wife; and it was so now when he returned to Laban evil for evil. At first it might appear to us that God passed by the sin of Jacob unnoticed leaving him to think that it was quite all right and even effective. More careful study reveals, however, that such was not so. One time when Jacob was manipulating his spotted sticks before the cattle, God sent to him a dream. Jacob described this dream thus, "And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, and speckled, and grised." Now Jacob knew that in actual fact all the rams of the flock were solid in color. Nonetheless God was telling him that as far as the hereditary characteristics of these rams which could be passed on to their young was concerned, they could be considered ringstraked and speckled. It is a fact of creation that parents can pass on to their young hereditary characteristics which are not apparent in the external appearance of the parents. Thus God with this vision was telling Jacob in effect that it was not his rods that brought him prosperity but the mating of the cattle as guided by His all-powerful hand.

It was in this way that Jacob was instructed and returned once more to faith. He was brought to see that it was not his own wisdom that gave him what he had but only the grace of God. At the conclusion of six years of such labor, he could say to his wives in faith, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me . . . And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me . . . Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me." B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 14, 15

V.

(Romans 15:1-6)

We now come to our study of Chapter 15 of the book of Romans. We would make a few remarks of an introductory nature at the outset.

First of all, after a second thought it seems better to us not to go off on a tangent on what has been considered the interpretation of the term "faith" in the phrase in Romans 14:23, "for all that is not out of faith is sin," whether this refers to faith in Christ, justifying and sanctifying faith, or whether this refers simply to subjective certainty of doing the right thing in relationship to the things indifferent, the *adiaphora*. For it is quite evident, that, shall faith mean the latter of the two just mentioned alternatives, it still cannot be aught else but the faith whereby we are justified and have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Secondly, in close connection with the foregoing, we will also forbear to enter upon what we called "directives for Christian *psychiatry*," a term unknown in the vocabulary of Scripture, since this would lead us too far afield from our present objective in this study of Romans. Suffice it to say, the testimony of so-called Christian psychiatrists to the contrary, that many a Christian has come to the cross-roads of life, because, what he did, could not square with a walk which is out of faith, and, therefore, walked subjectively in sin and with an accusing conscience. The Lord is not mocked, Gal. 6:7. What a man sows that shall he reap! And no high-sounding and flattering words of an unbiblical psychiatry can erase that reality, least of all in him who is brought by the Lord to these "cross-roads."

The principle that all, which is not out of faith is sin, is maintained by Paul also in this fifteenth chapter of Romans.

Forsooth Paul does not really begin a new subject in this chapter. He only takes a little different approach and argumentation to the same matter of the Christian attitude which is necessary in the body of Christ, the church, of the strong members in relationship to the weak members. Had Paul in the foregoing chapter motivated his admonitions by pointing the weak to the fact that the strong are accepted of God, and are, therefore, not to be judged or condemned by them, and the strong that they must by their meat not destroy the work of God in the weak, now he will admonish them unto a likemindedness in the Lord by pointing out to them that such is the quintessence of a *Christian* life, patterned after, and incited by, what Christ did for us on the Cross of Calvary!

Christ did not *please himself*! He came not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for

many! Thus the strong are not to please themselves, but to be pleasing to their brother in Christ, unto edification!

The text here in Romans 15:1-6 reads in part as follows: "*Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying . . .*"

It is quite evident that Paul is still speaking of how to treat our brother or sister who is *weak* in the faith, that is, one who cannot apply all the freedom which is ours in Christ to the matters of meat and days in a good conscience. Their conscience is *weak*. Before God they do not dare to account all days the same and eat everything. Such a conscience is not the ideal. However, it is not evil intention on their part but weakness. It is the "weakness of the weak" with which the strong must reckon! The translation "*infirmities* of the weak" is a very good translation. These brethren are weak in the faith. From this weakness spring forth certain "*infirmities*." The Luther's German translation has "*Gebrechlichkeit*." These infirmities are fears, scruples, wrong prejudices, tendencies to criticize the strong because of their very weakness! Such people are the touch not, taste not, handle not Christians. They call themselves ultra-conservative. The plain truth is that the leaven of legalism is not wholly overcome by such. They do not live wholly out of faith in the Gospel-promise!

Such must not be despised, nor must we ignore them or walk over them and brush their scruples aside as being of no account. To *them* these scruples are very real—and burdensome! They are not wholly the easy yoke and light burden of Christ, these scruples. Hence, we must be useful to the weak, bear long and patiently with them, and live in hope that under the gracious nurture and love of God they will, presently too, come to a richer season of grace. Meanwhile we are to study ourselves to be approved of God in relationship to such. For all that we are we are by God's grace! Is not the law of faith such that it excludes all boasting in our own native strength, boasting only in the Lord? (Romans 3:27) And does not this *faith* establish the law of God, being *energized* by love? (Gal. 5:6) And is not the entire law fulfilled in one word, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself? (Gal. 5:14)

How easily do not the strong forget that knowledge puffeth up and that only knowledge and faith energized by love edifieth! (See I Cor. 8:1.) When such puffed-up attitude is present then we live to *please* ourselves, and that, too, at the price of wounding our brother's conscience which is weak. And thus, "sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, we would sin against Christ himself!" Why disquiet the *conscience* of the weak? Christ died to give them peace of conscience. Shall we by our reckless strength disquiet their conscience? Shall we become the occasion for their being wrongly, yet *sincerely* disquieted?! Is such a reckless conduct in harmony with faith which is energized by the love of God?! No, that is simply self-pleasure! It is making the liberty which is ours

in Christ an *occasion for the flesh* (Gal. 5:13). Grace certainly cannot be the fountain-head from which fleshly actions receive their incentive! God forbid!

Nay, let us by love serve one another!

And, in this case, let the strong serve the *need* of the weak neighbor in the Lord. That need is his *edification*! He must be edified, that is, he must come more and more to see that Christ is all and all for him. He must *learn* to seek all in Christ, and hold on to the Head. In this he must be built, made strong. Meanwhile we must *bear* his weakness. Paul includes himself among the strong. He says "we"! And these infirmities of the weak we must bear, that is, we must bear the injustice, scruples of this infirmity. The weak cannot carry the strong. Such is the duty of us who are strong. Think of Gal. 6:1 where we read, "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted." In the German translation we read that the strong must "carry" the infirmities of the weak. We then *lift* the brother over the hurdles rather than casting them up before him!

The question is then not: how can I coddle the weak brother, pamper him in his infirmities. Such love will not do. It will always seek the real benefit of the brother. It is to change his condition of infirmity into one of strength. It seeks his *real advantage*. No one will say that one is coddling a little child if he does not maltreat him, would he? But when he corrects his child, bears with much of his whims and fancies that originate in his immature mind, then he seeks the edification of the child.

I believe that we are touching here upon a principle in our life of sanctification that may well be underscored. Dogmatics and ethics by no means coincide. The doctrinal *difficulty* and the *cure* from this doctrinal weakness are two *different* matters! Right is right and wrong is wrong! We are saved by grace and are free! Yet, we are free not to do our own will, but free to love the brother, who is weak. Has that distinction always been kept in mind by us in the recent history in our churches! We can almost spit out the word *schismatics*! But do we bear with any possible weakness in those who were deceived by leaders who should know better? Is our writing and speech always such that we give evidence that we have nothing to boast in and of, save in the mercy of God. And are we always so conscious of the fact that our not being "schismatics" is, if it is for principle's sake and consciously, only the grace of God? Let us beware lest we be like the elder brother in the Parable who said, among other things, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and have never transgressed a commandment of thine . . ." Right is right and wrong is wrong, and **sin must be confessed**. Also the grievous sin of schism in the body of Christ! But how is it healed? Certainly not by coddling a brother who has walked in, or is walking in the sin of schism, etc. Sin cannot be winked at. God is not mocked. However, let us remember that we must all stand before the judgment

seat of Christ. And then the question is: Did you restore the erring in the spirit of *gentleness*? Could Christ be seen in us, who pleased not himself but who complains already through David in the Holy Spirit in Psalm 69:9: "the reproaches of them that reproached *thee* fell upon me"!

When a brother *errs* in the faith (not to be confused with willfully walking in false doctrine and life), do we feel that that is a sin first of all against God? Or do we feel like Samuel often, who feels low and outraged, because the people ask for a king? Is our zeal truly the "zeal of God's house that consumes us"? That is the question. That is not a question of dogmatics and the confessions. They must stand as Paul says: Nevertheless the sure foundation of God standeth. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. But the truth must be spoken *in love*! Then we will see that the sin of schism is first of all against God and his Christ! Does the honor of God and of his Christ cause our zeal to glow? Then it is possible to bear with the infirmities of the weak. Christ did this par excellence! And this was written also for our learning that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Tone down doctrinal distinctiveness? God forbid! The foundations stand. That is love for the weak brother. Christ laid them in his blood, in the deepest reproaches of hell. It was a reproach against God that came upon him. And he took it. The zeal of God's house consumed Him. And He cleanses the temple in this *pure* zeal. And this zeal alone gives us patience with the weak. And looks in hope toward the day when the house shall be completely and perfectly built!

Only when God gives such patience and comfort will the zeal of God's house consume us and not our own sinful self-will, pleasing ourselves.

Well may Paul end this section with the prayer: "Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus, that ye with one accord may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Verses 5, 6.

Out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things!

Here all man's pride is abased and the Christian thankfully ascribes all that he is to God's grace.

And Paul says in this consciousness: "but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"! I Cor. 15:10.

G.L.

Post-Scriptum: On September 7, it will be twenty-five years ago that the writer of these lines was ordained in the Ministry of the Word. Before his mind passes Doon, Pella, Randolph, Creston, Loveland, Isabel-Forbes. He cannot make the former boast of Paul that he "labored more abundantly than they all," but he does confess the latter that what small or great labors he may have performed it was "the grace of God which was with me"! Soli Deo Gloria!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

A Child In The Way

You will find our theme in the Scriptures.

However we have here a clear example of what you can do with the Scriptures when you take a passage out of its context. Skip over that which precedes these words and come to a full stop at the end of them; and you get a statement that means something entirely different from that which it does in the text.

As it stands there it suggests a child that is in the way of his parents. It suggests that this child interferes with their freedom and that they secretly (and perhaps even openly) wish that the child had not been born. It ties them down too much. It limits them too much in the pursuit of their own happiness.

There is such a thing to be sure.

Paul wrote of its coming to a special degree in the last days. To Timothy he wrote in II Timothy 3:1-4, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . Without natural affection . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God . . ." How much of that you see today! Natural affection even is wanting to a great degree in the world. Mothers can forget their suckling children. They can give them out for adoption — especially if they are unwed mothers, because then these children stand so much more in their way of getting a husband and of having a good time. They can kill them in cold blooded murder. They can tie and chain them up in rooms and mistreat them as a beast would never be found doing. Children are in their way. As lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God they cannot even find time to be decent and civil to their own flesh and blood, to that which God gives them in a very miraculous way, and to that which only God can give them. There are parents who see their own children in their way and take steps to get them out of that way! Without natural affection . . . !

And then we do not have in mind a family as described in Holy Writ so that the wife is as a fruitful vine and there are a dozen, more or less, of these "olive plants round about thy table" (Psalm 128:1-4). We are not thinking of the man that is so *blessed* by God that these little feet and bodies are there all coming to the table for their daily bread and then in a *physical* way they occasionally get in your way and in each other's way and trip over each other's feet. We are thinking of the world that lacks even this natural affection and *one* child in a rambling house of some ten to fourteen rooms is in the way of the social "obligations," political antics, pleasure seeking and carnal entertainments of its parents.

The covenant parent takes an entirely different approach

to the matter. He sees his children as children of the covenant. He says with the psalmist in Psalm 127:3-5, "Lo children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are the children of the youth. Happy is that man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." The covenant parent sacrifices for his child. That child does not stand in the way of his joy. That child *is* his joy. He considers himself highly blessed of God to receive from Him a child to train in His fear and to watch develop into a living member in the body of Christ. He has a treasure that he will enjoy also in the life to come! Death will not rob him of this joy. There shall be a blessed reunion in the New Jerusalem.

We must understand that "the way" that is mentioned in our theme is God's way. About that we wish to write at this time: A Child in God's Way. For the full text from which we borrowed our theme is, "Train up a child in the way in which he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. There, my dear readers, you have your calling spelled out for you by that man of great wisdom, Solomon. But there you also have the wisdom of the infinite, almighty God held before your eyes. He tells you through Solomon what your calling is with your children: Train up your child in the way in which he should go.

We must take careful note that it is the way *in which he should go* and not the way in which we might like to have him go. The carnal mind is enmity against God and by nature a parent can only want his child to go in a way of enmity and rebellion against God. We have many carnal ambitions for our children. We want them to have a good education in the things natural. We like to see them at the head of the class when it comes to reading, writing and arithmetic. Their knowledge of geography, modern and ancient history, European and American history, science and civics must be the very best and as comprehensive as possible. We want them trained in all the things that will help them to live a prosperous and happy life here below.

But what about the way in which he should go?

Oh, I know the oft-repeated yet erroneous excuse. Why do I not send my children to a Christian school so that they may be taught all things in the light of man's lofty and inescapable calling before God? Well, you do not find the best teachers in the Christian Schools. They cannot pay the high (?) salaries that teachers in the public schools receive and consequently do not draw the best teachers.

Is that so?

Granted that an individual is not as fully skilled and educated in the ways of the world, does that mean that, when he has dedicated his life to teaching your child the way in which that covenant child should go, that he is not a better

teacher for your child? The man who signs up to teach children in the ways that the world wants him to go rather than in the Christian school that has for its purpose training in the way that God wants His children to go, and does so for a few paltry pieces of silver, for filthy lucre's sake, because he places more value on the things material than the things spiritual and is more interested in laying up for himself treasure on this earth than in heaven is far from the best teacher for your child. Train up your child in the way he *should* go, in the way that God wants and commands that he go. That is your calling.

Surely the Scriptures do not lie. God does not speak foolishness. Nor is He ever mocked. He has declared that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Bring your children where they are not taught in His fear and you yourself perform not an act of wisdom but of foolishness. That is strong language indeed. But let us understand that we have no choice in the matter. Either the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom or it is not. And if it is—and it is—then that which is not in His fear is not wisdom but foolishness. And before we are ready to rise up in protest and condemn the statement above that to bring our children where they are not taught in the fear of the Lord is foolishness, let us realize that to say that this is not true is to say that God does not know what He is talking about. Be careful lest you say that with your mouth. Be on your guard that your heart does not entertain that rebellious thought. And by all means see to it that you do not say it by your actions of sending your children to be instructed where they are not trained in the way that they *should* go: in God's way.

You agree.

You say, with all the above I am agreed. How can I call God a liar? Of course the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and I surely want my children trained in the way in which they *should* go. I do that too. I take them along to church. I send them to their catechism or Bible class. I teach them every day, give them good Christian literature to read. I make them prepare faithfully for their Young People's Society and learn their catechism questions perfectly and do their written work thoroughly. That all counteracts all that which they receive in their school room and supplements and supplies that which is lacking in their school room. I do not neglect their instruction in His fear simply because I send them to another school than the Christian school.

Let us look once again at the wisdom which God speaks lest from a new angle we tell Him that He does not know what it is about which He is talking. He says, "Train up a child." A few weeks ago we had the occasion to take the children to the Marineland of The Pacific near San Pedro, California, to see the trained seals, porpoises, dolphins and whales. One marvels at the things which these irrational water creatures can be trained to do by man. And that

training took many a tedious hour of repeating the same things over and over in an unwavering pattern. The trainer could not depart from the usual steps and procedure lest he confuse these animals. To train one in a certain way you have to continue to lead him in that one particular way. And we are not training our children when we bring them to the world five days a week where they are taught to lay up for themselves treasures here below and then add to this some side instruction in seeking the things above. To train them in the way that they should go, we must see to it that in all their instruction they are pointed in that way.

Another school season has begun. Are you seeing to it that your children are being trained in the way that they *should* go? Trained in that way you have God's promise that they will not depart from it when they are old. And if you have not trained them or provided for their training in that way and when they are old they go in a way in which they should not go, you have no one else to blame than yourself. Do not blame those who have unsuccessfully tried to counteract that training in the ways of the world.

We must train them while they are children. We must not treat them as children that are in our way. We must not count the cost and say that their training in God's way stands in the way of our material prosperity. It may mean that we will have to deny ourselves some of the pleasures and luxuries of this abundant life which is ours. But that does not remove the command of God that He has placed over us: Train them in the fear of the Lord. And let nothing stand in the way. A child in the way, that is, a child in the way of the Lord is a priceless blessing to the covenant parent. It is a child on the way to glory. Do you not covet that?

J.A.H.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' MASS MEETING

will be held at Creston Church
September 25, 1959 at 8:00 P. M.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, in Edgerton, Minnesota, Wednesday, September 16, 1959. The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than thirty days before the meeting of Classis. However, whereas the undersigned will be on vacation in August and has accepted the call to Redlands, California, the consistories are requested to send their material to the secretary of the classical committee, Rev. G. Van Baren, Doon, Iowa.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

PENANCE (continued)

CANON VI.

If any one denieth, either that sacramental confession was instituted, or is necessary to salvation, of divine right; or saith, that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Church hath ever observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is alien from the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention: let him be anathema.

CANON VII.

If any one saith, that, in the sacrament of Penance, it is not necessary, of divine right, for the remission of sins, to confess all and singular the mortal sins which after due and diligent previous meditation are remembered, even those (mortal sins) which are secret, and those which are opposed to the two last commandments of the Decalogue, as also the circumstances which change the species of a sin; but (saith) that such confession is only useful to instruct and console the penitent, and that it was of old only observed in order to impose a canonical satisfaction; or saith that they, who strive to confess all their sins, wish to leave nothing to the divine mercy to pardon; or, finally, that it is not lawful to confess venial sins: let him be anathema.

CANON VIII.

If any one saith, that the confession of all sins, such as it is observed in the Church, is impossible, and is a human tradition to be abolished by the godly; or that all and each of the faithful of Christ, of either sex, are not obliged thereunto once a year, conformably to the constitution of the great Council of Lateran, and that, for this cause, the faithful of Christ are to be persuaded not to confess during Lent: let him be anathema.

CANON IX.

If any one saith, that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act, but a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven to him who confesses; provided only he believe himself to be absolved, or (even though) the priest absolve not in earnest, but in joke; or saith, that the confession of the penitent is not required, in order that the priest may be able to absolve him: let him be anathema.

CANON X.

If any one saith, that priests, who are in mortal sins,

have not the power of binding and loosing; or, that not priests alone are the ministers of absolution, but that, to all and each of the faithful of Christ it is said: *Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven; and, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained;* by virtue of which words every one is able to absolve from sins, to wit, from public sins by reproof only, provided he who is reproved yield thereto, and from secret sins by a voluntary confession: let him be anathema.

CANON XI.

If any one saith, that bishops have not the right of reserving cases to themselves, except as regards external polity, and that therefore the reservation of cases hinders not, but that a priest may truly absolve from reserved cases: let him be anathema.

CANON XII.

If any one saith, that God always remits the whole punishment together with the guilt, and that the satisfaction of penitents is not other than the faith whereby they apprehend that Christ has satisfied for them: let him be anathema.

CANON XIII.

If any one saith, that satisfaction for sins, as to their temporal punishment, is nowise made to God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by the punishments inflicted by him, and patiently borne, nor by those enjoined by the priest, nor even by those voluntarily undertaken, as by fastings, prayers, alms-deeds, or by other works of piety; and that, therefore, the best penance is merely a new life: let him be anathema.

CANON XIV.

If any one saith, that the satisfactions, by which penitents redeem their sins through Jesus Christ, are not a worship of God, but traditions of men, which obscure the doctrine of grace, and the true worship of God, and the benefit itself of the death of Christ: let him be anathema.

CANON XV.

If any one saith, that the keys are given to the Church, only *to loose*, not also *to bind*; and that, therefore, priests act contrary to the purpose of the keys, and contrary to the institution of Christ, when they impose punishments on those who confess; and that it is a fiction, that, after the eternal punishment has, by virtue of the keys, been removed, there remains for the most part a temporal punishment to be discharged: let him be anathema.

From these decrees and canons of the Council of Trent, in which the Roman Catholic Church sets forth its doctrine on its sacrament of Penance, we may make the following observations and draw the following conclusions.

First, the Romish doctrine of the sacrament of Penance

considers this sacrament as consisting of three parts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Rome emphatically denies that there are only two parts of penance, to wit, a smitten conscience because of the burden of sin, and the faith which is generated by the gospel of Christ whereby the sinner believes that his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of Christ and His atoning blood. These three parts, contrition and confession and satisfaction, constitute the matter of this sacrament. The form of the sacrament is the act of absolution on the part of the priest.

Secondly, this confession must be auricular and include all our mortal sins (when Rome speaks of mortal sins it refers to sins that are deadly, sins that incur the penalty of eternal death, as opposed to venial sins, sins that are excusable, pardonable, slight and trivial). This confession must occur to the priests whom Christ, when about to ascend from earth to heaven, appointed to be His vicars upon the earth, in order that they, in accordance with the power of the keys, may pronounce the sentence of forgiveness or retention of sins. These priests do not merely declare a sinner's sin to be forgiven. They are presidents and judges, who actually forgive or retain sin. Rome declares that this sacramental absolution of the priest is a judicial act, not merely a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven. And Rome anathematizes anyone who denies that the priest absolves sins in earnest. We teach that the power of forgiving or retaining sins does not lie in a priest, in any office bearer, but only in the Word, and that this Word, as the Word of Christ, is enforced by Christ in the consciences of men. When, therefore, the Church declares to a person, upon the basis of the Word of God, that he stands within or outside the Kingdom of God, that his sins are either forgiven him or not forgiven, then it is not the office bearer who has the power to forgive sins or retain them, but it is Christ alone Who has the power of those keys and also exercises those keys in connection with and through the Word of God. It is exactly here that we have a very clear and marked distinction between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The former stresses the Word of God and the latter lays all emphasis upon the Church, that is, upon the Roman hierarchy and priesthood. Upon this element of the priesthood the entire structure of Roman Catholicism is built. This is also characteristic of Rome's doctrine of the sacraments.

Thirdly, Rome declares that this sacrament of penance, as including the three parts mentioned above (contrition, confession, satisfaction), is necessary unto salvation. Now it is true, of course, that there are things which we must do that constitute a very necessary and vital part of salvation. We are certainly not stocks and blocks. We must surely confess our sins in order to enjoy their forgiveness. One that refuses to confess his sin can never taste or experience the blessedness of forgiveness and justification. And the Heavenly Father will not forgive us our trespasses if we forgive not the brother his trespass. We must certainly crucify

our old nature and walk in a new and godly life. We must walk in all good works, deny ourselves and the things that are of the flesh, and fight the good fight of faith. However, all these things we must do, not as contributing anything unto our salvation, but as the fruits thereof. Never can anything we do ever serve as a substitute for the blood of the Lamb of Calvary. Jesus alone is our forgiveness. Through faith alone we receive this forgiveness. Justification is bestowed upon us as a free gift of grace. Only, this faith in Christ Jesus, through which we receive the forgiveness of our sins, is a living faith. It is this truth that is emphasized in the epistle of James. James does not contrast faith and works, but he draws a sharp contrast between a living faith and a dead faith. This living faith in Christ imparts unto us a new life. And to live out of Christ Jesus, by a true and living faith, necessarily implies that we walk in a new and godly life.

Rome, however, views penance as necessary, of itself, unto salvation and to procure the forgiveness of sins and pardon. Rome, we know, ascribes meritorious value to our works of satisfaction. Rome anathematizes anyone who clings to the blood of the cross as the sole forgiveness of his sins. Rome places intermediaries between Christ and the sinner. It is evident that Rome denies the complete efficacy of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rome denies the keynote of the gospel: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, repudiates the apostle Paul when he declares that he was determined to know nothing else in the Church of Christ than Christ and Him crucified.

It is indeed true what Hodge writes in his *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, page 494, and we quote: "This doctrine that no real sin, committed after baptism, can be forgiven unless confessed to a priest; that the priest has the power to remit or retain; that he carries at his girdle the keys not only of the visible Church on earth, but also of heaven and hell; and that he opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens, is one of the strongest links of the chain by which the Church of Rome leads captive the souls of men. No wonder that she says that the power of a priest is above that even of angels and archangels."—end of quote.

This concludes our articles on the Roman Catholic doctrine on its sacrament of Penance. Next time, the Lord willing, we will call attention to another sacrament of Rome, namely, the sacrament of Extreme Unction.

H.V.

Come, hear, all ye that fear the Lord,
While I with grateful heart record
What God has done for me;
I cried to Him in deep distress,
And now His wondrous grace I bless,
For He has set me free.

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 11

(Continued from July 1 issue)

Having noticed what was the occasion for this article, and having given our attention to the general lines thereof, we may now give our attention to the details of its contents.

We may notice, first of all, that the article speaks of “various carnal doubts” and of “grievous temptations.” These terms refer to the same reality from two different viewpoints. The term *doubt* looks at the reality under discussion in this article from the viewpoint of the saint himself: he doubts. The term *temptation* looks at that same reality from the viewpoint of its cause and occasion: the tempter comes and sows the seeds of doubt in the soul of the believer. These doubts that are sown by the tempter and that arise in the soul of the child of God are sinful: the article characterizes them as carnal. We must always remember this: doubt is sin. It is principally unbelief. And because it is principally unbelief, doubt is uncertainty: it is the opposite of assurance. If we ask the question, “How is it possible that a believer doubts?” the answer must be found along the following lines. In the first place, we may bear in mind that we are not now speaking of the essence and power of faith, which is never done away, but of the consciousness and activity of faith, which may vary and which may temporarily be defeated and disappear. And, in the second place, we must remember that the saint is imperfect, that he is not yet delivered from the body of sin and the infirmities of the flesh. And the believer arrives at a state of doubt when in his consciousness the infirmities of the flesh gain temporarily the upper hand over the consciousness of faith. These doubts may, as the article indicates, assume various forms. Sometimes the child of God finds himself in a very painful and crucial struggle to believe the Scriptures themselves. The devil, using the philosophy of vain man and the learning of so-called science, attacks the very veracity of the Scriptures and tempts the child of God to reject the Word of God. Sometimes the temptation of the devil causes God’s child for a time to fail as far as the personal appropriation of the truth of Scripture is concerned. Then that saint may say, “I believe that God’s Word is true all right, but I doubt whether I myself am a child of God.” The tempter may accomplish

this purpose in more than one way too. A frequent method of the tempter is to cause misunderstanding on the part of the saint as to his state and his condition. As to his state, the saint is perfectly righteous in Christ; as to his condition, that same saint is far from perfection in this present life. The devil will take advantage of this situation and emphasize that in the light of all his sin and imperfection that saint cannot possibly lay claim to justification before God. And if by means of these accusations the devil can cause that saint to look away from Christ and from the fact that he is righteous in Christ by faith only, he can cast that saint into terrible doubt. But it may also be that the devil takes advantage of the imperfect condition of the child of God and tempts him to walk in sin for a time. The only result of such a walk in sin can be the lack of assurance. The way of assurance is the way of sanctification; the way of sin is the way of doubt. But whatever may be the various forms of these carnal doubts, and whatever may be the method used by the tempter in planting the seeds of doubt, we may be certain that somehow the doubting child of God is not walking in the way of assurance described in Article 10. Whether the devil attacks directly, or whether he takes advantage of our carnal nature to lead us into temptation, or whether he arouses misunderstanding on our part as to our state and our condition, or whether he capitalizes on our laxity in watching and praying, somehow he succeeds for a time in luring us away from the God-ordained way of assurance. Then only do doubts arise.

Now what is the solution for this doubt?

The problem does not concern the objective certainty of perseverance. That remains. The fact that the saints shall surely be preserved, the fact that the Holy Spirit is never wholly withdrawn from God’s people, the fact that they never lose the grace of adoption nor forfeit the state of justification, the fact that the incorruptible seed of regeneration can never be lost,—these all remain. But the subjective assurance of faith that I am and ever shall remain a living member of the church of Christ, that no one can pluck me out of Christ’s hand,—this is lost when I am cast into a state of doubt. That is the problem. And it is not necessary at all to elaborate on the misery of one who is subject to such doubts. Any child of God can find his own doubts and fears back in the expressions of many of the psalms.

Nor is the ultimate solution of the problem to be found in the counsel to return to the God-ordained path of assurance. That this is necessary cannot be questioned. And that it is necessary to admonish one who is assailed with doubt to examine himself as to the spiritual reason for that doubt and to turn from that way of doubt also cannot be questioned.

The problem is in the deepest sense: how is it possible to escape the clutches of the evil one and the despair of doubt and to regain the blessed peace of assurance? How is it possible that the believer in his “struggle with various

carnal doubts" gains the victory over those doubts? Is the outcome of that struggle against doubt always a question, so that it might just as well be that carnal doubts are victorious as that faith is victorious?

The basic answer to this question is given by our fathers in this article. And whatever may be said about the spiritual cure for doubt, it must always be viewed against the background of the truth that is here laid down. That truth is, positively speaking, that God is the author of all assurance, not only initially but also in its continuation. And therefore, all our temptations take place absolutely within the limits of His will and in such a way that they can never be victorious ultimately in the life of the saints. Of this preservation of the elect to salvation, and of their perseverance in the faith, true believers for themselves may and do obtain assurance according to the measure of their faith." The outcome, the final issue, of the believer's struggle with various carnal doubts is always assurance. He may struggle against doubt. He may even lose his assurance altogether for a time. He may fall deeply into temptation. But God Himself takes care that His child returns to the state of assurance ultimately. He is the *Father of all consolation*! All consolation must and does come from Him, in Christ Jesus, through the Spirit. In your deepest temptations and doubts, therefore, turn to Him!

The fathers quote here a very fitting word of Scripture from I Corinthians 10:13. The entire text reads: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Over against our temptations, which are "common to man," or, literally, "human," stands God. The contrast is not between the power of temptation and our merely human strength. Then the situation would be hopeless. For we succumb to the temptations. We are faithless. But God is faithful! And it is the power of His divine grace that is the solution to our temptations and their resultant doubts.

And the text teaches us, in the first place, therefore, that God Himself determines and limits the measure of our temptations: "he will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." The devil in all his assaults upon the faith of the saints is strictly limited. He cannot do what he wants. He would like to destroy the faith of the saints, but he can never succeed. He would like to deprive them permanently of their assurance, but this he can never do. God says to him: "Thus far, and no farther." When He does so, the devil's temptation must cease. God says: "This long, and no longer." When He does so, the devil has no more leave to tempt. And the absolute limit of all temptation of the saints, beyond which the devil can never go, you have defined here: not above that they are able. This does not mean that the devil can never tempt successfully for a time; he surely can. We have already seen this in another connection.

But he can never cause the saints to reach spiritually the "point of no return." He can never tempt them in such a way that their faith as to its being, its power, is destroyed. He can cause them to fall very deeply, but never so deeply that the principle of the new life is totally lost. And this means, in turn, that the devil can never tempt in such a way that ultimately the believer loses the spiritual power to overcome the temptation. The power of the new life may retreat for a time and seem to be defeated. In the final analysis it triumphs, and the child of God returns into the right way of earnest repentance and conversion.

In the second place, however, the text from Corinthians teaches us that God also "with the temptations will make a way to escape." The situation, therefore, is not thus merely, that God provides the saints with a certain amount of spiritual ability and power and that He does not allow them to be tempted beyond their power, but that it is entirely up to them to use that power and to escape the snare of temptation. Nor does the text in referring to a way to escape refer in general and objectively to the Scripturally designated way of repentance and prayer etc. God does not simply point out the way to escape temptation. He does not merely provide a possible way to escape. He provides an actual way of escape. Otherwise we would never escape. How is it that a child of God, who has in him the indestructible seed of regeneration, but who falls deeply into temptation and continues in sin for a time, — how is it that suddenly such a child of God forsakes his sin and returns to God? You say: "The principle of the new life gained the victory." Yes, but that seed of regeneration was there all the time. You say: "He was admonished and heeded the admonition." Yes, but he was admonished all along, and he also had essentially the power to heed the admonition. You say: "The devil finally stopped tempting him." Yes, he did; but what caused that man to rise up out of the depths into which he had been tempted and where the devil had left him at the end of that temptation? The answer is: God provides the way of escape. God by His Word and Spirit certainly and effectually renews that saint unto repentance, to a sincere and godly sorrow for his sins. God Himself causes His child to return to the God-ordained way of assurance. And the end can only be that by His Holy Spirit God again inspires him with the comfortable assurance of persevering.

H.C.H.

Announcement

All correspondence with the Classical Committee of Classis East is to be addressed to its new secretary —

REV. G. LANTING
1000 Slayton Street
Grand Haven, Michigan.

WHAT IS THE MASS?

This subject, to me, is most intriguing. True, it does not affect us quite as directly and forcefully as it did our forefathers four centuries ago. For them the question of the mass was all-important. They had been part of it. They had been raised in that doctrine and fed its heresies from infancy on. Then, by the grace of God, they had been delivered from its errors through the wonder of the Protestant Reformation. In fact, the mass was one of the main issues in the whole Reformation. One Catholic authority puts it this way, "The history of the Protestant Reformation is largely the story of the new religion's efforts to destroy the Mass and the Catholics' efforts and determination to save the Mass." This statement contains much truth. Today all this belongs to the more distant past. No longer is the mass our chief stumblingblock. Other issues have our concern. Even so, the question is interesting, and practical too, for at the basis of the mass lie principles of abiding significance. In this essay our main purpose is to familiarize ourselves with the thing itself.

What is the mass, of which the Catholics make so very much and against which the Protestants have set themselves so determinedly?

The derivation of the name "mass" is not entirely clear. According to some Catholic theologians the name is derived from the Latin word *mesna*, meaning "table," and has reference to the idea of a supper, a feast. This is perhaps the more distant derivation. According to others the immediate connection is with the Latin word *missio*, meaning "to dismiss, send away," and the reference is to the last part of the form for the celebration of the mass, when the church is dismissed with the words: "Go now, the sacrament, the holy sacrifice, the Mass is ended."

The mass is the heart of the Catholic religion. It's the one thing every Catholic must do to be saved; the central act of devotion in the Catholic Church; the chief glory and center of their entire worship. Missing the mass is a deadly sin, that must and will be most heavily punished. People need not go every day, although they are urged to do so. Missing the mass on Sundays or holy days, however, is fatal.

The mass is the Roman Catholic Lord's Supper, to them an exact duplicate and repetition of that first Supper in the night wherein the Lord Jesus was betrayed. So much so, in fact, that in some form or other, largely by way of glittering symbolism, they seek to imitate all Jesus did that night. A study of the mass with this in mind is positively intriguing. It immortalizes and perpetuates that first Lord's Supper. It does not only represent it, it re-presents it, — day after day, till the end of time.

Excluding all embellishments and matters of incidental importance from our discussion, it may be noted that the mass contains four elements, which are essential: the consecration, the sacrifice, the adoration, and the communion.

Where these four things are present you have a complete mass, whether it be the simple requiem mass, the briefest of them all, or the elaborate pontifical mass of an hour or more; whether it be said by an army chaplain in the mud of a trench on an altar of ammunition boxes or administered in the great cathedral of Notre Dame. A priest dressed in ordinary clothes, standing at an ordinary table, consecrating bread and wine, consuming these elements in communion — that's just as real a mass as the one with all the trimmings. If only the four above-mentioned essentials are there.

The reasons for all the trimmings that frequently go with the mass are twofold. Mainly, no doubt, the Catholic Church wants to make the mass as much as possible like the Last Supper of Christ and His disciples. As stated, they want to imitate everything Jesus did that night. Therefore, as Christ proceeded from the womb of Mary, so the priest marches in all dignity from the sacristy (where the robes and holy vessels are kept) to the altar with the chalice in his hand. As Christ washed His hands, so the priest washes his hands as a symbol. As Christ washed the feet of the disciples, so the priest begins with an act of humiliation, confessing his sins at the foot of the altar. As Christ lifted His eyes to heaven, so the priest lifts his eyes to heaven. As Christ prayed, so the priest prays. Besides, the Catholic Church feels that in the mass it has something so precious, that it cannot be made too beautiful. Therefore the most beautiful music; the gorgeous vestments of the priest; the burning of incense, from the Old Law, and the burning of candles, from the catacombs; a host of attendants, all immaculately robed and each with his own function. Too much cannot be made of the mass nor can it be too beautiful.

Even so, trimmings or no trimmings, the essentials of the mass are the four elements enumerated above.

There is first of all the CONSECRATION of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, the Eucharist. This consecration takes place in the following manner. There are the bread and the wine. To the wine a drop or two of water is added. The Catholics claim that the wine which Jesus and His disciples drank was mixed with water. Especially is the water added to symbolize the blood and water that flowed from the wound of Jesus. Instead of the bread they now have the wafer. You can appreciate the reason for that. Since that bread changes into the very body of Christ, it obviously becomes sacrilege to allow it to crumb, fall on the floor, be eaten by mice or rats, etc. Hence, the wafer. These means are now placed on the altar. Then, at the moment the priest, who reads the form, utters the words, "This is my body," a miracle of God occurs whereby the natural bread is actually consecrated to the very body of Christ. The same takes place with the wine the moment the priest says: "This is my blood." Mind you, the priest utters these words in the place of Christ. So completely does he lose his personality in that of Christ, that for himself and the congregation it is as if the priest no longer existed and Christ Himself were standing there.

Hence, Catholicism certainly maintains, that the signs change into the things signified, and that after the consecration Christ Himself is really present on that altar.

Then there is the element of SACRIFICE. In the mass Christ repeatedly sacrifices Himself anew for the salvation of sinners. How they like to talk about the unbloody sacrifice of Christ in the mass! Therefore they have the altar rather than the table. To the Catholics Calvary, the first Lord's Supper and the mass are all essentially the same. On Calvary Christ sacrificed Himself in a bloody manner. There He actually shed His blood and body and blood were separated from each other, and that, to them, is really death. In the first Lord's Supper Christ did the same thing in an unbloody way. Also here body and blood were separated. Therefore Christ did not take the bread and wine together and say: This is my body and blood. Rather, he first consecrated the bread; then, and separately, He consecrated the wine. Thus the two were separated mystically and Christ sacrificed then and there without the shedding of blood. Now, what Christ did in that first Supper the priest does every mass in the place of Christ. He first consecrates the bread and it becomes the body of Christ. Then he consecrates the wine and it becomes the blood of Christ. Thus the two are separated and Christ sacrifices Himself anew every time the mass is celebrated. Thus the latter is not a mere representation, but a re-presentation of the cross of Jesus.

This sacrifice is the heart of the mass, even as the mass is the heart of the Catholic religion. It is a sacrifice of atonement just as truly as was the cross, meriting forgiveness and life, not only for the living but also for the dead in purgatory. Therefore the altar, not the pulpit, is the heart of the church. One Catholic leader put it this way: "Our most beautiful cathedrals have no other purpose than to shelter an altar."

The third cardinal element constituting the mass is that of ADORATION. By virtue of the consecration Christ Himself, sacrificed anew, now lies on that altar. That Christ must be worshipped, of course. Wherefore the church kneels before that altar to worship what to them is the Christ, but actually is only bread and wine. They strike their breasts in token of repentance in the presence of that Christ. In this way one heresy leads to another. Transubstantiation converts the wafer and the wine into Christ Himself. This leads to worship, inevitably.

Finally, there is the COMMUNION proper. The congregation eats the real body and drinks the real blood of Christ, under the taste and shape and color and texture of bread and wine. Rather, the priest partakes of both elements while the people receive only the sacred wafer. The chalice is withheld from the laity, for several reasons: to prevent the sacred blood from being spilt; to declare thereby, that Christ is present, wholly and entirely in each element, every crumb and every drop; to make a proper distinction between the laity and the clergy. However, the important thing is, — they really eat and drink Christ. "We no longer receive bread and

wine, but the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We are nourished by divinity itself."

* * * *

It is difficult to see how something so simple and obvious as the Lord's Supper could have changed into something so complex and fantastic.

The basic error of Catholicism on this point is, of course, that the mass is based on a wrong interpretation of the words: "This is my body." They take the phrase literally; it should be understood figuratively. This stands for My body, represents it, symbolizes it. As I might say of someone's picture: This is my father, or wife, or child. As Paul says to the Corinthians: "The rock is Christ."

Moreover, if it is as the Catholics would have it, the logical implication would be that all who partake of the holy sacrament are saved. Theoretically they reject this conclusion. It is possible to eat the very body and drink the very blood of Christ and still be lost forever. Does not Paul say that we must eat and drink worthily? Practically, however, the church has quite well fallen into this fallacy and self-deception. If only they partake of the mass all will be well. With the physical mouth they eat and drink Christ. And Jesus Himself says: "Whoso eateth my body and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life."

"The mass," says our Catechism, "is at bottom nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ." That it is! Scripture teaches: in His sacrifice on the cross Christ once and for always atoned for the sins of His people. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"—Hebrews 10:14. "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" — 10:18. In the mass, however, Calvary is and must be repeated constantly. With a blindness that can neither be explained nor excused Rome contradicts the very Word of God.

Finally, and undeniably, the mass is nothing but "accursed idolatry." What Rome imagines to be the Christ is in reality nothing else than bread and wine. Those means they worship. Accursed idolatry! The Bible teaches: Christ is in heaven, at the right hand of God, and there will He be worshipped. Pitiful blindness! Is it a wonder that in such a religion there is less need of Bible study and preaching? They have and receive Christ in the mass. What more do they need? How deeply the church can fall when once it departs from the way of implicit trust and childlike faith in the infallible Word of God alone.

R.V.

SUNDAY SCHOOL DELEGATE BOARD MEETING

will be held at Hudsonville Church at 8:00 P. M.

September 14, 1959.

ALL AROUND US

"Convergence of Two Denominations."

Rev. H. J. Kuiper writes on the above subject in the July-August, 1959 issue of *Torch and Trumpet*. The two denominations referred to are the Christian Reformed Church and the group that followed the Rev. H. De Wolf in the schism of 1953 when they left our churches. The Rev. Kuiper is very hopeful of a reunion of these two groups.

What was striking to us in the article of Rev. Kuiper was the fact that he correctly conceives of the group that left us as not being Protestant Reformed. He tells his readers that the De Wolf group "broke away from the denomination by that name (Protestant Reformed — M.S.) which since 1925 has been headed by Rev. Hoeksema." In the next paragraph of his article he tells the readers: "A few years ago a number of the churches belonging to the Protestant Reformed Churches were expelled from the denomination because they could no longer agree with the doctrinal extremes of Rev. Herman Hoeksema and his followers."

We would presume that the followers of De Wolf will not like this observation by Rev. Kuiper, simply because it has been and still is their contention that they, and not we, are Protestant Reformed. In all the court trials that resulted from the split they have avidly sought to take away our properties, and they did this by seeking to prove to the courts that they were the true continuation of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Rev. Kuiper evidently does not believe their contention that they are Protestant Reformed. He believes that Rev. Herman Hoeksema and his followers are the Protestant Reformed denomination since 1925, and because the De Wolf group "broke away from" and "were expelled from that denomination" are no longer Protestant Reformed. This is exactly what we have always maintained. Rev. Kuiper has done us a service by calling this to the attention of those who are no longer with us.

Moreover, that Rev. Kuiper does not believe the De Wolf group to be Protestant Reformed, is also evident from the fact that he conceives of them as being doctrinally one with the Christian Reformed Church. True, he understands that all the differences between the two groups have not yet been ironed out. But these are differences which will ultimately be erased by continued conversations. He believes that in the main the De Wolf group also embraces the Three Points of Common Grace, and therefore there is no reason for separate existence. Also this we have always maintained.

Kuiper closes his article with the following paragraph: "We hardly need to say that, as we see it, the Protestant Reformed Churches, with their strong emphasis on theological conservatism, on the antithesis, and on the necessity of being Reformed would be a very welcome addition to the Christian Reformed Church."

"Calvinism and Capitalism"

Under the above title Rev. Irving E. Howard writes in *Christian Economics*, an article intended to remember the 450th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. The article is brief, and we quote it in its entirety for its merit.

"This year marks the 450th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, benefactor of Western Civilization in many surprising ways. One must hasten to acknowledge that some of the benefits which are usually traced to John Calvin may also be credited to Martin Luther, but nevertheless, the Reformation came to England and America in a Calvinistic framework and Calvinistic Puritanism was the major force in the making of America. It is therefore fitting this year to pay tribute to this logically precise reformer.

"The enemies of capitalism have delighted in pointing to a connection between the capitalistic economic system and the teachings of John Calvin. They have reasoned: Calvinism is in disfavor in the modern world; therefore, we will demonstrate the relationship between Calvinism and capitalism. However, the method has backfired! The theological fashions have gone full cycle and Calvinism is in favor again!

"Max Weber was the first to explore the connection between Calvinism and capitalism in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. His purpose was not to discredit capitalism, but to refute Marxian materialism. R. H. Tawney took Weber's thesis and used it in his book, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, as an oblique attack upon capitalism. In this, Tawney set a precedent which others have followed, but neither Weber nor Tawney defined what they meant by 'capitalism.'

"If by 'capitalism' one means an economic system in which man uses his ingenuity and accumulated wealth to increase production, that system began when the first cave man made the first stone tool. If by 'capitalism' one means the market system based on money, credit, division of labor and exchange of goods and services such as has developed in Europe and America, the Protestant Reformation contributed to its birth, although the European society had been gestating such a system before the 16th century. In a crude form, it existed in the cities of northern Italy long before the Protestant Reformation.

"John Calvin's chief contributions to the development of the capitalistic system in the second sense of the word are his doctrine of calling, his ethic of work and thrift and his defense of interest and credit.

"The Puritans applied Calvin's doctrine of calling to all vocations. Calvin himself had spoken highly of vocation as a service to God, but the Puritans wrote such treatises as *Navigation Spiritualized*, *Husbandry Spiritualized* and *The Religious Weaver*. Making everyday work a joyous service to God became a characteristic of Calvinistic people. Furthermore, the man in the small house could not resent the man in the big house as long as he believed that God had called

them both to their respective stations in life. Calvinism negated the class conflict that communism has incited. Calling also implied a Divinely ordered universe, which faith has been at the foundation of capitalism. Adam Smith spoke of it as 'the hidden hand.' When faith that the universe is a harmonious order disappeared from the West, capitalism became ill. It is this illness, resulting from lost faith in the sovereignty of God, that has brought us to the brink of chaos.

"John Calvin's ethic of work and thrift contrasted sharply with the Medieval virtues of leisure, meditation and charity for the poor. While Calvin taught charity and made careful provision for the poor in Geneva, he also called upon the poor to improve their own situation. He made no virtue of poverty and he frequently quoted a statement of Paul's rarely heard in modern pulpits: 'If any would not work, neither should he eat.' Calvin also condemned indiscriminate almsgiving because of its effect upon the recipient. If the Calvinistic ethic contrasted with Medieval life, it contrasts much more with modern welfare statism. The indolence and improvidence which Calvin denounced as sins, present day politicians encourage to get votes. Too much credit cannot be given this Calvinistic ethic of work and thrift for the capital accumulation in the West, without which Western technological progress would never have been possible.

"Not the least among Calvin's contributions to capitalism was his endorsement of 'usury' which the Medieval authorities condemned. Calvin argued that it was as just to charge interest for money as to charge rent for land. He made rules to protect the poor from exploitation which a free market economist would consider unnecessary interventions, but nevertheless, his influence was on the side of the credit system which became the heart of the Western market economy.

"How Calvinism, which regimented life in Geneva and in Puritan New Haven, finally became the strongest champion of economic freedom and political liberty is a story too long to tell here. The fact remains that Calvinistic Puritanism did just exactly that.

"Whittaker Chambers in *Witness* reminded us that the most revolutionary question in history is: God or Man? and that whoever answers 'Man' shares the Communist vision whether he is aware of it or not. John Calvin answered that question unequivocally: God! The strength of his answer furnished iron to the Western struggle for political and economic freedom."

The above article clearly demonstrates that Calvinism is more than a theological system. It is a way of life. If practised properly, it affects the whole of life in all of its departments and necessarily our economy. It stands to reason therefore, that where Calvinism flourishes, communism has no ground in which to embed its roots. We agree with *Christian Economics* that our American way of life with its original Puritanic and Calvinistic principles is fast fading into a socialistic-communistic system in which all of our real liberties will ultimately be destroyed.

"Converted Doctor Diagnoses Romanism!"

Under the above title we read the following article in *Protestant News*, a new newspaper in the Grand Rapids area, the July, 1959 issue.

"Dr. Frederick E. Milkie, M.D., of Lima, Ohio, a former Roman Catholic but now a Bible-believing Christian, conducted a 'forum on Romanism' at the Lincoln Lake Baptist Youth Camp on Memorial Day. Dr. Milkie, who previously served as psychiatrist for the Ohio Penitentiary, was invited here by the Michigan-American Council of Christian Churches, a group which believes in 'contending for the Faith.'

"Dr. Milkie declared: 'Romanism, directed from the Vatican, is the greatest danger to our way of life. It is an insidious infiltration.' A former member of the Knights of Columbus himself he described the K of C as a mere 'front for the priesthood' to promote R. C. objectives.

"He stated that one of Satan's most effective tools is the argument that there is 'nothing bad in religion' when in reality there are 'terrible religions.' Dr. Milkie's forum follows, in part.

"QUESTION: What ways is R. C. hierarchy working to make American Catholic?

"ANSWER: Two ways principally — The Educational system and their Hospital system. Rome grows through income from R. C. hospitals. Protestants would be appalled if they knew how many of their babies have been baptized Catholics in the R. C. hospitals.

"QUESTION: How does the Roman Catholic church operate in the community?

"ANSWER: Rome is being given more and more concessions. The law in Ohio says no bingo, yet the R. C. Churches have Sunday and Wednesday nights for bingo.

"QUESTION: Does Roman Catholicism have control over papers?

"ANSWER: Definitely! Most newspapers do not even accept advertising unfavorable to R. C.'s.

"QUESTION: Are there conversions out of the priesthood?

"ANSWER: Many leave the priesthood and come out of nothing into nothing. They're afraid. Some have threats of being committed to a mental institution if they leave the R. C. Priesthood. Only the truly saved ones will stand up.

"QUESTION: How can churches best reach Roman Catholics for Christ?

"ANSWER: Door to door visitation. Some will slam doors. Don't argue. Express appreciation that R. C.'s teach the virgin birth of Christ, verbal inspiration of Scriptures, etc., which many modern Protestants no longer believe."

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Hagar and Ishmael not in the Covenant

Esteemed Editor:

In the process of time, in the last year, much attention was given in *The Standard Bearer* in regard to Hagar and Ishmael.

The Rev. B. Woudenberg wrote on this subject under the theme: "A Cloud of Witnesses," and Rev. R. C. Harbach wrote two articles under "Contributions"; and as I look at these two views, they differ as much as light and darkness, blessings and cursings, to be a covenant friend of Jehovah, or a friend of the Prince of darkness.

Now, as a common uneducated man, permit me, Dear Editor, to present also my view; not as if it should lay any weight in the balance, but to bring to light that we as common men do a little thinking of ourselves and leave it not altogether to preachers and thinkers in dogmatics; and no one will blame us for this: I am sure of that.

As you have noticed: I do not agree with those who give Hagar and Ishmael a place with the elect of God, for it is my contention that you ever can deduct from the pages of Holy Writ this to be the truth.

We must not make the mistake to quote Scripture out of its connection, or quote texts at random to prove our point. The text must be explained in the context, and brought in harmony with the whole of Scripture. We may not reason (as is done frequently) reverting now to the subject we treat: God blesses the elect only, consequently Hagar and Ishmael are elect people of God. You know: By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, but we know that the covenant blessing rested only upon Jacob, and Esau received what was left, n.m. the corn and the wine, earthly prosperity; and to my mind this is all that Ishmael ever received in accordance with Gen. 17:20. I for one can not gather from Scripture that Ishmael was blessed with the spiritual blessing of his father Abraham as the father of all believers. In Gen. 16:12 he is pictured as a wild ass among men, and in Job 39:5-8 we hear the same language: Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; which means that he was a quarrelsome person, and did not have the meek spirit of Moses the Mediator of the Old Testament. In the wilderness he cried, but it was not the cry of repentance but only the cry of despair. Later on we see him as he really is: Gen. 21:9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, at the great feast where Isaac was weaned, mocking. And remember: this mocking was not a child-like sport, but a deep-rooted, bitter, sinful act which is to be expected of this wild ass. He sneered with a devilish sneer, for his carnal mind had no eye for the reality that in this wonder child the salvation of all the elect was promised in the generations to

come; again a fact that he has no part in the promise, for he hated the true God of Israel.

Neither did Hagar have grace in her immortal soul, for she broke loose from her mistress, whom she supposedly loved. If we do not love the people of God we cannot love God. However, the Lord told her: return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands.

And as the two fugitives were cast out by Abraham at the command of God, they traveled in the direction of Egypt, Hagar's country, through the wilderness of Paran, and in Paran they made their home. And at the time Ishmael was ready for marriage Hagar took him a wife, not of friends from Abraham and Sarah; but out of Egypt; and Scripture does not inform us that they ever turned back. And how could it be otherwise; they were excommunicated, and never repented.

Galatians 4 also speaks of the two sons of Abraham, the son of the bondmaid and of the freewoman. Here Paul speaks to the Church of Galatia, but also to the Church of all ages, and warns, not to seek salvation by works, for it can only be obtained by grace for it is the gift of God, lest any one should boast. He who seeks salvation by the works of the law is condemned and will be cast out.

Isaac was a wonder child. He came into this world as life from the dead. He was born through the power of the promise, and he represents the whole elect church, the true spiritual seed of Abraham, as they are chosen, redeemed, and saved in Christ.

Ishmael is a type of the whole carnal reprobate seed that always is opposed, and persecutes the Church of the living God in the midst of this world. He was born outside of the promise.

Also in Galatians we meet the two seeds; the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and God put enmity between the two, Gen. 3:15.

Do you still believe that Ishmael was a child of God?

I can not find it in the Word of God. And I refuse to believe that Jehovah, the Triune Covenant God of His elect people, made the mistake, that He chose one of His children to be a type of the carnal race, the seed of the serpent. God is God.

S.D.V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 11, 1959, our dear parents

MR. and MRS. OTTO VANDER WOUDE, nee Hanko
will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for sparing them through these many years for us and for each other. Our sincere prayer is that the Lord may continue to bless them, and keep them in all things, in their remaining years.

Mr. and Mrs. John Vander Woude
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Redder
Mr. and Mrs. William Corson
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Byker
8 grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

August 20, 1959

Rev. M. Schipper, of Southwest Church, has declined the call from Edgerton, and Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church, has declined the call from South Holland. Holland's new trio is Revs. G. Lanting, G. Vanden Berg, and B. Woudenberg. Edgerton has named the following trio: Revs. H. Hanko, J. Heys, and G. Vanden Berg.

Rev. J. M. Mc Collam has severed his connection with Holland's Consistory, as he is no longer a minister in the Prot. Ref. Churches, inasmuch as he has resigned his pastorate in Holland and has accepted a call in one of the United Presbyterian Churches. (cf. 2 Peter 2:22.)

The Radio Committee of First Church has come to the conclusion that they definitely need a Prot. Ref. Radio Choir to furnish the musical portions of the Reformed Witness Hour. The Committee reasons that the Radio Program is becoming increasingly more and more a denominational project, because the Synodical Mission Committee is using its facilities—and is planning on adding more stations—; because some of our churches are desirous of sponsoring one or more stations; because various ministers of the denomination are called upon to preach on the air; and, musical talent is already recruited from other than First Church members. The Committee is confident that when this need is known among the churches the response will be such that a Radio Choir will be organized in the near future. They ask us to await further developments regarding such proposed organization.

By this time the Young People's Convention is past. Be sure to read the *Beacon Lights* Convention number. Show your young people that you are interested in their activities.

Many of our ministers did not have a summer vacation in the accepted sense of the word. They merely exchanged pulpits, in two- or three-way trades; in that way their congregations might enjoy the lively preaching of the Word instead of its inferior counterpart, Reading Services.

Be sure to attend First Church the evening of September fourth! Rev. H. C. Hoeksema will then be installed in the office of Professor of Theology at 8 p. m., D.V. This will be a "first" in the history of our denomination. Let's make it necessary to open the balconies to seat the audience! Rev. G. Vos, of Hudsonville, will read the installation Form, and Rev. H. Hoeksema will preach the sermon.

The Steering Committee for Prot. Ref. Secondary Education sent out their first news letter July 26th. A quote from this letter: "A great amount of work and planning has yet to be done. Only through our collective efforts, and constant

prayers for God's guidance and blessing will the ultimate goal be reached."

Holland's "many hands" made light work of the cleaning and painting of their place of worship.

An example of a demonstration of that new term, "togetherness," is revealed in Hudsonville's bulletin. The teacher of the first grade in Sunday School has her husband print the memory verse in the bulletin, thereby enlisting the help of the parents in teaching the little ones the verse of the week. The teacher is Mrs. G. Vos.

We gather from Lynden's bulletin, from the order of worship at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that the minister breaks the bread and pours the wine in the sight of the congregation, thereby completing the symbolism of the broken body and poured out blood of our Savior. We wonder why this practice has not found universal acceptance in our whole denomination.

Because Rev. H. Hanko filled a Classical appointment in Randolph July 26th, Hope had the unique experience of attending an afternoon service that day. This gave Rev. Schipper opportunity to occupy their pulpit without sacrificing his own in the evening.

Although the Young People's Societies in the Grand Rapids area recess for the summer, those of South Holland and Oak Lawn meet every Sunday evening. Grace Ipema, of Oak Lawn, was scheduled to give an essay Aug. 16th on "Temperate Use of Alcoholic Beverages."

The South Holland-Oak Lawn Church Extension Committee recently issued a two page report of their activities. Among other things, they distributed two thousand copies of, "The Unbreakable Bond of Marriage" by Rev. H. Hoeksema; and are regularly mailing out fifty copies of *The Standard Bearer*. The Committee asks "for your continued prayers and support of this work that the testimony of the truth may be extended far and wide." They conclude their news letter, "by expressing a word of appreciation to all who have helped our committee and co-operated with us in making this program possible . . ."

Did you know . . . that all of our consistories have mailed a Synodically written letter to those who have left us in the '53 schism; that this letter, in part, tells of our sorrow of heart that they were deceived by their leaders and have departed from the truth which they had loved, confessed, and adhered to for many years; that it gives a ~~six~~-part evidence to support that charge; and, that a partial quotation reads like this: "When we see all these things . . . we cry, 'Lord have mercy on our beloved brethren and sisters!' Believe us, we fervently wish for your return, for your repentance and confession before God, for again clasping the hand of brotherhood . . . Dear ones in the Lord . . . come back to us. We will gladly accept you as from the Lord Himself, so that we once more may continue our walk together to heaven . . ."

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.