

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

MERCY FOR MERCY

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. 5:7

There are just two states of the mind and heart: the hard and the merciful.

By nature all men are hard-hearted. But when the eternal mercies of God reach you, you become tender-hearted.

And the result is a great tenderness within you: the tenderness of mercy.

Of that mercy we will speak at this time.

The merciful: who are they?

They are not those who revel in its *show*. Mercy, real mercy has nothing at all to do with human philanthropy.

As far as man is concerned, we are easily fooled. All we behold is the face, not the heart. But as far as God is concerned: it is nothing but an empty show. They embrace humanity, but hate the individual. They will shed tears for the thousands far away, but hate their next door's neighbor.

There are many who will open their purse, but shut their heart.

And the worst of a bad lot are those who commercialize charity and mercy.

Did you ever see those filthy photographs in the dailies where a man or woman gives a check to another?

They have their reward.

Did you ever read those articles eulogizing the individual or the community? They have their reward.

And then there is the mercy of the welfare state. What a miserable business!

That's nothing but selfishness. It is good business. It does not pay to have slums in the neighborhood. It breeds communism. That is, by the way, also the reason why you will hear over the radio and television the sage(?) counsel: Go to your church or synagogue!

Listen to Proverbs 12:10: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

* * * *

What, then, is mercy?

Mercy is a true virtue of the heart and mind.

Mercy is one of the many forms of the love of God.

It is the love for the object of our love in misery.

Mercy is always connected with misery, at least, in this dolorous dispensation.

Mercy shares misery with its object.

Mercy is unselfish: it does not expect anything in return.

And what an opportunity to practice this virtue!

First, let us look in the church.

The living God sees to it that there is ample opportunity to practice mercy. Listen to Jesus: The poor you have always with you!

There are floods of misery of the body and the soul all around you in the church.

And every one of us is called as priest and priestess to console, to commiserate, to help, to comfort and to sympathize among the miserable brethren and sisters in Christ.

And that without respect of persons.

And how "natural" that we should practice this virtue!

Are we not one body? Anyone's misery belongs to us, even as we are members one of another.

If one member suffers, the whole body is miserable.

And, second, let us look at its practice in the world.

Listen to Paul: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

And, again: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (What depths are here!)

History tells us that the early Christian Church in Rome

would care for the sick and dying during the horrible epidemic of the pest. And these sick and dying Romans were their persecutors and killers.

That's mercy.

Listen to this: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12:20, 21.

Or, again: "Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not." Verse 14.

And the greatest mercy of one man to others we find in Acts 7:60: "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Oh yes, he cried with a loud voice!

So loud, that we still hear his voice. It is long ago, but we still hear it, and it charms our heart. That was mercy, mercy of God.

* * * *

What is the Source of such loving mercy?

Oh, the answer is easy: mercy is from God, the Source and Fountain of all mercy.

God is a merciful God in Himself. If there never had been a man or a universe with its terrible and beautiful history, God would still be a merciful God in Himself.

As to its essence, mercy is to be moved about a certain object. And God is moved when He looks at Himself. God is filled with a great tenderness of heart whenever He beholds Himself in His Son.

But now there are "men" and "angels" and a creation that is destined to be renewed.

And so, mercy of God is as a stream, an everlasting stream, flowing toward His people in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Listen to Isaiah: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence (and that is Jesus) saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (63:9).

Is it not overwhelming to listen to this definition of God's everlasting mercy?

Here is the mercy of God: He takes all the sin, death, damnation and everlasting hell of His people on His own shoulders, and carries them away, never to return.

And why?

Because of His mercy, pity and commiseration for His own.

And you may now sing!

Now then, that everlasting stream of Divine mercy reaches all the hearts of His regenerated and converted children.

And you will know it when that happens. For then you feel tender-hearted toward your brother and sister in misery and want.

Oh, dear brother and sister: the Christian is merciful.

What did the heathen say? "The kings of Israel are merciful kings."

* * * *

And what is the reward of those that are merciful?

They shall obtain mercy.

Let us first see what it does not mean.

First, it does not mean that your and my mercy is first.

The very opposite is true.

We are first very hard and cruel. That is the outstanding condition and state of every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.

That is so with respect to our natural state, but it is also true with respect to our life, *after* we are regenerated and converted. By far the greater part of our converted life we still are hard and cruel. Look what the ten brethren did to Joseph. Or see what Israel did to Judah. Shudder when you look at swearing and cursing Peter within the hearing of Jesus! Where was Peter's pity?

No, but there was genuine pity and commiseration with the bleeding and suffering Jesus: He prayed for Peter while he was cursing!

No, mercy is not first with us, so that God may reward that principal mercy with more mercy.

Neither is the mercy which you receive from men, as a reward for being mercifully inclined to them. That is the way it is sometimes explained.

Then the reasoning is this: Be merciful to those that are round about you, and they will repay you with mercy. Do good to your neighbour and he will repay you with good.

That is not true.

The very opposite is often the case.

Look at Jesus: when Peter struck off the ear of Malchus, Jesus healed him. And how did Malchus repay Him? Did he fight for Jesus or speak for Him? There is a great silence.

And so also with the merciful. What has been their reward in this world of ours?

I will tell you: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Listen to Jesus: "They hated Me, they shall also hate you!"

But above all: look at Jesus: He is mercy of God personified. And what did He receive for all His mercy?

I will quote Jesus, such as He spake in the Old Testa-

ment through the prophets: "They have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My love!"

What then?

When the everlasting stream of God's mercy sets your heart aglow with mercy for the miserable, and when you consequently are practicing that mercy around about you, God rewards His own work in you with more mercy.

Always, when you are merciful to others, God is merciful to you. That is a fundamental law in the Kingdom of God.

It is like a living stream.

The stream of mercy reached your heart and made you merciful.

You give that mercy away, and it is replaced with more mercy.

And that process goes on and on unto the praises of the Fountain of mercy.

And they are blessed.

That is: full. To be blessed is to be filled. Filled with all that you really need. Look at Christ again. He is the great Disposer of Mercy. And He is filled to overflowing with God. In Him dwells the Godhead bodily.

God is very near you when you weep for those that are in deep distress. G.V.

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 agendum 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

"The whole truth of religion, and the very foundation of piety would be overthrown if the providence of God, as it has been defined and explained, be not maintained: Because, 1. We would not be patient in adversity if we did not know that these things are sent upon us from God our Father. 2. We would not be grateful for the benefits which we receive if we did not know that they are given to us from above. 3. We would not have a certain and good hope in relation to future things if we were not fully persuaded that the will of God, in regard to our salvation, and that of all his people, is unchangeable."

Zacharias Ursinus, Heidelberg Catechism
Page 164

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EDITORIALS

Re-Union?

The late Synod of the Christian Reformed Church appears to have been favorably inclined to a re-union of their churches with those of the De Wolf group. In *The Banner* of July 3, 1959 we read:

"With a view to carrying on further discussions with the Protestant Reformed Churches (De Wolf group) it was decided:

"1. To address a communication to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in order to pave the way for further consideration regarding an eventual unification.

"2. To continue the present committee which will hold itself in readiness to confer with a committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches if further conferences should be desired by them to work out various details necessary for effectuating such a possible re-union."

From this I receive the impression that, apart from some "various details," the re-union may be realized as far as the Christian Reformed Church is concerned.

* * * *

Also the Rev. Henry Kuiper, in *Torch and Trumpet*, writes very much in favor of such a re-union. He does so on the basis of the fact that the schismatics have virtually adopted the chief contents of the "Three Points." Writes he:

"A study of the reports shows that the committee succeeded in attaining to a large measure of agreement on the points of doctrine that have been in dispute for over thirty years. Minor concessions were made by the Christian Reformed contingent in the joint committee. In regard to Point One of common grace, the Protestant Reformed members now agree that there is indeed a certain divine favor or grace which is shown to God's creatures in general. The term 'creatures' naturally includes all men, even those who die in sin and are ultimately lost . . .

"The Protestant Reformed brethren also accept the essence of Point Two, namely, that through the grace of God there is a restraint of sin in the hearts and lives of those who are not saved. They also agree to the Third Point in so far as it teaches that the unregenerate can perform civic good."

From all this it is evident that the Rev. H. J. Kuiper agrees with what I wrote on the reports of the two committees, namely, that the schismatics adopted the "Three Points" and, therefore are not Protestant Reformed.

Kuiper, however, still has one serious scruple. It concerns the question whether the offer of the gospel is, on the part of God, grace for all that hear the gospel. This must be maintained at all costs. Yet, the schismatics do not appear ready to accept this. After Kuiper quotes a few passages from the Confessions and from Scripture, he writes: "All such expressions imply that the Lord loves sinners though

he hates their sins. If this is not true, the offer of the gospel can hardly be called a sincere offer; it is nothing more than a presentation of the claims of God and a declaration that those who do not believe in Christ will perish in their sins. The Gospel goes far beyond such a cold presentation. The heart of God is in that gospel. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Of course, it is not my purpose, in this connection, to criticize the Rev. Kuiper. I merely present his reactions to the report of the committees. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from making one remark. It is that he, evidently, must have nothing of the doctrine of reprobation which, after all was one of the chief questions before the Synod of 1924. The question was whether God loves the reprobate wicked. This question Kuiper answers in the positive: "the Lord loves sinners" all sinners, as is evident, mind you, from the "sincere offer of the gospel," so that God, evidently, means to save them.

Finally, strange though it may seem, Kuiper also issues a word of warning to the schismatics, to think twice before they join the Christian Reformed Church. For: "This Church is at the crossroads right now. It seems to us that a very important question which the Protestant Reformed brethren will consider is what disposition our Synod will make of the overtures pertaining to our mission policy with respect to Nigeria and particularly of those that deal with the question of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. We can think of no question which is more basic than the latter, for unless we maintain that the Bible is infallible in all its parts we have begun to undermine the very foundation of all our doctrines. If I were a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches it would make a world of difference to me what stand the Christian Reformed Church is going to take especially on this issue."

Does Kuiper mean to say that he, too, will leave the Christian Reformed Church if this issue is decided in the wrong way? Will there be a split in the Christian Reformed Church?

I do not believe that the Christian Reformed Church is strong enough for a split. It will compromise and continue to compromise till the matter is hopeless.

And why?

My answer is: because of the basic corruption of 1924.

God is not mocked!

* * * *

But now it seems that the schismatics are not as yet ready to unite with the Christian Reformed Church.

We have no official report on the matter as yet, but according to an oral report of one that was present at their "synod" there must have been a proposition before the meeting to postpone action on the question of uniting with the Christian Reformed Church until the next "synod." This, according to the reporter, was adopted by a very small majority.

There are still several questions which I cannot answer until I have the official reports. Why did the schismatics decide to postpone action? Were they afraid that their people as a whole were not ready for the step? Was there, perhaps, also a question of some properties involved? Did they approve of the report of their committee that was appointed to meet with a committee of the Christian Reformed Church? The report must have been read before the meeting. But was it also adopted and approved so that they virtually adopted the "Three Points"?

These questions I cannot answer.

But certain it seems that they postponed action on the question of uniting with the Christian Reformed Church.

They are not quite ready.

H.H.

About The Three Points

The report of the committee of the Christian Reformed Church regarding the Second Point reads as follows:

"Regarding Point II and III. Inasmuch as the brethren of the Protestant Reformed Churches informed us that their churches fear that these points endanger the doctrine of the antithesis, our committee declares that the Synod of 1924 in no way countenanced the undermining of this important doctrine of Holy Writ, and that we repudiate any interpretation of Points II and III which would in any way be antagonistic to this truth.

"In this connection we call the attention of the Protestant Reformed brethren to the *Testimony* which the Synod of 1924 made to all the churches, in which *Testimony* the Synod emphatically maintains the doctrine of the antithesis and warns the churches earnestly against the danger of losing sight of this Scriptural truth . . .

"We declare, however, that although the Synod of 1924 ascribed the restraint of sin to the general operations of the Holy Spirit, this statement as such, while we believe it is Scriptural, nevertheless, cannot be substantiated by a direct appeal to the Confessions."

And a little later:

"With respect to Point II:

"a. It has been agreed by both committees that there is a restraint of sin.

"b. However, it has become evident that the Confessions quoted for proof do not directly teach that this restraint is to be ascribed to the general operations of the Holy Spirit.

"c. It is also agreed that this restraint is not to be interpreted to mean that there is any essential improvement in the depraved sinner."

What shall we say about this? We briefly remark the following:

1. It is not true, as the committee declares, that the Second Point (in connection with the Third) does not "countenance the undermining" of the antithesis.

What is meant by the antithesis?

It refers to the absolute contrast between and opposition

of light and darkness, of righteousness and unrighteousness, of Christ and Belial, of the children of God and the children of the world, principally, of election and reprobation; and that, too, in every sphere of the life of this world: in business and industry, in science and education, in the family and in society as well as in the state.

It stands to reason that this antithesis presupposes a principal difference between the children of God and the children of the world themselves. The latter are the unrighteous. They are totally depraved. They cannot do any good and are inclined to all evil. This is the plain teaching of all our confessions. I do not have to quote that I may prove this to the reader. On the other hand, the former are the righteous. It is true that they still have their old nature and they often sin. But it is also true that they repent before God in dust and ashes and that they fight against the sin that is still within them. Principally they love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength and walk in newness of life. Hence, arises the antithesis.

But the Second Point and also the Third deny this. They deny the total depravity of man. In the abstract the Chr. Ref. Church may confess that man is totally depraved, but in the concrete there is no totally depraved man in the world due to the fact that, according to the Second Point there is a constant operation of the Holy Spirit upon him according to which sin is restrained so that it does not break out in all its force and by virtue of which the natural man can still do much good.

But if this is true, it ought to be evident that there can be no antithesis. By virtue of the remnant of natural good that is still left in every man and which is maintained in him by the restraint of sin in his heart by the Holy Spirit, all men are alike in this present world and they all do good. Let us all cooperate, then, as far as the life in this present world is concerned. Neither let us establish special Christian schools where the children of the covenant may be instructed antithetically to prepare them to walk in every sphere of life as a separate people of God. Let us rather cooperate with the world to make the public schools as good as possible.

The Committee of the Christian Reformed Church that met with the Committee of the schismatics may *assert* that the Second and Third Points do not undermine the idea of the antithesis, more than a mere assertion this is not. And the assertion certainly is not true.

2. We wish to point out that the Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, also in this instance, does not concede anything at all to the schismatics. It is true that they grant that the expression that the restraint of sin must be ascribed to the general operations of the Holy Spirit is not found literally in the Confessions, but, at the same time, they emphasize that it is Scriptural. And that implies that the idea must be maintained.

3. Finally, the Committee of the Christian Reformed

(Continued on page 439)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

The Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:14-19

It is of the utmost importance for the future understanding of the book of Revelation that you have a clear view of the question in what connection this seventh trumpet is here mentioned, and how it occurs. Let it be definitely understood that in this passage we have no detailed description of the effects of the seventh trumpet, but merely a general proleptical vision of it. The last part of the chapter bears the same character as the entire portion that preceded. As we have said, in the preceding we had only general pictures: a picture of the church, her testimony, her struggle, the Antichrist, Babylon, and the relation between all these. In future chapters this will be worked out in detail. We must not be surprised if we read of the church again, even though in this chapter we saw her already going up to heaven. We must not be surprised if in future chapters we shall read again of the false church, of Babylon, of Antichrist, and of the intrigues against the church. All that follows describes in detail what is here mentioned in general. And the same is true of the seventh trumpet. We are told here that it blows, and in general terms the voices in heaven and the elders tell us what is the effect of this seventh trumpet. That trumpet finishes all. You will remember that there are seven seals, and that the last seal reveals itself as seven trumpets. When therefore the seventh trumpet shall have had its effect, all shall have been completed, and the mystery of God shall have been finished. Babylon shall have fallen, and Antichrist shall have been judged. Gog and Magog shall have been destroyed. The devil and all his host shall have been cast into the pool that burns with fire and sulphur. The new heavens and the new earth shall have been realized, and Christ shall have delivered His kingdom to the Father. The seventh trumpet shall finish all things, and carries us into eternity. Now in our portion we have the picture of the effect of the seventh trumpet, but not in detail. We are not told here of the fall of Babylon and of the last mighty attempt of Antichrist to gain control, of the final defeat of the devil. Nor have we a real description of the resurrection of the dead and of the judgment, of the coming down out of heaven of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the realization of the kingdom. All this will be described in the future. We shall therefore also meet with the seventh trumpet again, when it shall dissolve itself into the seven vials of wrath. But in our portion we have a proleptical vision, revealing in a few sentences the entire effect of that seventh trumpet. A general statement it is of the effect of this trumpet as viewed from heaven.

We are told in the text that at the blowing of the seventh trumpet great voices were heard in heaven. Many attempts have been made to identify these voices and to answer the question whose they are. But the text does not tell us; nor is this of any account to us. There are indeed many possibilities. In future portions of the book, in connection with the carrying out of the plan of God especially in connection with the realization of the seventh trumpet, we read of voices that speak and cry and sing. When the dragon is cast down to the earth, we read that a great voice speaks in heaven, making mention of the salvation of God's people and of woe to the earth, 12:10. Chapter fourteen makes mention of various voices. It speaks of the voice of the one hundred forty-four thousand who sing with the voice of many waters, of great thunder, with a voice of harpers. It makes mention of the voice of the angel flying in mid-heaven and proclaiming eternal good tidings to them that dwell on the earth. It speaks of a second angel announcing the fall of Babylon the great, of a third announcing woe to them that worship the beast and his image, of a voice pronouncing a beatitude upon the dead that die in the Lord. Chapter fifteen speaks of a multitude that stands by the sea of glass and sings the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Chapter sixteen tells us of a voice that proceeds from the temple and speaks to the angels that hold the seven bowls of wrath. Many and various voices are mentioned in connection with the realization of the mystery of God. As the time approaches that the kingdom shall be completed, the voices in heaven multiply. We receive the impression that heaven is watching and waiting for a long time. An occasional voice is heard now and then; but in the end it becomes plain that God Almighty is to have the victory, and heaven appears teeming with life and rebounding with songs and outcries and voices that rejoice and take part in the carrying out of the plan of the Almighty. And therefore we need not be surprised that our text describes in a few sentences the effect of the seventh trumpet, and speaks of great voices that cause themselves to be heard.

Of more importance it is to us to know what these voices say. The text says that they shout: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." In our version we read of *kingdoms*, in the plural. This would leave the impression that the reference was to the various kingdoms and empires in the political sense of the word that exist upon the earth. But the original does not speak of *kingdoms*, in the plural, but simply of the *kingdom*. And the idea is that the sovereign rule over the world has completely fallen to God Almighty and His Christ. We might therefore paraphrase: "God and His Christ have gained the sovereign rule over the world as a whole." That world was originally made to be a kingdom as an organic whole. And now, at the end, when the seventh trumpet blows, God has with and through His Anointed, His Christ, gained the actual sovereign dominion over all the world. We feel that these voices speak proleptically. At the moment the seventh trumpet sounds

they speak as if the effect of it had already been accomplished, and in one sentence they tell us that God and His Christ have assumed the sovereign rule over all the world.

Two questions arise in our mind when we listen to these voices. In the first place, the question arises: in what sense does God become sovereign over all the world at the end of time, when the seventh trumpet is finished? Is He not sovereign, and His Christ not actually sovereign, all through this dispensation? And, in the second place, what is the relation between the sovereignty of God Almighty and that of His Christ at the finishing of the seventh trumpet? Shall they reign side by side, or shall there be subordination? In answer to the first question, it must be said that God is indeed sovereign all through the history of the world. There is nothing, there is no creature, that can thwart His will; and all are in subjection to Him. Even the devil and all his host and all the wicked world can after all do nothing against Him, even though they so imagine in the wickedness of their heart. But although in this sense He is sovereign, absolutely sovereign, yet it is not true that His sovereignty is undisputed. Even though we tremble at the thought, it is true nevertheless that the devil conceived of the plan of becoming sovereign instead of the Most High, and that he has employed other angels and man to realize this plan of his own sovereignty. And therefore, he, together with his agencies, the host of the devils from the abyss and Babylon and Antichrist on earth, rise in rebellion against the Sovereign of heaven and earth. There is therefore a battle being carried on in this world for the possession of the whole world as kingdom between God and His Anointed, the Christ, and the devil and his anointed, the Antichrist. God's sovereignty is disputed. The devil wars against God, to wrest His sovereignty from Him. And the full and complete sovereignty of God Almighty shall not appear before these rebels have been subdued, before these enemies have been destroyed, and God and His Christ reign in undisputed sovereignty forever. This destruction of the enemy, this final subjection of all that rebel against God, the seventh trumpet shall bring about. By this seventh trumpet Babylon shall be brought to its ruin, Antichrist shall be destroyed, Gog and Magog shall be annihilated and punished, the new Jerusalem shall be realized, and God shall spread His tabernacle over all. And now these voices, at the sound of the last trumpet, see the realization of all this. They speak as if the trumpet is already finished, as if the enemies have already been destroyed. And therefore they now shout: "The sovereignty of the world has become the sovereignty of our God and of His Anointed for ever and ever."

As to the second question, we must remember that the plan of God is that the kingdom of the world shall be a kingdom of man under God. Man is made king of the world in obedience to God Almighty as Sovereign. He is made viceroy. But man rebelled. The first man went with his power and royal glory and subjected himself to the prince of darkness with his kingdom. And now God has sent His

second man, the Anointed, the man Jesus Christ. He is to take man's place. He is the Servant of God, the head of the covenant that is to be realized, the King of the new creation. But He is to take the place of man. Now He reigns at the right hand of God and carries out the decree of God with a view to the coming kingdom. He breaks the seals. He causes the trumpets to blow. He sends the vials of wrath. For He alone was worthy to receive the book out of the hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne. But in the end, when all is completed and the seventh trumpet shall have finished its work, He shall subject Himself too, according to the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15, and reign over all the works of God forever and ever, but under God as His Sovereign. In Christ, the Anointed of God, the new creation shall lie at the foot of its Maker and give Him glory. What a glory that shall be! The enemies of God and of His church are destroyed. The people of God are delivered. All creation is lying at the feet of the Sovereign forever and ever. There will be no more war or disturbance. There will be no more sin. There will never be a second fall of angels and men. But into ages of ages God, the Supreme Ruler, reigns over all, and we shall reign with Christ forever over the works of His hands.

But there is not only the voice of these mighty ones that is heard, but also the voice of the four and twenty elders that shout in this connection. Who they are we have explained in a different connection. We will not go into detail again. Be it sufficient to say that they are the representatives of the church of all ages, both of the old and of the new dispensation. We read of them that at the voice of the seventh trumpet they fell upon their faces and worshipped God. This is in complete harmony with the contents of the great voice that has just spoken. The latter had announced that God and His Christ had assumed the full sovereignty of the world, and that forever and ever. In harmony with this the twenty-four elders fall upon their faces and worship.

H.H.

ABOUT THE THREE POINTS

(Continued from page 437)

Church agreed with the schismatics that the restraint of sin does not mean that there is any essential improvement in the depraved sinner. Also this does not mean a thing. Fact is, as we have pointed out before, that the Second Point presupposes that there is a remnant of good left in the natural man, and this remnant of good is preserved by the restraint of sin through the operations by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Second Point does not teach any essential improvement in the so-called depraved sinner, because he never was totally depraved. How otherwise can you speak of a restraint of sin the fruit of which is that the so-called depraved sinner still is able to do much good in the present world? This, then, is our opinion of what the Committee of the Christian Reformed Church expressed in regard to the Second Point.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Jacob's Family

"And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled." — Genesis 29:21

Jacob had deceived his blind father Isaac, and the result of that sin was that he was banished for many years from his covenant inheritance in Canaan. Far from his father's house while dwelling with his uncle Laban, the Lord subjected Jacob to severe chastisements because of his sin. He had deceived his father; at the hands of his unscrupulous uncle he was subjected to a very similar deception. It was the hand of the Lord leading him through deep trials in the way of his sanctification.

Seven years passed as Jacob served Laban so that he might have Rachel in marriage. We read that "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Finally the years of servitude were finished, and it was Jacob who had to approach Laban and remind him of the agreement that had been made. With more than his usual willingness Laban agreed to meet his debt. With more than his usual generosity he made ready for an elaborate celebration of the marriage. It was not until the morning following the ceremony that Jacob discovered the reason for his uncle's amiable cooperation. The same seed which Jacob had sown so many miles and years before, he reaped again in kind. Under the veil of his father's blindness he had presented himself in the place of his brother Esau. Under a veil of cloth and of darkness his uncle presented to him Leah in the place of Rachel. As Jacob had sown so did he reap.

It is this even more than any other which brings out the avaricious and greedy nature of Laban. Laban gave as a reason for this substitution the custom of that country that required the older daughter to be married before the younger. But no one could take this reasoning very seriously. Had such been the truth surely Laban would have, or at least should have, informed Jacob of it at the time of the original contract. We would conclude rather that Laban had found the service of Jacob to be so profitable that he did not want to see its terms expire. Knowing the affection which Jacob held toward Rachel, he anticipated the possibility of renewing in this way the contract for yet another seven years. This would be all to his profit. So it was that Laban in a very real sense sold his daughters for nothing more than filthy lucre.

Much has been made of the guilt which Leah also incurred by taking part in this imposture. What is forgotten thereby is that in that day it was quite improper for any man to approach a woman concerning marriage except through her father or legal guardian. It is not at all impossible that through the seven years of Jacob's service

Laban in his cunning never informed his daughters of his agreement with Jacob. Meanwhile there developed in Leah a strong love for Jacob based, at least in part, upon her love for the place which he held within the covenant of God. Thus when Laban told her to prepare for the coming wedding, she did so joyfully in complete ignorance of real terms of agreement and the expectation of Jacob.

We wonder why Jacob, when he discovered the imposture, did not renounce his marriage with Leah on the basis of fraud. Surely he could not have been held legally responsible for a marriage contracted under such fraudulent circumstances. He could have exposed the trickery of Laban and justly demanded recompense. But Jacob did not. Was it, perhaps, that underneath his strong attachment for Rachel there was also a love for the more spiritual Leah? He recognized the spiritual superiority of Leah and was not ready to put her to open shame by exposing the fraud. In this the hand of the Lord was working. Just as before this God had used the deceit of Jacob to keep Isaac from giving the covenant blessing to Esau, so here God used the deceit of Laban to make Leah the mother of the covenant line. He would not be dependent upon the works and ways of men. God had ordained that Leah should be the mother of the generations of Christ. In spite of the weakness of Jacob, He guided all things that so it should be.

But Jacob was not ready to renounce his love for Rachel. It was a superficial love based on Rachel's greater external beauty; but still it loomed very strong within the heart of Jacob. Had Jacob had the strength of his father Isaac he would have recognized the hand of the Lord in that which had happened. Then he would have repented of his desire to have Rachel for his wife and received Leah as a gift from the Lord. But Jacob was yet spiritually immature. He was not willing to renounce that upon which he had set his heart. Immediately the next morning he approached Laban and with angry words he accused him. "What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" Laban was ready for him. He offered to contract with Jacob for another seven years of service so that Jacob might have both of his daughters. So it was that Jacob was subjected once again to the cunning of his unscrupulous uncle. Within another eight days he took to himself also Rachel and sold himself to the sinful life of polygamy.

Polygamy was only too frequently practiced by the people of Old Testament times. The Old Testament Scriptures pointed out quite clearly that it was wrong but did not give direct commandment forbidding it. Neither did they provide for a direct punishment or discipline for those who practiced it. Nonetheless, those who practiced polygamy were punished, for the very practice itself inevitably brought great sorrow and suffering into the families where it existed.

In the family of Jacob trouble developed very soon after he had taken both Leah and Rachel to be his wives. This

trouble was due principally to two different facts. The first was the continued preference which Jacob gave to Rachel overagainst Leah. This is a natural result of polygamy and we find several examples of it recorded in Scripture. It is a human impossibility for a sinful man to treat two wives with complete equality. But when such equality does not exist it results in jealousy and antagonism. The second fact was that God showed preference for Leah. Leah had been chosen and ordained by Him to be the mother of the covenant line of Christ. Furthermore, she was the more spiritual of the two women. This too only served to increase the antagonism within Jacob's family.

Soon after her marriage to Jacob God looked down in compassion upon Leah and opened her womb so that she bore children; but Rachel was barren. We gain a glimpse into the spirituality of Leah when we observe her reaction to the birth of her first four children. When Reuben was born she said, "Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me." When Simeon was born she said, "Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also." At the birth of Levi she remarked, "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons." Finally when Judah the father of Christ was born, she exclaimed almost prophetically, "Now will I praise the Lord." In this we see reflected some of the pain which Leah felt because Jacob withheld from her his love. It was a grief that weighed heavily upon her heart. Nevertheless, she did not become bitter or hateful. She looked, rather, to the Lord to take away her burden. As each one of her children were born she did not become arrogant or proud boasting in her own strength. She gave thanks unto God recognizing that it was His grace that gave her these children.

It was with Rachel that the trouble which was to beset the family of Jacob first made its appearance. She dominated the love of Jacob, but that did not satisfy her. She was barren and she envied her sister with her children. With her heart filled with bitter jealousy she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." In anger Jacob replied, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" With the entrance of carnal rivalry into the family of Jacob, the love of God which leads His people to share each other's burdens departed. Nor did it stop with that. Incited by her jealousy, Rachel observed no moral boundaries but, following the example of Sarah before her, she thought to raise up children unto herself by giving her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob. When Bilhah brought forth a son, Rachel also made an appeal to God as having vindicated her. However, the battle in which she thought herself to be vindicated was not a spiritual battle but a carnal competition for dominance over her sister. This became evident when Bilhah bore a second son, and she responded, "With great wrestling have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." Because of the competition between his two wives, the life of

Jacob's family was brought down into the depths of antagonism and strife.

Neither did Leah remain untainted by the antagonism of Rachel. Leaving her level of high spirituality, she was caught up by the spirit of jealousy which was pervading their home. Following the example of her sister, she too imposed her handmaid upon Jacob. No longer was the bringing forth of children a matter of faith with her. When Zilpah gave birth to two sons she named the first one Gad, which is practically the equivalent of our expression "Good Luck"; and the second one she named Asher, meaning merely "happy," for she said, "Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed." Gone were the beautiful testimonies of faith which accompanied the birth of her first four sons.

So this vying for ascendancy continued, all the while draining the joy and spiritual strength from the household of Jacob. It reached perhaps its lowest ebb when Rachel and Leah bargained together over some mandrakes which Reuben had found in the field. The mandrakes were a fruit that according to popular superstition were thought to cause fertility. Rachel, still barren, wished to have them for herself. Leah was ready to sell them for the attention of her husband. With such petty bickering and superstitious bargaining taking place, spirituality seemed to have departed almost completely from the covenant household of Jacob.

We may wonder at times that the Old Testament Scriptures do not speak out more strongly in condemnation of polygamy. But, if we correctly understand such events as this, they speak for themselves. The Spirit of inspiration vividly portrays before our eyes the evil results that fall upon them who ignore the very ordinance of creation that to every man there should be but one wife.

In fairness to Rachel we should note, however, that eventually she must have seen the futility of her way and turned from it in repentance. Scripture does not give to us the details but only records that "God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb." Pre-supposing a spiritual revival within the heart of Rachel, this statement prepares us for the confession which she made at the birth of Joseph, "God hath taken away my reproach." Purged from all taint of jealousy and animosity, this confession gives honor to Whom honor belongs. It reminds us of the glorious truth that, although His people may fall into great depths of sin, God will use also that as a means to show them the futility of their sin and to restore them to even greater heights of faith.

B.W.

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

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 14, 15

IV.

(Romans 14:13-23)

We now proceed with our exposition of the last section of this fourteenth Chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. In this portion Paul directs a strong, concise and well-motivated exhortation to the brethren who are strong in the faith, that is, to those who in good conscience can apply the doctrine of justification by faith, without any works of law, to all the spheres of life, believing that to the pure all things are pure!

We noticed in our former essay, did we not, that Paul admonishes the "weak" brethren not to judge the stronger brethren in the faith? He motivated that admonition by pointing out, that, in so doing, they would be judging the household servants of Christ Himself. Christ is their Lord. "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another," answers Paul! To his own Lord and master the strong stands and falls. It is pure presumptuousness to judge of the stronger brethren in terms of "days" and "meats."

Let the weak beware!

However, also the strong must be transformed in their minds, and must approve of the good, the perfect and acceptable will of the Lord. Such is also their reasonable service. They are not in any way to confuse that which is "permissible" with that which is "edifying"! Dogmatics and ethics must not be identified; true, these may not be at variance with one another, but what is permitted us in Christ Jesus and what is for edification under certain circumstances varies. All things must be done according to the standard of *love for the brethren*, rooted in the love of God to us.

Wherefore Paul writes, in part, in these verses 13-23 as follows: "*Let us therefore not judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest not longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died . . . Let us then follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. . . . Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

Let us not forget that the particular problem around which Paul's discussion revolves is that of "keeping of days"

and of "eating or not eating of certain meats." These matters are really indifferent in themselves. They are *adiaphora*! Some said: in Christ we are free to eat anything which is eatable, created for that very purpose by God. Others said: certain meats are unclean, no matter how eatable! The former were right dogmatically, and the latter were in that sense wrong. Hence, the former are the strong in faith and the latter are the weak in faith! However, one need not eat everything to be a Christian, nor need one abstain from meats to be a Christian. As such, therefore, meats and days are indifferent, they are *adiaphora*! It is our *new relationship* to the Lord which constitutes our being a Christian. Keeping of days and eating of meats is really non-determinative. A Christian may eat meats and may keep days — provided he does so unto his Lord. And a Christian may be a non-user of certain meats, and keeper of certain days — provided he does so unto the Lord!

Let it be well-understood!

Whether we live or die we are the Lord's!

Hence, we should not be interested or disinterested in "days" and "meats," but our primary concern should be our *brother* in Christ, and his *edification*. We should only be interested in his becoming rooted and founded in the faith, growing in love, holding on to the Head, Christ. Now admittedly all things do not edify! And what is permissible and what edifies by no means always coincide!

Here then we are to walk according to the rule that we are willing to lay down our life for our brother. This does not mean that the strong relinquish their freedom in Christ as proclaimed in the Gospel, but it means that the strong shall *not press* their full claim to the Gospel in matters which are *indifferent as such*, if such pressing of this claim should become the occasion of stumbling to the weak. For if by such pressing of the claim of the freedom of the Gospel, in regard to matters not expressly stated in the law, and not dealing with any Article of the Christian Faith, our brother is grieved in his conscience so that he falls into sin, we are no longer walking according to the law of love! For all the law is fulfilled in one Word, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Here the rule laid down by Paul in Galatians 5:13-15 is applicable which reads, "For ye brethren were called for freedom: only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

In the verses 13-23 Paul gives various motives for a Christian conduct toward the weak brethren by the strong.

Paul insists that there must be a hearty determination and resolution on the part of the strong not to cause the weak to stumble. In the sentence, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put

a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling." It must be their *determinate judgment*, taking in all the facets of the matters at hand, the evil results effecting therefrom, that they shall not longer judge the brother. Instead of being critical of his conduct they are to be seekers of his edification! What a boon on earth! Behold, how pleasant and how good! Writes Lange in his commentary: "The apostle uses the same word (*krinein*) in a changed meaning, in order to emphasize more particularly, by this anaclysis the antithesis of judging . . ."

The reason for such determination is, as we have repeatedly pointed out, not that anything is unclean of itself. Writes Paul in verse 14: "I know and am persuaded by (in) the Lord Jesus that there is nothing common (*koinon*) of itself." Paul knows and is persuaded perfectly up till the present moment (*pepeismai*) not simply by a subjective feeling. He is persuaded that nothing is common, profane, unclean in a religious sense, and, therefore, unusable in the temple of God upon the altar of consecration and prayer. For all things are of us, we are of Christ and Christ is God's, I Cor. 3:23. The foundations stand. Paul does not sacrifice sound doctrine for practical considerations! This is placed on the foreground.

However, there is the "infirmity of the weak" which must be considered. And such consideration does not grant the weak the correctness of their position, but it commiserates with their weakness. It seeks to make them stronger. Not *their view* must be raised as standard of conduct, but *they themselves must be saved*; the work of God in them must not be destroyed. Tenderly their weak conscience must be considered until it grow stronger in the Lord.

Besides the matter of eating or not-eating is really not the important, the essential matter in the Kingdom of God. The strong should not get too excited over this individual matter. For the "Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." One cannot equate the right to eat of meats and not to keep days with the "Kingdom of God." Conceivably it can have nothing at all to do with the Kingdom of God.

What is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is certainly a Kingdom in which Christ is King. He entered into this Kingdom to be Lord of the living and of the dead, through His death and resurrection. This Kingdom came at Pentecost in its principal fulfillment and will be consummated in the age to come. It is not of this earth according to the good confession which Christ made before Pontius Pilate. It is heavenly. Flesh and blood cannot inherit it, no more than corruption can inherit incorruption!

Now the nature of this Kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Only what the Holy Spirit puts into our hearts belongs to this Kingdom.

There are in the main two schools of interpretation of

the clause "Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Firstly, there is the school of exegetes from Chrysostom down to Grotius, Meyer, which makes at best this righteousness to consist in a walk of sanctification through the operation of the Holy Spirit, or at its worst simply some moral virtues. Writes Charles Hodge: "Paul does not mean to say, that Christianity consists in morality; that the man who is just, peaceful and cheerful, is a true Christian. This would contradict the whole argument of the epistle."

We concur with the latter writer, Charles Hodge.

We believe that "righteousness" is here the righteousness of God in Christ, which Christ merited for us on the Cross of Calvary, so that we are righteous before God and heirs of everlasting life. And, further, that "peace" is here the peace which is ours with God and with our neighbor, since we have been justified by faith, so that we have inner tranquility of conscience, being free from the curse of the law. And that the "joy" here is that fruit of the Holy Spirit, the eternal blessedness which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard and which hath never entered into the heart of man! Such is the nature of the Kingdom of God.

Such it must also become more and more in the hearts of both the "strong in faith" and in the hearts of the "weak in faith."

Now, admittedly, anything which stands in the way of this Kingdom thus being established in the hearts of the weak, causes them to stumble, is a pit-fall for them. And, again, only when we thus conduct ourselves that the righteousness, peace and joy of Christ, merited on the Cross, becomes the portion of the weak, or when we do not interfere with this their salvation and joy, do we strive for the things that make for peace! Only thus do we *serve* Christ, His cause and His work in the saints. And only then do we edify when we so conduct ourselves that the weak brother lays hold on this righteousness in Christ by faith. Then too will he have peace with God, whether he eats or eats not (and not merely when he eats *not*). And the pure joy of Christ, the eternal joy shall be his portion here more and more.

This joy in our hearts is the "work of God." Let us by our eating meat not destroy it, nor do anything which might cause the brother to backslide to his own eternal destruction!

Rather let us be fully convinced in our own mind that when we eat we eat unto the Lord. Happy is the man who does not condemn himself in this respect. Here are motives of psychiatry! Here are the inner conflicts of conscience often. Blessed is he who has not experienced it.

For all that is not out of faith is sin!

More about this in the next instalment.

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

With A Checkup And A Check

Few there are of our readers who do not know from where it is that we have borrowed the title which is found above this article.

We live in a day when the dreaded disease of cancer is continually before the minds of the inhabitants of this earth. In itself it is a disease that fills the human heart with fear. For, although certain types are cured by radical surgery and painful radium treatments, in many instances the disease does not make itself known until all hope of cure is gone, and in many other instances its growth is so fast that there is nothing in man's knowledge that can halt it or cure it. And recently so many well-known and prominent figures in our every-day life have been afflicted with this disease; and their treatment and condition has been publicized by every news medium.

The advice is given, therefore, on printed page and over the air waves that we fight this disease with a checkup and with a check. And our purpose with these lines is neither to advocate this fight by a checkup and a check nor to call it an evil practice. We are not writing under the auspices of any cancer society or doing this at the request of any such society. Nor are we requested by anyone to speak against this slogan or have we set forth by our words to discourage the checkup or the check.

Surely for our own health's sake—and we have a calling to protect and take good care of our bodies—a periodical checkup is not only wise but also our calling, especially when there are signs in our bodies that indicate that we might have the beginning of the disease in our flesh. Does not the Heidelberg Catechism teach us in Lord's Day XL that the sixth commandment demands of me that "I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger"? Indeed! And I surely do expose myself to danger willfully when there are things in my body that could be the beginning of this dreaded disease and I do not place myself in the hands of a competent physician for a checkup. And that I commit no sin when I write out a check for scientific research that those already afflicted may have the best methods of treatment does not need to be proved. I *am* my brother's keeper in that respect. I must mind not only the things of myself but also the things of others. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:4, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Who would deny that Paul means also that we look upon the distresses and sicknesses of our fellow men and as much as we are able seek to help them in their woes? And Jesus told us to DO unto others that which we would have them do unto us. It is not simply a case of *not* hurting them because we do not want them to

hurt us. But it surely is a case of doing something for them even as we would like to be helped by them when we are in distress and misery.

Did Jesus condemn those who sought deliverance from sickness, blindness, leprosy and for that matter from any physical infirmity? Did he call those carnal who pleaded with Him to come because their children were at the point of death? Came He not when Mary and Martha sent for Him after their brother Lazarus was dead? Surely we will find no basis in Holy Writ for the stand that we may not call in the physician when we or our children are stricken with some serious disease. You will find no Scriptural proof that an operation or a blood transfusion are of the devil. And that men fight cancer with a checkup and a check, we will not condemn.

But the thought we wish to leave with you by these lines is that In His Fear we will never stop there; and we will never fight this dreaded disease as an end in itself as though having conquered(?) it, we have really achieved something worthwhile. In His Fear we will "fight" this disease and all other diseases, death included, not by a checkup and a check but through a Cross and a Crown, and expect victory only through them.

Consider that when the physician and therapist have rid your body of every last cancer cell and you are pronounced wholly cured, death still stands before you. A checkup and a check will never stay that hand of death. The world says it in jest, but it is tragically true: The operation was a success, but the patient died. Yea, that relentless power of death has never been conquered by man. Neither check nor checkup has dominion over this last enemy. Without the cross of Christ and the crown of life and of righteousness a checkup and a check can only achieve an illusion of victory. What is more without that cross and that crown a checkup and a check will have for its result a greater measure of torment and of the agony of everlasting death of hell. Consider that when we speak of a man being saved from the jaws of death, he is not actually saved from death. He receives a few more days and even perhaps years of earthly existence than seemed, at the moment, to be allotted to him. His days seemed numbered; and the doctor will tell you that this particular cancer in this specific organ develops at such a rate of speed that he has at the most so many days of life left unless radical surgery is performed at once, or radium treatments are begun. The cancerous growth is removed and apparently all the malignant tissue is removed. The patient slowly recovers from the operation and from the disease that was eating away at his life. After a period of five years no new symptoms of the disease appear elsewhere in his body; and he is proclaimed completely cured of his cancer. With a song in his heart, with lightness of step, with a smile for all who meet him he hastens to his car after this report on his most recent examination. But before he can arrive home safely, he is killed in an automobile accident.

The checkup and the check gained for him, so it seemed, a few more years of this life; and yet this "victory" is empty, for another assault is made on his life. And this time he loses his life.

But some will say, it was worth it! Five years added to his life! Who would call that an empty victory? Yes, but listen, we said that without that cross and that crown this checkup and check will result in greater woe and misery in hell. For each minute of those five years will testify against that man in the day of days. Five more years there have been of rebellion against God. And in the judgment day a man shall be judged according to his works. The greater the number of evil works that he has performed in this life, the greater his punishment will be. Without that cross and that crown he is not able to fill these years with thankfulness to his God Who guided the hands of this skilled surgeon. Without that cross and that crown there is no forgiveness of these sins committed during his last five years of life. When the books are opened in that judgment day, five years more of sin will be revealed which would not be there if he had failed to get his checkup in time and the checks of others had failed to produce this cure for his disease.

Sin is a cancer that cannot be cured by science, education, medical research, radium, the surgeon's scalpel or any earthly creature whether fluid or solid, taken internally or externally. It is cured only by blood, the precious blood of Christ. Before it no sin can stand. It blots out sin so completely that all trace of its presence is completely gone. And where these wages of sin, death, now reigns this blood brings life in its place. For where sin is removed the wages of sin are not only removed but God, Who gives grace for grace, bestows life as the free gift of His grace. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23. And there and there only, do we have the true victory over cancer and all other diseases and miseries of man.

Otherwise a checkup and a check mean nothing and will only bring an illusory victory. What is more, let us assume that man has found a way to prevent and cure cancer even as he has made such progress in other diseases that formerly took a huge toll of lives each year in times gone by and of another age. Man cannot rid himself of the curse. He never will rid himself of the curse. The cross and the crown are God's means whereby He in His grace delivers His people from all sin, all the effects of sin, all the scars and blemishes of sin to bring us with beautiful bodies into the glory of His kingdom, to heal all our diseases and restore to us a whole and perfect body wherewith we shall be able to serve Him in the perfection of holiness.

Let us be careful lest we put our trust in men, in their medical and surgical skill. Let us beware lest we take our eyes off Him Who is the Great Physician to fix them upon one who is himself under the power of the curse. We read

the other day in one of our better known news magazines of a doctor who performed the first successful operation for lung cancer. His patient is a strong, healthy man today completely cured of that lung cancer which had afflicted him. The doctor, however, died two years ago. He died of lung cancer! Put your trust in men and you will surely be put to shame. It may take a little time before this becomes apparent; but man who is under the curse cannot deliver you from that curse. Put your trust in the Great Physician Who took the curse upon Himself for our sins and made atonement for our sins, and you will never be put to shame. You will be healed, completely healed. For He is the victor over grave and death and all that brings death upon man. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the resurrection *because* He is the life. Live in His fear, that is, put all your trust in Him.

In His fear, then, you will also live a life of gratitude before Him. That belongs to His fear and indicates that it is present. Oh, it is so easy to be ungrateful, complaining and fault-finding when miseries, diseases and pains strike us. It is so easy to question God's goodness and to say with Asaph that clean hands are worthless and pure hearts are vain. These we do when we do not live in His fear. In His fear we stand before Him in reverence and awe. In His fear we see Him as GOD! And we are thankful before Him, thankful for the cross whereby we have a complete cure of all our diseases and victory over our death. Thankful for the testimony of His Word that we have a crown of righteousness and of life through the blood of that cross. And then it is *that* cross — and not a red or blue or white cross that represents the practices of cursed men — that gives us hope and confidence as we walk through the valley in which the shadow of death is cast. Say it with David in your distresses, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." So we speak when we live in His fear.

J.A.H.

"To believe God and to believe in God are two very different things. The first expresses historical faith; the latter, true faith or confidence; for when I say, I believe that God is, if I speak properly, I believe there is a God, and that he is such an one as he hath revealed himself in his word, namely, a spiritual essence, omnipotent, etc., the eternal Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When I say, *I believe in God*, I mean, I believe that he is my God, that is, whatever he is and has is all for my salvation. Or *to believe God*, is to believe a certain person to be God, according to his attributes. *To believe in God*, is to be persuaded that he will make all things attributed to him subservient to my salvation, for the sake of his Son."

Zacharias Ursinus, Heidelberg Catechism
Pages 139, 140

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

PENANCE

We concluded our preceding article by quoting Chapter VI of the decrees of the Council of Trent on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of penance. This sixth article or chapter decrees that absolution must be granted by the priest. It also teaches that even priests, who themselves are in mortal sin, exercise the office of forgiving sins, as the ministers of Christ and through the virtue of the Holy Ghost Who was bestowed upon them in ordination. This absolution of the priest must not be viewed merely as a bare ministry, as simply declaring that sins are forgiven, but as a judicial act, whereby sentence is pronounced as by a judge. And, lastly, the penitent must not think that he is truly and in God's sight absolved merely on account of his faith. The absolution by the priest is absolutely necessary unto the forgiveness of his sins. However, as we shall now see in Chapter VII there are certain exceptions or reservation of cases.

CHAPTER VII

On The Reservation Of Cases

Wherefore, since the nature and order of a judgment require this, that sentence be passed only on those subject (to that judicature), it has ever been firmly held in the Church of God, and this Synod ratifies it as a thing most true, that the absolution, which a priest pronounces upon one over whom he has not either an ordinary or a delegated jurisdiction, ought to be of no weight whatever. And it hath seemed to our most holy Fathers to be of great importance to the discipline of the Christian people, that certain more atrocious and more heinous crimes should be absolved, not by all priests, but only by the higher priests; whence the Sovereign Pontiffs, in virtue of the supreme power delivered to them in the universal Church, were deservedly able to reserve, for their special judgment, certain more grievous cases of crimes. Neither is it to be doubted, — seeing that all things, that are from God, are well ordered, — but that this same may be lawfully done by all bishops, each in his own diocese, unto edification, however, not unto destruction, in virtue of the authority, above (that of) other inferior priests, delivered to them over their subjects, especially as regards those crimes to which the censure of excommunication is annexed. But it is consonant to the divine authority, that this reservation of cases have effect, not merely in external polity, but also in God's sight. Nevertheless, for fear lest any may perish on

this account, it has always been very piously observed in the said Church of God, that there be no reservation at the point of death, and that therefore all priests may absolve all penitents whatsoever from every kind of sins and censures whatever: and as, save at that point of death, priests have no power in reserved cases, let this alone be their endeavor, to persuade penitents to repair to superior and lawful judges for the benefits of absolution. — end of quote of this seventh chapter on the sacrament of penance as decreed by the Council of Trent. Notice, please, how arbitrarily, without any quotation from Scripture, the Roman Catholic Church has expressed itself here on this "sacrament." They say that there are special cases, more atrocious and heinous sins that should be absolved, not by all priests, but only by the highest priests. However, for fear that any might perish on this account, that Church declares that there be no reservation at the point of death, and that, in case of imminent death, all priests may absolve all penitents and that regardless of the nature or severity of the crime that may have been committed. And now let us notice, in Chapter 8 of the decrees of this Council on the Romish doctrine of penance, what the Romish Church teaches with respect to the necessity and the fruit of satisfaction. This constitutes the heart of the Romish doctrine of penance.

CHAPTER VIII

On the Necessity and on the Fruit of Satisfaction

Finally, as regards satisfaction, — which as it is, of all the parts of penance, that which has been at all times recommended to the Christian people by our Fathers, so is it the one especially which in our age is, under the loftiest pretext of piety, impugned by those who have *an appearance of godliness, but have denied the power thereof*, — the holy Synod declares, that it is wholly false, and alien from the Word of God, that the guilt is never forgiven by the Lord, without the whole punishment also being therewith pardoned. For clear and illustrious examples are found in the sacred writings, whereby, besides by divine tradition, this error is refuted in the plainest manner possible. And truly the nature of divine justice seems to demand, that they, who through ignorance have sinned before baptism, be received into grace in one manner; and in another those who, after having been freed from the servitude of sin and of the devil, and after having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, have not feared, knowingly *to violate the temple of God, and to grieve the Holy Spirit*. And it beseems the divine clemency, that sins be not in such wise pardoned us without any satisfaction, as that, taking occasion therefrom, thinking sins less grievous, we, offering as it were an insult and an *outrage to the Holy Ghost*, should fall into more grievous sins, *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*. For, doubtless, these satisfactory punishments greatly recall from sin, and check as it were with a bridle, and make penitents more cautious and watchful for the future; they are also remedies for the remains of sin, and, by acts of the opposite virtue, they remove

the habits acquired by evil living. Neither indeed was there ever in the Church of God any way accounted surer to turn aside the impending chastisement of the Lord, than that men should, with true sorrow of mind, practice these works of penitence. Add to these things, that, whilst we thus, by making satisfaction, suffer for our sins, we are made conformable to Jesus Christ, who satisfied for our sins, from whom all our *sufficiency is*; having also thereby a most sure pledge, that if we suffer with him, *we shall also be glorified with him*. But neither is this satisfaction, which we discharge for our sins, so our own, as not to be through Jesus Christ. For we who can do nothing of ourselves, as of ourselves, can do all things, he co-operating, who strengthens us. Thus, man has not wherein to glory, but all our glorying is in Christ: in whom we live; in whom we merit; in whom we satisfy; *bringing forth fruits worthy of penance*, which from him have their merits and by him are offered to the Father; and through him are accepted by the Father. Therefore the priests of the Lord ought, as far as the Spirit and prudence shall suggest, to enjoin salutary and suitable satisfactions, according to the quality of the crimes and the ability of the penitent; lest, if haply they connive at sins, and deal too indulgently with penitents, by enjoining certain very light works for very grievous crimes, they be made partakers of other men's sins. But let them have in view, that the satisfaction, which they impose, be not only for the preservation of a new life and a medicine of infirmity, but also for the avenging and punishing of past sins. For the ancient Fathers likewise both believe and teach, that the keys of the priests were given, not *to loose only*, but also *to bind*. But not therefore did they imagine that the sacrament of Penance is a tribunal of wrath or of punishments; even as no Catholic ever thought, that, by this kind of satisfaction on our parts, the efficacy of the merit and of the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ is either obscured or in any way lessened: which when the innovators seek to understand, they in such wise maintain a new life to be the best penance, as to take away the entire efficacy and use of satisfaction.

CHAPTER IX

On Works of Satisfaction

The Synod teaches furthermore, that so great is the liberality of the divine munificence, that we are able through Jesus Christ to make satisfaction to God the Father, not only by punishments voluntarily undertaken of ourselves for the punishment of sin, or by those imposed at the discretion of the priest according to the measure of our delinquency, but also, which is a very great proof of love, by the temporal scourges inflicted of God, and borne patiently by us.

Before we make a few observations on this Roman Catholic doctrine of Penance as expressed in this decree of the Council of Trent, we wish to quote the Canons on this "sacrament" as adopted by this Council, in which Rome anathematizes those who deny this "sacrament."

Canon I

If any one saith, that in the Catholic Church Penance is not truly and properly a sacrament, instituted by Christ our Lord for reconciling the faithful unto God, as often as they fall into sin after baptism: let him be anathema.

Canon II

If any one, confounding the sacraments, saith that baptism is itself the sacrament of Penance, as though these two sacraments were not distinct, and that therefore Penance is not rightly called a second plank after shipwreck: let him be anathema.

Canon III

If any one saith, that those words of the Lord the Saviour, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained*, are not to be understood of the power of forgiving and of retaining sins in the sacrament of Penance, as the Catholic Church has always from the beginning understood them; but wrests them, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, to the power of preaching the gospel: let him be anathema.

Canon IV

If any one denieth, that, for the entire and perfect remission of sins, there are required three acts in the penitent, which are as it were the matter of the sacrament of Penance, to wit, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which are called the three parts of penance; or saith that there are two parts only of penance, to wit, the terrors with which the conscience is smitten upon being convinced of sin, and the faith, generated by the gospel, or by the absolution, whereby one believes that his sins are forgiven him through Christ: let him be anathema.

Canon V

If any one saith, that the contrition which is acquired by means of the examination, collection, and detestation of sins,—whereby one *thinks over his years in the bitterness of his soul*, by pondering on the grievousness, the multitude, the filthiness of his sins, the loss of eternal blessedness, and the eternal damnation which he has incurred, having therewith the purpose of a better life,—is not a true and profitable sorrow, does not prepare for grace, but makes a man a hypocrite and a greater sinner; in fine, that this (contrition) is a forced and not free and voluntary sorrow: let him be anathema.

H.V.

Announcement

Announcements and obituaries rates are changed from \$1.00 to \$2.00, effective July 1.

OUR OWN HIGH SCHOOL — A NECESSITY

I have been asked to write an article for our *Standard Bearer* on the subject of our own Protestant Reformed Christian High School. This request did not come to me floating out of the air, so to speak; but it was made by a group of men who have already done a considerable amount of work in order that our own high school may become a reality.

Although I have no personal acquaintance with the work of this committee, nevertheless I would like to inform you of some of their efforts. It was shortly after the first of the year that a committee voluntarily constituted itself in order to work on this problem. This committee was and is now composed of two lay members from each of our churches in Michigan, and has met from time to time in the course of the year. They were appointed by no one and are answerable to no one, but they are deeply interested in our high school movement. It is sometimes difficult to know just how to start a movement of this nature, and these men felt that this way would be the best way. Their purpose is not to take the whole matter of a high school into their own hands, for this they could not possibly do. But they do intend to be a "steering committee" to start the movement and give it direction. I am personally not in a position to inform you of what work they have done up to this point, but I do know from talking with one of their members that their goal is a society meeting of all men in this area and outside of it. This meeting they hope to call sometime in September at which time they intend to present to this society the fruit of their labors and point them to the feasible direction in which to go especially in connection with the host of problems that arise in any such venture. They hope that at that time a society will be definitely organized and that a school board will be elected which can carry on the work that has to be done.

Now it is time, these men feel, for their work to receive some publicity so that their efforts may be brought before our people. It is time for the importance of a high school of our own to be presented to those of you who will in the future support the movement and send your own children to this institution.

They have asked the undersigned to emphasize in this article particularly the necessity of a Protestant Reformed High School. This implies that in the mind of the committee there is really no other choice but to have a high school of our own. It is, with them, not a question of utility or of the proper time; it is not a matter that can be shrugged off indefinitely; it is simply a necessity which must be faced now and about which something must be done. With this I agree completely.

In the briefest sense of the word it is, of course, true that the reasons why we have elementary schools of our own are the same reasons why we must have a high school of our own. This is denied by some. There is an argument to the effect that our own high school is not necessary at all because

of the fact that our children, once having been trained in elementary schools which are Protestant Reformed, are now able "to stand on their own feet" and throw off any false doctrine that may be presented to them in the existing high schools. With this argument I cannot possibly agree. The reason for my disagreement is not primarily that I doubt the ability of our high school students to "stand on their own two feet," but rather that the need for our own high schools has a more positive basis and foundation than mere negative criticism. Although at the same time I question whether any man is completely impervious to constant instruction in false doctrine no matter how old he may be. But such negative reasons deserve a secondary place.

The positive reasons may be familiar to all of you who have given thought at one time or another to our educational program, but are nevertheless worth reviewing.

We believe that the schools in which our children are taught are extensions of the home. The complex culture in which we live and the vast body of knowledge that has been accumulated in the past ages make it impossible usually for a child to be taught in the home. So there are schools organized in which teachers are hired to take the place of the parents and assume the responsibility for the instruction of the children.

Now, it is the deepest desire of the hearts of covenant parents to see their children instructed in the truth of God's Word. This truth has entered into the hearts of the parents themselves; they have learned to love it and cherish it; it is to them a priceless treasure for which they will sacrifice all, yea life itself. It is but natural then that these covenant parents have no deeper desire than to see their children grow up to love that same truth as they come to spiritual maturity. To see one's children show antipathy to the truth is always very difficult. But to conclude that the reason is that we have not been faithful in teaching them is far worse.

This is not to say that schools are miniature seminaries in which only doctrine is taught, but it is saying that the knowledge of God must permeate all knowledge of all things before it can ever be said to be knowledge at all. If the study of trees and the starry heavens, of the earth's crust and the history of the nations is not a study of the knowledge of God, there is no profit in it in this life or in the life to come.

But this desire which is undoubtedly found in the hearts of covenant parents is rooted in a deeper obligation which is given them of God. The children they bring forth are not their own, but are children whose names are written on the pages of the Book of Life with the ink of the blood of the Lamb of God. These children are God's because God has chosen them to be His own and redeemed them in the cross of Calvary. We receive them from Him for a time in order that we may take them on our knees to teach them and lead them by their hands in the way of God's precepts. If our minds wander from this fundamental truth, we will lose the courage to instruct them in God's fear and our patience with them will wear thin.

So we must have schools where we can fulfill these obligations. Certainly we would never take pains in our homes to inculcate into their minds things which were repulsive to us. We would never spend time and energy in our home to make sure that our children mastered the fundamentals of errors with which we cannot possibly agree. We would not force them to learn evolutionism as the truth or Common Grace as the Word of God in our homes. We should not do it in our schools. This is inconceivable. There too, it is in reality covenant parents teaching covenant children although they have delegated the responsibility to others.

From this it follows that the ideal situation is to have a complete system of education for our children beginning with the kindergarten and continuing on through the university. The trouble is that it has happened repeatedly in the past that the church has organized such a system of education only to see it fall into the hands of those who no longer wish to confess the truth in all its purity. The result is that the church must start all over once again. And this all requires time and money. Nevertheless, this is obviously the will of God for our lives, and it is once again incumbent upon us to see to it that we have schools of our own.

Yet there is another strong positive reason why such schools which we can call our own are a necessity. This reason is that there is a very definite need to develop a distinctively Reformed approach to the whole field of education. This has never been completely done. There is little if any attempt in the existing grade schools, high schools and colleges to do this. Most generally, pedagogues are content with what they have which has been in the main developed by the world and which is changed by them only to the extent of a Bible lesson. It is not as if we come armed with an entirely complete development of the fundamental principles of education as we approach a high school of our own, but it is high time this is done. We need to know and develop the principles that are the foundation of any Reformed education. We need to develop these principles in the light of our own distinctive truth which warrants our existence as Protestant Reformed Churches. We need a Reformed set of principles of education; a Reformed educational psychology, a Reformed understanding of the child which is being instructed and of the best way to instruct that child. We need to know how the knowledge of God can be imprinted upon and become the essence of every subject which we teach in our schools. This can only be done in schools of our own. Within Protestant Reformed schools, given consecrated school societies and boards and teachers that love the truth with all their hearts, there is the possibility and probability of developing all these things for the sake of our children. But the importance of doing all this cannot be overemphasized.

It stands to reason that this is all impossible in the existing schools. This is primarily because of the fact that we cannot maintain control over them by putting our own men in the majority on the boards and staffing the schools

with our own teachers. I do not mean to say that we have the right of control, for certainly we are not in the majority in the existing high schools. Nor am I even saying that we have been as faithful as we should in attempting to make our voice heard in the existing schools. But apart from all this, it remains a fact that our voices are drowned out in the clamor of those who are greater in number than ourselves. The result is that the existing high schools are not above criticism. It stands to reason that the all pervading world and life view of common grace will have its deleterious effects on the whole body of instruction which is given in them. Given teachers imbued with it and board members building upon its foundation, it can be no different. This is not merely a matter of formal instruction in the theory itself, but is on the contrary a matter of emphasis and approach in any subject of the curriculum. I am not denying them the right to teach in this fashion if such is their conviction, but it is not and ought not to be for us.

We would not tolerate instruction of this sort in our homes; we may not in our schools.

I am not unaware of the many practical problems which arise in connection with a high school of our own. There are problems of finances, of teachers, of curriculums, of providing the necessary plant and equipment to make our instruction in these schools what it should be. I for one feel very strongly that the teaching given should meet the rigid requirements of any accredited school, and that our school should be able to compete successfully with any high school as far as the quality of the instruction is concerned. But these are not problems which cannot be overcome. A few remarks about these things would be in order.

1) In the first place, the quality of the instruction is determined primarily by the fact that it should be Christian instruction. I do not mean that a course in biology must ignore the huge body of facts that have been accumulated in the past concerning the organic part of the creation. But mere mastery of facts in our days has become a fetish in itself so that instruction is Christian in name only. This ought not to be the case with our schools. And I am quite content to rest in the knowledge that any teacher who is earnestly desirous of being a true Christian school teacher and not one in name only will see to it that the formal and factual aspects of the course are not neglected. This is emphatically the case in our existing schools.

2) In the second place, the elaborate and often ornate school buildings, the perfectly equipped laboratories for science courses, the multi-thousand dollar gymnasiums are not an essential factor in Christian education. They are indeed nice to have, but they are not essential to the school—to a *Christian* school. No more than a church building makes a congregation does a school building make a body of pupils or a staff of teachers. Again I am not making a plea for school to be held in a hovel in the city dump, without chalk or blackboards, without any equipment which is essential to

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DECENCY and ORDER

Article 38

The main element in this article is undoubtedly the fact that in the organization or re-organization of a congregation, the advice of the Classis must be obtained. This means that a church independently organized will not be admitted into or recognized by the denomination unless this advice of the Classis is first sought. The article itself does not deny the autonomous right of a group of believers to organize the church. This question is not directly involved because the Church Order is here treating only the relation of a group desiring organization or re-organization and the denomination of churches with which it seeks affiliation. Within this framework, a group that feels itself ready for organization, must seek the advice of the Classis first. This advice is tantamount to "approval" and this means that the final determination in this matter lies in the hands of the Classis. The Classis, upon investigation of circumstances, decides whether or not these warrant the organization of a new church. If they do, Classis advises to proceed. If not, the actual organization must be postponed until such time as the approval of the Classis can be obtained. In this light it appears that the term *advice* has a broader significance than that of *judgment, counsel, or help* as the Church Order Commentary suggests (pg. 172).

Apart now from the question as to whether this properly belongs to the jurisdiction of the Classis rather than to that of the Synod, a question we discussed in our last article, we must ask why the Church Order makes this provision. Would it not be better and more in harmony with the principle of the autonomy of the church to permit a group that feels itself ready to organize independently and then apply for admittance as an organized church to the Classis or Denomination with which it desires to affiliate? Isn't it a bit hierarchical to insist that a group may not organize without the approval of the broader assembly of the churches?

Authorities of Reformed church polity have considered this question in the past. None of them deny the inherent right of a group of believers to organize a church. That would indeed be hierarchy. That, however, is a different matter than that of a group organizing as a particular church in affiliation with an already existing denomination of churches. In regard to the latter we have to do not only with the inherent rights of the group that organizes but also with those rights of all the already existing churches or, in other words, the rights of the denomination. This must also be considered and so in connection with the question of organization it is not only a matter of "*authority*" or of who has the final or highest word in the matter but it is a question of decency and good order. Not a single group is to determine whether circumstances warrant organization but all the churches with

whom that newly organized group is to affiliate must decide this. That is certainly in the interests of the well-being of all the churches. Furthermore, suppose that organization were permitted first and that then Classis would refuse to admit an organized church. We can conceive of all kinds of practical difficulties rising from such a situation and these are avoided because they are not made possible under the present arrangement of the Church Order.

The history of this article, like many of the articles of our Church Order, dates back to the time when the church was persecuted. During those days many churches were shattered. The members of the church fled for their lives, many of them even going to other countries. When then the persecutions abated, attempts were made to restore many of these broken churches. In some cases this was the advisable thing to do but in other cases it was not. This circumstance gave birth to the rule that "*where the consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall not take place except with the advice of the Classis.*"

Later this same rule was used and applied to the organization of new churches. This is its common usage in our present day. With this rule the Christian Reformed Proposed Revision of the Church Order has combined Article 39 of our Church Order into one Article. The two combined articles are found in Article 29 of the Revision and read as follows:

"Groups of believers among whom no consistory can as yet be constituted shall be placed under the care of a neighboring consistory. For the organization of a new consistory, the approval of the classis must be obtained."

The part of this revision that is related to Article 38 differs from the original in that it speaks of "*organizing a new consistory*" instead of "*constituting a consistory*"; it elides the phrase "*for the first time or anew*"; and it changes "*advice of the Classis*" to "*approval of the Classis.*" The original Holland has: "*In de plaatsen, waar de Kerkeraad voor het eerst of opnieuw is op te richten, zal 't zelve niet geschieden, dan met advies van de Classis.*" Whereas the proposed revision does not improve the article with respect to either clarity or meaning, we feel the original should in this instance be retained although we can see possibility in combining this article with Article 39 since these two articles deal with matters that are very closely related. We feel that where a revision is to be enacted there must be purpose in that revision. We fail to detect that in the present proposal.

We may conclude our discussion of this article with a few remarks concerning the formal procedure in organizing a new congregation. The rules of our churches respecting this matter are very clear and, therefore, we may also be brief. These rules, quoted in the previous issue of *The Standard Bearer*, are found under Article 38 in our Church Order.

It is to be noted, first of all, that there is one exception made in these rules to the organizing of churches under the advice of the Classis. This exception is cited under Article

4 of the Constitution of the Mission Committee which deals with the "*Duties of the Mission Committee*." Rule 5 thereunder reads: "*The duty of the mission committee is to serve, in conjunction with the missionary, in the organization of new congregations, giving advice and permission thereto, and to officiate at such organization.*"

This means that a congregation can be organized without the advice or approval of the Classis. If a group desires to become a congregation in the denomination of the Protestant Reformed Churches, they can apply directly to the Mission Committee (or to the Classis). This committee is empowered under its rules to grant permission to organize and in the event it would do that, it further attends to the details of organization. As a rule this is done by the Mission Board after it has informed the Synod of the proposed organization but this need not be done. It would certainly do this in consultation with the consistory of the calling church although even this is not strictly mandatory. The mission committee has broad power in this respect and it may undoubtedly be said that this power is used more frequently than the method prescribed in Article 38 of the Church Order. Statistics I do not have but it seems to me that most of our congregations in the past have been organized under the supervision of the Mission Committee. When such organization takes place the Mission Committee will advise the newly organized church to seek affiliation with the Classis under which it is to resort and will further to that body a recommendation that the Classis receive the church it has organized.

Under Article 38, however, the organization of a new church takes place by observing the following steps:

1. Request or Application: The group desiring organization forwards to the Classis a letter requesting the right to organize as a Protestant Reformed Church. This letter must be signed by the heads of the families and by adult single persons belong to this group.

2. Action by the Classis: Classis must consider the request. She must determine whether or not it is in the best interests of the group and the churches at large. Many things must be taken into consideration in this important step, and, having done this, should the Classis then advise organization, she appoints a committee to carry out the actual organization of the congregation.

3. The Organization Proper: At the meeting that is called of all interested and concerned parties, a service of worship is first conducted. Then, in as far as is possible, the persons desiring organization submit certificates of previous membership. These, if found in good order, are accepted and thereupon the election of office-bearers can take place. This must be done by free election. Then the elected office bearers are duly installed in their respective offices and the consistory and congregation are declared constituted. If possible, it is advisable that at this same meeting the necessary papers for the incorporation of the congregation are brought in order. The consistory can, of course, take care of this later

but there is no point in delay. It can be just as well done at once and therefore should be.

Another matter that is sometimes considered in connection with Article 38 is that of combined churches. By this is meant that in certain instances there may be two or more small churches that are, for financial and other reasons, unable to maintain themselves as separate churches. By combining into one they could support a minister. However, other circumstances may make it impossible to unite into one church. Hence, by mutual agreement they remain separate churches but together call one minister who in turn serves the combined churches. An instance of this we had in the request that came to our last Synod from the Isabel-Forbes congregations in South Dakota. In cases like these there are usually a number of practical difficulties that have to be overcome. Of great importance wherever such arrangements are sought is the advice given by Monsma and Van Dellen who write: "*Whenever churches thus combine their strength and efforts they should be careful to draw up a good set of rules by which all parties concerned will be guided. If this should be neglected disharmony and friction may easily result*" (pg. 173). And, equally important, as far as the Classis (Synod) is concerned in giving advice with regard to organization under these circumstances, is it that they determine that the agreements made with respect to the groups seeking combined organization are workable. If this is not the case the organization under the proposed plan will not only be temporary but it will work irreparable harm.

It is said: "One ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

G.V.D.B.

OUR OWN HIGH SCHOOL — A NECESSITY

(Continued from page 449)

sound teaching; but there is room for emphasis on the point that it is not essential to compete with existing schools public or Christian in the erection and equipping of our own edifice. If we must have the most elaborate and very best in equipment and facilities, our own school is out of the question. The only thing I insist on is the very best of school boards and the very best of teachers. And by "best" I mean school board members and teachers who are dedicated to the cause of Christian instruction as we understand it. If our parents who support our schools are dedicated, our schools will have staffs and boards who have this same dedication.

- 3) We have to make no apologies for our size as churches nor feel any twinges of embarrassment that we do not measure up to the standards which the world sets for success. We need not do this as churches; we need not do this when we build our schools. We need feel no compulsion to defend a school that is not architecturally beautiful and modernly equipped and capable of offering an elaborate physical education program in a huge gymnasium, if the subjects that are

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ALL AROUND US

"The Answer"

As promised in the June 1st issue of *The Standard Bearer*, we now hope to finish the quotation of the little pamphlet with the above title published some years ago by the Rev. M. Gritters and the Rev. A. Cammenga, in which they set forth the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches re the Common Grace question. If there is space at the conclusion of this final quotation, we may have some comments to make. Here follows the continuation of the quotation of the pamphlet.

"15. It has often been rumored that the Protestant Reformed Churches preach only for God's elect; is this true?

Answer: This is nothing but slander! Besides, does not Scripture command us to preach the gospel to *every creature*? (Mark 16:15). And to this command the Protestant Reformed Churches desire to remain faithful. Finally, who among men is able to separate the elect of God from those reprobated?

"16. Is it true that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not believe in Missions?

Answer: This, too, has often been slanderously reported, yet it is not true! The Protestant Reformed Churches will also go out unto the ends of the world to preach the gospel to every creature. Even today the Mission Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches is investigating a foreign mission field which can be supported by said churches. (Acts of Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches 1945, 1946.)

"17. It is often reported that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not preach repentance since the elect will come to repentance anyway; is this true?

Answer: This is another untruth! With John the Baptist the Protestant Reformed Churches preach: 'Repent, ye!' However, this preaching of repentance is not presented as an *offer of grace or a kind invitation* dependent on the *free will of man*; but it is preached as a *command* and an *injunction* of God which can only be obeyed by the power and presence of God's grace in the heart. And it is in the way of the preaching of the Gospel and through the power of God's spirit that God's chosen saints are brought to repentance. (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; John 6:44; Acts 13:48; Acts 16:14.)

"18. Does the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches deny the responsibility of man?

Answer: God forbid that the responsibility of man be denied! However, throughout the history of the church it has always been said that the doctrine of sovereign predestination denies man's responsibility, but they that make such

statements only prove that they are enemies of the Reformed truth, even as evil men spoke maliciously of the doctrine of grace when they concluded: 'Let us sin that grace may abound' (Rom. 6:1). Man as a moral, rational creature remains responsible for all his acts, his conscience bearing him witness and accusing him (Rom. 2:15).

"19. Do the Protestant Reformed Churches subscribe to the doctrine of Pre-Millennialism?

Answer: They do not. This they believe to be contrary to Scripture and the Confessions. Scripture condemns the theory of Dispensationalism and it teaches the unity of the Old and New Testament Church.

"20. What statistical information can you give concerning the Protestant Reformed Churches?

Answer: The Protestant Reformed denomination is composed of twenty-two churches to date, numbering approximately 1200 families in all. These churches maintain their own Theological Seminary which gives these churches a well trained clergy. Besides the regular ministers of the Word a full time missionary is also maintained. Several publications serve the membership of these churches, among which are: *The Standard Bearer*, *Concordia*, *Beacon Lights*, the latter publication for the Young People's Societies, and *The Sunday School Guide*.

"21. Why do the Protestant Reformed Churches perform missionary work in the neighborhoods of established churches rather than going out into the world of the unchurched?

Answer: It is a mistake to say that the Protestant Reformed Churches perform missionary work among the churches *rather* than among the unchurched. Missionary work among the churches and the unchurched are two different branches of mission work, and both must be performed. The apostles of Christ also received the injunction to perform both of these branches. For this reason they started at Jerusalem, the church, and proceeded toward Samaria and from thence went into all the world (Acts 1:8). The purpose of mission work among the churches is to proclaim the old and tried truth of the Word of God and of our Reformed Confessions to such church groups who lack this truth in whole or in part, or where this precious truth is waning slow but sure. And a church has no greater calling than that of seeking the welfare of any church or group of churches. If any given church neglects to seek the welfare of the instituted church in this world and there refuses to be his brother's keeper what can be expected of this church when it approaches those who are heathen and unconverted? The strength of the church of Christ on earth is not first of all to build churches in heathendom but to strengthen the churches' own walls first, and these church walls are found not only where are churches bearing the name of one's own denomination, but they are found wherever there are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter what denomination he

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Rev. C. Hanko was noticeably absent from this meeting because of a recent operation. The chair appointed the Revs. R. Veldman and B. Woudenberg to convey to him the best wishes of Classis for a speedy recovery and a prayer for the Lord's blessing.

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Re the Holland matter, Classis decided with one dissenting vote to acknowledge the decision of Synod and notify the Consistory of Holland re this decision.

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or she belongs to. To follow the example of the Psalmist and 'pray for the peace of Zion and seek her good' (Ps. 122) does not mean to seek the good of one's own little church or denomination, but it means that one seeks the spiritual good of all those that love the Lord.

"This the Protestant Reformed Churches are intent on doing whenever and wherever they send their men to preach the Word of God among the churched. Their purpose is not to destroy the church, but rather to seek her good. The love for the Reformed preaching of the gospel together with the conviction that only in that gospel lies the hope of the Church of Christ, brings the Protestant Reformed missionary to the neighborhoods and communities where churches are already found. These missionaries call men and women of every denomination to rally to the Standard of the Reformed truth of the Gospel of Christ, for without this truth of the gospel the church must and will fail. How can any church be safe when it denies man's total depravity as well as the sovereignty of God? How can there be any comfort and assurance in life and death when salvation depends on man's free will and is not based solely upon the eternal and sovereign counsel of God?

"The Protestant Reformed Churches believe and confess that the hope of the church and its only comfort is in the precious gospel proclaiming that God is all and man nothing. And because they believe, therefore do they speak everywhere!" Conclusion of the pamphlet.

The views concerning missions set forth in this pamphlet are still substantially the views of our Protestant Reformed Churches. In this we have not changed. But striking it is that of those who left us in the schism of 1953 four were missionaries in our churches. These men labored also among Christian Reformed people propagating these views. One of these men on more than one occasion was severely taken to task by leaders in the Christian Reformed Church because of the tactics he used in disseminating these views. Now all of these men and those who follow them repudiate these views. Now they seek to join hands with those whose doctrines they publicly criticized and condemned. Rev. H. J. Kuiper in *Torch and Trumpet* of July-August, 1959 correctly remarks they "broke away from the denomination by that name (Protestant Reformed Churches — M.S.) which since 1925 has been headed by Rev. H. Hoeksema." They, therefore, are no longer Protestant Reformed and from every point of view have forfeited the right to the name. They are as Rev. Kuiper recognizes them, namely, Christian Reformed in heart and doctrine. But the churches which are still under the leadership of Rev. H. Hoeksema are Protestant Reformed in doctrine and practise.

It is also interesting to note that the statistics reported in the twentieth question and answer have changed somewhat due to the schism. As far as numbers are concerned, we have been considerably decimated. Though we have at

present nineteen churches, the number of families is a little more than half the figure quoted in the pamphlet. But the reader should note that those who left us cannot boast of a Theological Seminary "which gives their churches a well trained clergy." This seminary we still have which is the very heart of our churches. Those who left us cannot boast of a full time missionary. This we have. Since the schism one flourishing congregation has been added to our churches through his efforts, and there are prospects of two more being added in the near future. Those who left us cannot boast of the several publications which serve the membership of our churches. As far as they are concerned none of the publications mentioned exist any longer. Even *Concordia* has gone out of existence, and was replaced by *The Reformed Guardian*.

And we might add to the above that they have also lost the radio program known as the Reformed Witness Hour in which most of their ministers participated at one time or another. They lost also the Protestant Reformed Schools which they also helped to organize and establish in which our covenant children are trained according to the doctrine believed and professed in our churches. Fact is, they have nothing left. They realize that they cannot continue to exist as a separate denomination and because the doctrine they now embrace is essentially Christian Reformed they are making every effort to return to that denomination.

We pity them, and most of all the people who have been misguided by their leaders. Many of them are people who since 1924 have taken with us a strong stand against the error of common grace adopted by the Christian Reformed Church. Would to God that they would see the error of their way in which they now travel, and repent and return to us and the doctrinal position they once embraced with us as stipulated in the pamphlet under discussion.

Only in the way of repentance and return is there any hope for them and their children as far as the Reformed truth is concerned. If they truly and sincerely love the Protestant Reformed doctrine, it should not be difficult for them to return to us. We would advise them to go to the local consistories from which they separated themselves and confess that they erred when they became guilty of schism when they followed their leaders in the split of 1953. They should confess that they embraced the false doctrine stipulated in the statements of Rev. De Wolf. They should show that they have a firm resolve to adhere to the doctrines of the Protestant Reformed Churches as formulated in the three Forms of Unity and restated in the Declaration of Principles which clearly militates against the error of common grace and the conditional doctrine which at one time sought to be imported into our churches. Doing this they may once more be assured of a healthy and sound denominational life which can be maintained only where the truth is preserved.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Through an infinite variety of changing scenes our ever-to-be adored covenant God has brought us thus far. The various troubles that we have had to grapple with in the past few years only leave our numbers growing less. For us older ones, we shall never have to wade through them again. If God the Holy Spirit has sanctified them to our souls, they have done us no real harm. If we have learned through them, as instruments in the hands of our glorious Teacher, more of the emptiness of this vain polluted doctrine of conditionality, then let us not for a moment regret that we have been visited with them. But rather let us praise and adore our glorious Lord that He has taken the advantage of them to confirm our souls in his love, by proving Himself to be our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Not being wholly ignorant of Satan's devices, but led to it by a train of circumstances which I need not enumerate here, I had long suspected that there was a good deal of error covered up with a form of sound words, secretly entertained by many. Now, what has brought these errors to light? The distinct, clear, positive declarations of principles. Clear positive statements of divine truth are the two-edged sword which pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. This naked sword discovers the foundation of error unto the meek.

In a similar way the touch of heavenly truth has detected an error previously existing, but working unseen. It was undermining the churches like a gangrene but covered up with a form of godliness. The present necessary consequence of this has been strife and confusion. Some, who love peace at any price, would sooner have a church united even if it involved the sacrifice of truth. Look on with regret if not in anger that such mere questions, as they call them, should distract the churches. We were peaceful they say. Yes, but what sort of peace was it? Was there ever any real union of heart and spirit between the lovers of truth and the lovers of error? Much may pass for union in a church, which is no more than a natural feeling of friendship and regard as worshippers in the same place. There may be much warm shaking of hands and kind inquiries and friendly looks and expressions, but real, sound union is a rare thing. It is a gift of God: spiritual life cemented in spiritual union.

When then God means to sift a church in His sieve and search Jerusalem as with candles, He brings to light errors and heresies hitherto concealed. This is the first step which begins to break to pieces the false bond of union. This is cutting asunder the staff (bands) to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel (Zech. 11:14) and the staff is broken thus.

A man of God sounds the trumpet throughout the camp with a clear sound, and proclaims boldly and plainly the truth in doctrine, experience, and precept. He does not do

this in angry bitter spirit as if for the very purpose of stirring up strife and contention but as a part of the gospel entrusted to him. The burden of the Lord lies upon his conscience. He delivers it for the glory of God and the profit of his people and for those who love the truth and have been taught by the same spirit, and know, and feel the power of the same vital realities in their own souls. One responds to the clear notes of the trumpet and cleaves to the certain sound for it fills their hearts with peace and joy. Being thus blessed they cannot but speak warmly of the truth and of the instruments who proclaim it so faithfully.

But what response do they meet? The erroneous and the unsound, who have been hugging their errors in secret and are offended by the naked truth, are stirred up to opposition. What offended them so? Was it not the glorious truth of eternal, absolute, and unconditional election? We have been told that to preach Election strongly would offend many pious, zealous minds and be a means of unerring the cause of real prosperity, and so they hinder the progress of the cause of God. So then the truth of God must give place to the imaginary piety, and false zeal of man, and God must be insulted for the purpose of promoting his cause upon the earth!

All this may seem pleasing enough to the fleshly self-seeking minds of man, but what would they say had they heard the glorious truth of Election? Christ thanked the Father for hiding the truth from some and revealing it unto others, and that, because it seemed good in God's sight. Yea, even the Holy Spirit tells us that at that time Jesus rejoiced in Spirit and thanked the Father. He also told his disciples that he spoke in parables because unto them it was given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom but unto others it was not given. Once he had a congregation of very pious Pharisees who for a while appeared to wonder at the gracious words that Jesus spoke. Though Christ knew it would give them great offence and though he knew all their hearts, yet he preached it. The Pharisees rose up and thrust Him out of the city. We can see by this that the Lord considered the truth of God of infinitely more importance than that of keeping a company of respectable Pharisees in good humor. On one occasion He told some of His hearers that they believed not because they were not of his sheep. He assured his disciples that the reason they were not of the world and that the world hated them was because he had chosen them out of the world. So we see that the Lord preached it as it were from the house tops, and that, in the strongest terms possible. He made no secret of this important truth.

Blessed be the Lord, there is nothing uncertain in the salvation and glorification of His elect. All goes upon a solid and sure basis. All the devices of DeWolf and his followers with all their *ifs* and *buts*, shall never overturn the counsel of the Lord. "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure." Nothing is so dear to Jehovah as His own glory. What ever He gives to others, He keeps His own

glory sacred to Himself. How blessed is it that our glorious Lord has inseparably connected everlasting salvation with His own glory. For the Holy Spirit says, "But I had pity for mine holy name which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went" (Ezekiel 36:21-32). Read the whole if you please.

Blessed Lord. And will not such a glorious display of sovereign grace lead us to self-loathing and self-abusement? Then surely grace is free. What a blessed declaration of undeserved mercy and free grace are here. Blessed thrice. Blessed are the people of God, for their God has connected His own glory and their well-being together. What a dishonor then to our glorious covenant God to speak or even think of what man must do. For, they say, "We shall never perish if we prove faithful to the grace God gives." But the promise is absolute and unconditional (they shall never perish). There is no such a thing named as: "If they do this, that, or the other." Besides I would like to know what they mean by faithfulness to grace after all the defamatory speeches and publication against those ministers that defend the truth of unconditional Election. If by so doing man proves faithful to grace, I am at a loss to know who does not prove faithful. Is it faithfulness to darken the power of the unconditional promise of our covenant God and accept the statements of DeWolf as was done in Classis West in 1953? How have they rejected that which they were called to protect! We can now plainly see the reason why the people had to be brought in confusion. The principle of the Prot. Ref. truth had to go when it came to a test. It was not wanted. Some of the delegates at that Classis sold the truth without themselves knowing what was going on, and they seem to be blinded for it all as of yet. Is it faithfulness to grace when men act as if they were ashamed of the truth they profess (for they still call themselves Prot. Ref.). In shamefully concealing it, or keeping it back, and in pouring contempt upon every one whose conscience is made too honest to unite with them in so doing? A Christian in his right mind can see something of beauty in Election, for he knows if this is not the truth, he must inevitably perish. For if God's love to him is not unconditional, without the least eye to anything done by him, he would never have loved him at all. If this love can be removed from him by sin, Satan, or the world, it must of necessity be taken away. But when he is enabled to see what Jehovah did in everlasting love: elect him as a vessel of mercy to eternal glory, without the least eye to his worth or worthiness but merely as an act of his own sovereign grace and good pleasure, such a soul will never say that his faith is prerequisite to enter into the kingdom. For God lets His own see themselves as an unclean thing and they could as soon trust Satan for justification than rely on self for believing. The Lord, according to His own infinite reason, calls dead sinners out of

their graves of sin and death to reveal Himself to them and live with them. He calls the things that were not as if they were (impossible for man and possible only for God). See how great and glorious is that God who gave His only begotten Son over into the hands of sinners: the hope of all the Elect from the beginning of time. What? Can we add to this but dead works of men even after grace is received? It's not the good works of men, but only His good work to will and to do in us; and He gives us to taste that He works in us. Then will we cry out, "Lord, I am sinful," and we will bow in the dirt before Him beholding all this in true faith. "Lord, be merciful to me, don't ever leave me." This alone is dear unto me. This God I long for every hour. I feel the need of His coming to me to receive strength to believe in Him. None shall ever be able to stay his hand or make the way muddy. The providence of God has cast our lot in a day of great profession of religion. But it is a day of departure from the doctrines of the Cross of Christ while enemies of these truths increase both in number and activity. In awfully opposing these truths, a religion suited to the fleshly appetite of man is the religion that the bulk of them are contending for. Under these circumstances may every believer, and especially every minister of Christ, consider himself called upon to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and never be ashamed of the blessed gospel of God's grace which has made us free.

JAKE VAN DEN TOP

OUR OWN HIGH SCHOOL — A NECESSITY

(Continued from page 451)

taught are capably taught and if the pupil passing through the doors and walking down the corridors and finding his seat in the classrooms is given instruction in the knowledge of God no matter what subject he may study. The approval of God upon work well done is sufficient reward in itself. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Zechariah in 4:10: "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

4) These things which are presented above are well within our means and are goals which can be successfully reached by us now. The movement is started, and to procrastinate now will be fatal for our entire movement. As churches and as schools we must continue to go ahead. The opportunity to do this is ours at this time. Let us not shirk our calling at this crucial point!

The movement of our churches as a whole and of each individual endeavor in particular is a movement of faith. Without faith in the cause of the Lord we are easily tossed about on the stormy seas of the times in which we live without guidance or goal. But faith which looks to the future is able to overcome all the problems that confront us and to establish this vital link in our educational program.

That there is a necessity for our own high school is apparent. What is a covenant obligation and necessity for us, the Lord never makes impossible to perform. When He gives

us responsibility in His covenant, He does not shut the door before us to the fulfillment of these responsibilities, but opens the way with guidance from on high. All the spiritual qualifications of a high school are no doubt present with us — we have a most blessed truth; we have consecrated teachers; we have dedicated men to serve on our boards; it remains to make this a reality. Let us then support the committee which is now working! Let us by all means attend the coming school society meeting! Let us make a high school of our own an actuality!

H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

July 20, 1959

Rev. H. Veldman accepted the call to serve the church in Redlands, Calif. He expects to preach his farewell sermon in Edgerton on August 2nd, D.V. The parting between the congregation and her pastor and his wife will not be pleasant for they have filled a large place in the congregation: the minister in all his labors, and Mrs. Veldman as minister's wife and as a teacher in Edgerton's own Christian School. The Reverend writes that he leaves Edgerton with a heavy heart, but is convinced that duty calls him to his new charge.

Edgerton has now extended a call to Rev. M. Schipper from Southwest Church in Grand Rapids, from a trio which also included the Revs. H. Hanko and R. Veldman.

Because of the resignation of Rev. E. Emanuel, Randolph has also been added to the vacant churches of our denomination. To fill this vacancy the Rev. J. A. McCollam has been chosen from a trio which also included the Revs. C. Hanko and H. Hanko.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema has accepted the call to be a Professor in our Seminary, filling the vacancy left through the emeritation of Prof. G. M. Ophoff. South Holland will call a minister from a trio consisting of Revs. H. Hanko, J. Heys and G. Vanden Berg.

Rev. C. Hanko is grateful for his recovery from his recent surgery, but no less for the experience of the love of God in His abundant goodness and nearness, but also in the experience of the communion of saints through the church. The Rev. has not yet taken up his labors in the congregation but is looking forward to that time when he may again be privileged to do so.

Due to the illness of his colleague, Rev. H. Hoeksema has not "vacationed" as usual this summer; indeed, he sometimes preached twice a Sunday!

Are you attending the Hymn Sings sponsored by our young people? If you failed to attend the one of June 21 at Hudsonville you missed the best one of the season.

Holland's bulletin, like so many in our churches, is prepared by the pastor. The bulletin distributed July 12 included the program for Divine worship for the 19th and 26th as well, when the pastor and his family would be vacationing in Maryland.

The Protestant Reformed Male Chorus again was privileged to extol the praises of God with uplifted voices on the evening of July 2. The Chorus gave their program at the Chr. Ref. Conference Grounds on Lake Michigan. Due to the nearness of the July holiday the audience was small, but the quality of the music was not diminished; if possible, it was better than ever before.

The Ladies' Aid picnic of Holland was the occasion for the presentation of a gift to the pastor and his wife which was described by the recipients as "very lovely and useful."

Johnson Park, situated on the Grand River, was the scene of Hope's Sunday School picnic scheduled for July 22; and was also that of their Ladies' Aid picnic held June 26.

Hudsonville goes forward. The congregation adopted the proposals of the consistory which included a new organ, a new furnace for the basement rooms, and remodeling both floors to obtain more usable space. During the remodeling the Sunday School classes meet in the auditorium for devotions, after which some of them meet in the parsonage for class instruction.

Bulletin Quote: "Our conversation must be such that we may evidence the communion we have . . . with God in Christ at the Lord's Table. It is not enough to say that we have fellowship with Him: the vilest hypocrites pretend to have that honor; but by walking in darkness they disprove their pretensions and give themselves the lie. We must therefore show that we have fellowship with Him by walking in the Light. — M. Henry.

Oak Lawn's congregational picnic was held July 4th at the Elim School picnic grounds. The day included the usual group games, and also gave opportunity to the Ladies' Aid to sell their products. Canteen service was provided by the Elim School. The South Hollanders were also invited.

The Young People of the G. R. area have scheduled their annual outing for July 25th. The place: Silver Lake, near Hart. They shall travel to and fro by chartered bus.

The members of Southeast Church have received small banks which they are expected to fill with daily contributions. When emptied the monies will go into their New Organ Fund.

Proverb of the month: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. 20:9.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.

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