

THE STANDARD

Bearers

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MEDITATION

CONSTRAINING LOVE

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." II Cor. 5:14, 15

Paul was under constraint!

There is some kind of figure in this text: as a flowing stream is urged onward by a narrowing bridgehead, so Paul is urged on by the love of Jesus Christ.

And this love of Christ in Paul causes him to judge something relative to the Corinthians.

And what is this judgment which is as an irresistible stream? It is this: he judges that if One died for all, then were all dead!

What does this mean?

It is a very loveable judgment. For it believes of the church of Corinth that they are children of God. And therefore Paul judges of them that they should live according to that state.

Let us look into this.

* * * *

Everything here is wonderful! One died for all!

Especially so when we remember that He that died is the very Son of God! It is as it is written by Paul in I Tim. 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

God came down in the form of a man, and took on our entire human nature.

And standing as the Great Innocent before the Throne of God, He began to die, and He died the eternal death.

And for whom did He die?

For all!

Let us first see what this cannot mean.

This cannot mean that all and every man that ever lived, now lives, or shall live is embraced in this text. All does not mean all men, head for head and soul for soul.

Now, there are many texts in Holy Scripture which teach the particular character of Christ's atonement, but, it seems to me, that John 10:11 and 26 are the clearest of all.

In verse 11 the Lord says: "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

But in verse 26 the Lord Jesus says to the Jews: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you."

This is so plain that not one word can be said against it. Christ simply did not die for all men, as it is so often stated by pseudo-expositors of God's Word.

He died for the elect. And election is the viewpoint here. And then you can say: He died for all!

It means that Jesus is our Head, our Surety, our King.

And He is that from all eternity. There He was given unto God's people whom He foreknew in the foreknowledge of His everlasting love, to be our Head, King and Surety. And He was that both in the juridical and in the organic sense. Hence, coming into the world, He was responsible for all those whom the Father gave unto Him. In fact, Jesus received commandment from the Father that He lose none of them.

And so Jesus at once came into the state of the guilty. He was made sin for us.

And so He died for us all. If you add sin and guilt on the one hand, and loving obedience to the Father on the other hand, the sum of them is eternal death for Jesus.

Dying the death out of love and obedience to His Father, and for the love of His sheep.

And what a death!

No one in all eternity will be able to approximate the

understanding of that death. There is a little rhyme in the Holland saying that if you would understand a poet, you must have been in his native country.

Well, apply this to Christ. If you are to understand fully His poems in the Old Testament Psalms, crying and groaning in His death agony, you will have to go to hell first. Attend to the Psalms 25, 42, 44, 43, 69, 77, 88, etc.

But He died for all of us. Hallelujah!

* * * *

Now let us look at the fruit of that death of Christ.

Paul argues: if Christ died for all, then all are dead!

And that was his loveable judgment of the church of Corinth.

And just how loveable it was we will now see.

"Then were all dead"!

What does that mean?

It means this: when Jesus died on Golgotha then all the elect died with Him. And they died there unto sin, unto the cursing law, and unto corruption. Attend to the following Scriptures: 1) Eph. 2:15, "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." 2) Col. 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." 3) Rom. 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Now these Scriptures teach plainly that the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ is imputed unto the elect. And according to its power it is granted unto them in regeneration.

Henceforth sin has no longer any right to rule over me. That is the legal side.

But there is more: since Jesus died on the cross, sin has no power, principally, to rule in the elect. And that is what Paul has in mind. The Corinthians were regenerated, which means that the death of Christ as a spiritual power had the ascendancy in them. They were dead, for Christ died for them, and in their stead. They were dead unto sin and corruption. The power of the death of Christ had changed them from willing slaves of sin unto willing workers in the Kingdom of Christ. They were dead unto sin and all corruption.

There you have the loveable judgment of Paul, constrained by the love of Christ.

* * * *

That is the way God judges over us.

And that is the way Jesus judges over His church.

Juridically God so judges from everlasting to everlasting, and — absolutely!

Organically, spiritually, God judges thus in principle, and in the sweet bye and bye, perfectly.

Legally, juridically, God never saw any sin in His elect, because they were always safe in Christ Jesus in God's eternal counsel.

And organically, in time, He regenerates them, so that the life of Christ is the predominant factor in their lives. They are renewed according to the image of Christ.

And it is dependent on that Cross. And therefore that Cross must be constantly preached.

And hearing that Cross of Jesus, I am constantly justified by faith; and that means that all my sins are gone, that I am adopted unto a child of God, have a right to eternal life and have peace with God.

And hearing that Cross I am constantly sanctified and crucify myself unto sin and all corruption.

That was Paul's judgment over Corinth's church.

* * * *

And here is his purpose.

If it is true that Jesus died for you; and if it is true that therefore you are regenerated and dead unto sin, so that you are no longer a willing slave unto sin — then it follows that you no longer live unto yourselves!

Only the wicked, hard, unregenerated world lives unto itself. They act as though they are gods. They act this way because Satan injected that poison in their hearts at the beginning of history.

When you live unto yourselves you do all things for your own sakes. *You* must be pampered, loved, cherished, petted, and what have you! That is the root sin of the human race.

But Paul is loveable in his judgment. He says to the Corinthians: Christ died for you, and according to its right and power, it found you. Its power regenerated you, so that in the depth of your souls and hearts you love God.

And according to that judgment he treated the Corinthians, in other words, he rebuked them, and admonished them, and scourged them with the Word of God. That is love!

And hence, he told the Corinthians that they should not live unto themselves.

The preaching of the Cross of Christ is the deathblow to all selfishness.

* * * *

What then?

That we should live unto Christ who died for us and rose again!

The first question here is: what does Christ live? And the answer is easy: Christ lives unto the Father! Even according to the Godhead, Jesus is always turned to the Father: He is *with* the Father! Is His express Image.

But also in His incarnation, Christ always lives unto the Father. He exegetes Him, He declares Him, He manifests Him. He could say to Philip: If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father!

But this is outstanding: the Cross! If anything, that Cross shows and proves that Jesus certainly did not live unto Himself, but that He lived, and died unto God. It is the proof of absolute and loving obedience to God the Father.

And thus we should live.

Not unto ourselves. That is very death.

But that we should live unto God in Christ.

Such a life gives real joy and peace! Amen.

G.V.

CALL TO SYNOD OF 1959

In harmony with the decision of the Synod of 1958, the Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby notifies the churches that the 1959 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene on Wednesday, June 3, D.V., at 9:00 A. M., in the above mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, June 2, at 8:00 P. M. in the Hudsonville Church. Rev. G. Vos, president of last year's Synod, is leading this service.

Synodical delegates will kindly meet with the consistory before this service.

If any of the delegates need lodging, please, contact our clerk, Mr. Harry Zwak, R.F.D. No. 2, Hudsonville, Mich.

Consistory of the
Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church:

REV. G. VOS, *President*
H. ZWAK, *Clerk*

Through pain and trouble Thou hast led,
And humbled all our pride;
But, in the end, to liberty
And wealth Thy hand did guide.
Here in Thy house I give to Thee
The life that Thou dost bless,
And pay the solemn vows I made
When I was in distress.

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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EDITORIALS

Evolution, Long Periods, or Days

Before I proceed with my discussion of the creation days in Genesis, I cannot refrain from calling attention to an article in the *Beacon Lights* under the caption "Proof Positive — The Earth is Flat," by C. H. Westra.

The reader understands, of course, that the heading of the article is a piece of sarcasm since no one believes that the earth is flat. But Westra, as I understand his article, could just as well have made the caption of the essay: "Proof Positive — the World was Created in Six Days of Twenty-four Hours" and that, too, with equal sarcasm.

And since this is a reflection on my articles on the subject of creation days in *The Standard Bearer*, although he does not refer to them, I cannot refrain from writing a few words about the article.

First of all Mr. Westra makes a remark that there was a time when it was considered a heresy worthy of censure to teach that the earth was not flat but round. Seeing that this is a tendentious statement, I would like to have proof. When were the people of God ever cast out of the church because they believed that the earth was round? Certainly, the Bible does not teach that the earth is flat, even though it speaks in figurative language of "the four corners of the earth." It tells us very plainly that the earth is round, that, in fact, it is a globe. In Isa. 40:22 we read: "He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth." The original Hebrew for "circle" is CHUG, which means circle or sphere, so that the text may be translated: "He that sitteth upon the sphere or globe of the earth, the orbis terrarum." See Genesis *in loco*. And not only is the earth round but everything in creation is round, even in the heavens. In Job 22:14 we read: "He walketh in the circuit of heaven" where the same word is used (CHUG) as in Isa. 40:22. We might very well translate, therefore: "He walketh among the spheres of the heavens." The same idea is found in Prov. 8:27: "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth," where again the same word (CHUG) is used for compass. Certainly, according to Scripture, nothing is square or flat, not even in the original chaos, the "depth," but everything is round from the beginning. Again, the same idea, in respect to the waters on the earth, is expressed in Job 26:10: "He hath compassed (the same word is used here as in the other passages we quoted, only now in the verbal form CHAG) the waters with bounds." We may translate, therefore: "He described a circle or marked with a compass the face of the waters (thus according to the original Hebrew). Everything therefore, according to Scripture, is round: the earth is a sphere, the waters on the earth are round, and the heavenly bodies are also spheres.

But I like to have historical proof for the statement of

Westra that the people of God were persecuted for their teaching that the earth is round. I do not deny this. Nevertheless, it is up to him to furnish proof for this tendentious statement, which not only makes the church look foolish, but which also must serve as an introduction to his suggestion that the days of the creation narrative were long periods, at least, *perhaps*.

Another tendentious introduction to the position that, perhaps, the days of creation were long periods, is the paragraph that informs us that, for a long time "the theologians-would-be-scientists" believed that the earth was the center of the universe and that the sun and the planets revolve around the earth. Again, I ask for historical proof of this statement. Mr. Westra merely makes this statement without any proof. What must be proved is: 1. That those theologians actually taught this; and 2. That this was only the teaching of what Westra calls deprecatingly "the theologians-would-be-scientists," and that it was not the general belief in those days. Surely, at that time these "theologians-would-be-scientists" were already cured of their error that the earth was flat, for how otherwise could they possibly teach that the sun and the planets revolved locally around the earth? At any rate, I want proof. Again, I say that I will not deny this, but neither will I take Westra's word for it. I want historical proof.

At any rate the Bible, though it certainly teaches that man-in-Christ is the center of the universe, knows nothing of the earth's being the local center of creation.

But now I quote the paragraph to which the whole article of Westra, evidently, means to refer: "A similar situation faces the church today. Various laboratory techniques which can measure with astounding accuracy the amount of radioactivity of various substances (including the well known carbon-14) have indicated that the earth is thousands of years older than Scripture seems to indicate. Not only that the earth itself is that old, but that for a half a million years before the birth of Christ, animals and some sort of human life existed. This technique of measuring the radioactivity that remains in the samples submitted by archeologists is as sound a technique as can be found in any measuring laboratory. In fact, this method is so extremely reliable it has been compared to a yardstick!"

Now, in the rest of the article, Mr. Westra does not definitely either teach or deny the long period theory, as from the above quoted paragraph we would certainly expect. For there he presents with evident approval the theory of science so-called that the earth is thousands of years older than "Scripture seems to indicate." However, I nevertheless have the impression that Westra believes that when what he calls "general revelation" (let us call it science) will ever be harmonized with what he calls "specific revelation," "general revelation" the (science) will prove to be correct. And that means that creation account of Gen. 1, 2 is a mere myth.

Mr. Westra writes nothing new. Even the attempt to harmonize the creation narrative with the theory of evolution

is nothing new. But all these attempts have not only failed, but they have resulted in denying the Word of God.

But I would like to ask Mr. Westra a few questions.

He must remember that I am not a scientist, nor even a "theologian-would-be-scientist." Hence, my questions; which I ask also for the readers of *Beacon Lights*.

1. Will you explain to a simple theologian that is not a scientist, as well as to the readers of *Beacon Lights*, just what is Carbon-14? Yes, I have read about it, but I am not a scientist. Neither are most of our readers of *Beacon Lights*. Hence, the question.

2. Will you explain how, especially Carbon-14, proves that the earth is thousands of years older than Scripture indicates? You, evidently, believe this. Hence, the question.

3. Will you explain how it is even possible, and now I mean in the light of Scripture, that animal and now I mean in the light of Scripture, that animal and some form of human life existed a half million years before the birth of Christ. And will you prove this also from Carbon-14 as well as from "the technique of measuring the radioactivity that remains in the samples submitted by archeologists?"

4. Was man created in the image of God a half a million years ago or did he gradually develop into that image?

Well, this is enough for the time being. I hope you answer my questions, preferably in the *Beacon Lights*.

H.H.

About The Three Points

The report of the conferences and discussions of the committee of the schismatics with a committee of the Christian Reformed Synod about the notorious "Three Points" has now been published. And seeing that I am writing on the "Three Points" anyway, it seems quite proper that, for a while, I interrupt my discussion and discuss, first of all, this report.

It stands to reason that I will subject this report to a fair but also to a thorough criticism.

And then I wish to point out, first of all, that the committees started from a wrong angle and from a mistaken point of view. At least, before I would ever start a discussion officially with a committee of the Christian Reformed Church on the question of the "Three Points" I would have to discuss the question and want a definite answer to it: was it right or wrong to cast faithful ministers out of the Christian Reformed Synagogue in 1924?

By discussing the "Three Points" without first having an answer to this definite question, the schismatics, in their anxiety to be received back in the Christian Reformed Church (Cf. De Boer and the schismatic Classis West), already gave up the ship and evince an evident willingness to adopt the

"Three Points" in principle and apologize. It was either right or wrong to expel the Revs. H. Danhof, G. M. Ophoff and undersigned from the Christian Reformed Church. In my opinion it was an ecclesiastical crime. If it is still the opinion of the Christian Reformed Church that it was right, I will never have any official discussion with them about the "Three Points."

But you object, perhaps, that this is not fair. Must not the answer to the question whether it was right or wrong to depose the three above mentioned ministers necessarily be preceded by a discussion of the "Three Points"?

This I emphatically deny.

First of all, the Synod of 1924, although they adopted the "Three Points" said nothing about discipline, although it had overtures to that effect on the synodical table, and although the committee appointed for our case had in its report the statement that if the three ministers (two at the time) did not agree to the "Three Points" they should be disciplined. The Synod did not adopt this part of the report of the committee. In other words, they decided nothing about discipline.

But what is more important still is that the Synod of 1924 gave a very favorable testimony of the two accused ministers, especially as to their being Reformed. Here it is:

"On the other hand, Synod declares that these ministers in their writings, according to their own repeated declarations, do not intend or purpose anything else than to teach and maintain our Reformed doctrine, the doctrine of Scripture and the Confessions; and it cannot be denied that they are Reformed in respect to the fundamental truths as they are formulated in the Confessions even though it be with a tendency to one-sidedness."

I claim that, apart from that tendency "to one-sidedness," which I deny, this is a beautiful testimony to two ministers that were accused of being unreformed from several sides. It certainly speaks the truth when it declares that they never intended else than to propagate and develop in their writings the Reformed truth. And, mind you, this testimony was given after the undersigned wrote on and criticized, years before 1924, the doctrine of grace and the theory of "common grace" in the rubric "Our Doctrine" in *The Banner*. But what is more, Synod not only testifies that the two ministers intend to propagate and develop the Reformed truth, but also that it cannot be denied that they "are Reformed in the fundamental truths as they are formulated in the Confessions." I say that the two ministers, of whom I am the only one still living, may well be grateful for this testimony in regard to their confessionally Reformed soundness especially in view of the fact that at the same Synod they were tried for heresy.

But, in the light of all this, is it not correct when I maintain that, even before I will officially discuss the "Three Points" with any committee of the Christian Reformed Church, the question must be asked whether the Christian

Reformed Church still takes the position that I was legally and properly deposed from my office as minister?

This question must certainly be answered first of all.

Consider once more: 1. The Synod did not want discipline as is very evident. 2. The Synod declared us fundamentally Reformed in the light of the Confessions. Yet, Classis East and West Grand Rapids declared us heretics because we refused to sign the "Three Points" and, in a very high-handed way deposed us from office.

Do you think that I would sit in any official capacity in a committee meeting discussing the "Three Points" while branded as a heretic and legally deposed minister? Never!

But this is exactly what the schismatics did and by this very action they already repudiated the Protestant Reformed Position. They met the committee of the Christian Reformed Church as heretics and as those that were legally cast out of the Church.

H.H.

Teacher Needed

Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, 1545 Wilson Ave., S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan, needs a teacher for the third grade. If interested, please apply by contacting David Meulenberg, 1743 Moelker Ave., S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan, Phone AR 6-4589.

PROTECTING GRACE

All who with heart confiding
Depend on God alone,
Like Zion's mount abiding,
Shall ne'er be overthrown.
Like Zion's city bounded
By guarding mountains broad,
His people are surrounded
Forever by their God.

The men who falsehood cherish,
Forsaking truth and right,
With wicked men shall perish,
God will their sin requite.
From sin Thy saints defending,
Their joy, O Lord, increase.
With mercy never ending
And everlasting peace.

Psalms 125:1, 3

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER VIII

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:3, 4

For I cannot imagine that Enoch and Elijah, who have not only been taken to heaven, but who have also been translated and who are now in glory, shall once more return in corruptible bodies to this earth of corruption, testify and suffer and be killed, and then rise again and go to heaven. But in the second place, this limitation makes it to be in conflict with Scripture. True, the Lord says that Elijah cometh, but we must not forget that in this same portion He also says: "But I say unto you, that Elijah has come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would. Even so shall the Son of man suffer of them." And the clear remark is added: "Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." And in the eleventh chapter of the same gospel Jesus says with reference to John the Baptist: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." And again, "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come." If we take into account these Scriptural references, clear in themselves, we have no difficulty. Then we shall no longer maintain the strange notion that in the literal sense of the word Enoch and Elijah shall return, but we shall understand that these men, and especially Elijah, were types. They were powerful witnesses themselves, in the first place. In John the Baptist Elijah returns again as a powerful witness to the people. And so also it must be expected that again such witnesses shall come, according to our chapter, that shall sound their testimony before a perverted generation. Also in this interpretation, therefore, there is an element of truth. Not indeed as if these two prophets of the old dispensation shall return literally, but in the sense that Enoch and Elijah, and, in fact, Noah and Moses and many others, must be taken as types of the witnesses that are mentioned in the words of our text.

There are still other interpretations. But these are the most important. And we rather turn to the text, to see whether it can be ascertained with a reasonable amount of certainty who are meant by these two witnesses. And then we remind you of our explanation of the first two verses, in the first place. Jerusalem stands for Christendom in the broadest sense of the word. Outside of the court and the temple it symbolizes the false church, that part of Christianity that still claims to belong to it but in the meantime tramples

under foot the blood of Christ and denies the great truths of atonement and redemption in the blood of the Savior. The outer court stands for the show-church, or the hypocrites, that indeed enter the temple in the outward sense but never worship in Spirit and in truth. These two essentially belong together. And the temple proper stands for the true church of Jesus Christ. It is in that condition and during the period that the church is in that condition that the two witnesses give their testimony, that is, during this entire dispensation, as we have seen. It is therefore a testimony that arises from the true church, from the midst of the true, spiritual children of God. It is a testimony that must serve two purposes, no doubt. It must testify against the wickedness of the false church and the show-church, a testimony that preaches hell and damnation to all that do not believe in Jesus Christ as the King and Redeemer. And at the same time it is a testimony that must serve to strengthen the true believers. And that the time of their testimony, although being of the same length as the forty-two months and the three and a half years, is nevertheless expressed in terms of days, twelve hundred sixty days, shows that it is a continual testimony which they give. And therefore from the context we gather the following. First of all, the testimony for which we must look is a continual testimony all through this dispensation, from the exaltation of Christ to His second coming. It is during this period that the false and the show-church, as well as the true church, exist. It is during this same period that the testimony of these witnesses is heard. It is a testimony that is naturally heard from the true church of Christ, not from the city at large, not from the outer court, but from the temple building proper. It is a testimony of repentance and sin against the false church and the show-church. And these witnesses are preachers of repentance, as is at the same time indicated by their being girded with sackcloth. It is a testimony for the truth of Christ and the strengthening of the true believers.

But we must now turn to the fourth verse of the chapter, for there evidently we have the key to the entire explanation. There we read: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." The plain reference here is to Zechariah 4. For there we read in the fourteenth verse, in answer to the question of the prophet concerning the identity of the two olive trees: "These are the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth." Here therefore is the key. The two witnesses are the two olive trees and also the candlesticks there mentioned, so the text tells us. Hence, the answer to the question as to who are the two olive trees and the candlesticks in Zechariah 4 is at the same time the correct answer to the question who are meant by the two witnesses.

Zechariah, the prophet, receives a vision. He beholds in the vision a candlestick with seven lamps. Above the candlestick he sees a golden bowl, or reservoir, filled with oil. This bowl of oil above the candlestick is connected with the lamps by means of seven pipes, through which they are supplied

with oil from the bowl in order to give light. He beholds, further, on each side of the bowl an olive tree. These olive trees are again connected with the bowl above the candlestick, so that from them the oil continually pours into the bowl, and from the bowl into the lamps. That is the vision: a candlestick receiving its oil from a bowl above it, which in turn receives its oil from the two olive trees.

What is the meaning of this vision? Also that is given in the chapter. The general meaning is a message to Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." After the captivity Zerubbabel must be instrumental in the rebuilding of the temple. But in this work he meets with opposition from the imperial or world power. He can make no headway. And now this vision tends to instruct Zerubbabel that by the Spirit of the Lord the opposition of the world power shall be brought to nought and the temple rebuilt, the kingdom of God restored. Still more in general, the meaning of the vision is that although the Lord employs human instruments, nevertheless the completion of His kingdom is not the work of human hands, but of His own Spirit. If the candlesticks are to give light, the bowl and the olive trees and the pipes are necessary indeed, but what would they be without oil? And so it is with the church and the kingdom of God. The church as such and the servants of the Lord and the means of grace are all necessary. But what would they be without the Holy Spirit? They could not shed light of their testimony in the church and the world. But now we must still further ask the question: what is the meaning of the details of the vision? What is meant by the candlestick, and what by the olive trees? We need not be left in the dark as to the answer to this question. The candlestick in the temple and tabernacle was a symbol of the people of God as shining with their knowledge of God and their testimony in the midst of a world of darkness. That was Israel of the old dispensation. And so in the new dispensation it is symbolic of the church of Christ letting its light shine in the midst of the world of darkness and unbelief. The church is a light, a testimony of the truth of God. That this is true is clearly proved by the first chapter of this book of Revelation, where the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches. But who are the two olive trees? In Zechariah 4:14 we read that they were the two anointed ones, standing before the Lord of the whole earth. From this we learn, in the first place, that they are servants of God. They stand before the Lord of the whole earth. They are therefore ready to serve. And that they stand before the Lord of the whole earth also implies that they are especially the ones that are ready to serve the Lord before the whole world with their testimony in word and deed. But, in the second place, we learn that they are *anointed* servants of the Lord. They are therefore officially called and ordained for service. They are divine media through which the people of God receive the blessings of God's grace, especially of the knowledge of God, so that they may let their light shine. In the Old Testament there were but two that were

thus officially anointed to be servants in the theocracy, namely, the king and the priest. And there is for that reason no question among interpreters generally but that by the two olive trees, in the first place, Zerubbabel the prince and Joshua the high priest are meant. But in the second place, a general reference is made to the royal and priestly office in Israel. And in the words of our text, therefore, the olive trees are evidently none other but the divinely ordained and called true ministers of the Word, who must serve as media to supply the church with light.

If in this light we turn once more to the words of our text, the whole is convincingly clear. The two witnesses, as our text has it, are not only the two olive trees of Zechariah 4; nor are they only the two candlesticks; but they are both. John identifies them. The olive trees and the candlesticks cannot be separated. They belong together, and together they are the two witnesses of Christ in the world. That John speaks of the *two* witnesses is also plain. It is not because two individuals are meant, but it is simply because the entire reference of the text is to the two witnesses of Zechariah 4. And the Lord means to say: "Just as in the Old Testament I had two witnesses, just as then I had my people as a shining light and testimony in the world in my people Israel and the servants I appointed over them, so also in the new dispensation, during the forty-two months that the false church and the show church shall exist and defile the sanctuary, I shall have my two witnesses who shall bear testimony before all the world." The candlesticks and the olive trees in Zechariah 4 are none other than the people of God as lights shining in the world together with the divinely anointed and appointed servants of God. So also in our portion we conclude, on the basis of Scripture, that the candlesticks and the olive trees together are the church of Christ throughout this dispensation, together with the divinely ordained servants of the Word, the true ministers of the gospel, who must serve the Lord as media to supply the congregation with light. If we understand this, the whole is rather clear. We have in the words of our text, in the first place, again a word of comfort and warning. A word of warning: for not all is Israel that is called Israel, and not all is Christendom that calls itself by that name. On the contrary, by far the widest area is left out when God's people are measured. There is a large mass of so-called Christians that laugh at the truths of Christianity and of Scripture, that renounce the Christ and that crucify Him anew. In the second place, there are in the visible church proper the hypocrites, scattered and hidden among the true people of God,—dangerous people, that really belong to the enemy, that shall ultimately openly unite with the power of the Antichrist, but that cannot be detected. And the question might well be asked by God's people: but is not the whole cause of God a lost cause? If that is the condition of the church, shall there be a true church in the future? Who shall stand? And our text gives us the assurance that throughout this dispensation the two witnesses shall stand,

the church shall let its light shine in the midst of the world and in the midst of the apostate church. The Lord shall keep His church even to the end of the world as a shining light. Still more. Not only the candlestick but also the two olive trees shall remain. The Lord shall not leave His church without its faithful servants. These faithful servants, in the first place, shall instruct the congregation in the full truth of the Word and thus shall serve as media to supply the congregation with the oil of knowledge necessary to let their light shine. But in the second place, it shall be especially through them that the church shall testify. The church and the servants of God belong together. The servants are the mouthpiece of the church. They shall above all testify and witness in the midst of the world and in the midst of the apostate church. They shall testify against the wickedness of that apostate Christendom and testify for the name of Christ, testify also against the hypocrisy of the hypocrites and the false church.

This condition is to develop in extreme features toward the end of the world. Apostasy shall increase. Jerusalem shall turn once more wicked. False Christianity shall become more openly false. Days of persecution shall arise. The show church shall unite itself with the false church in the days of persecution. But still the candlestick shall shine. Many shall fall away, according to the words of our Lord. Many also of the servants of God shall become unfaithful. But always Christ shall have the two witnesses, His church and His servants,—yea, to the end of the world. And the more the lines are sharply drawn and the greater the apostasy becomes and the more clearly Antichrist develops, the louder and the more clearly and the more definitely the testimony of the faithful church, with its faithful ministers, shall resound throughout the world.

If we bear this in mind, we shall also understand that there have been many types in history of these two witnesses. Types of these were men like Enoch and Noah and Moses and Elijah. Types of these also were Zerubbabel and Joshua. And types of these were the martyrs of the early church, as well as of the church of the Reformation together with the faithful servants of their time. Huss and Wyclif and Luther and Calvin represent these faithful witnesses. Types of these witnesses at the final stage of history are the churches and the servants that sound the trumpet today and that will know of nothing but Christ and Him crucified. And through them all we have the realization of the comfort expressed in our portion: "I will give my two witnesses, throughout this dispensation, that they may prophesy. The candlestick shall shine, the olive trees shall supply with oil, all the days of this dispensation, even until the end of the world."

But at the same time we have in our text a word of admonition and calling, a word to the church as such. She must be a witness of Christ. She must let her light shine boldly, fearlessly, testifying against the apostasy of the age with all her might and main. Not according to the imagination of man, but according to the light of the Word of God

must she live and speak. Regardless of what the world may say, we must witness. Regardless how beautiful the world may look and however sweet the world may speak of Christ and Christianity, the great question that must always again be asked: do you believe in Christ, the Son of the living God, in the blood of atonement and the redemptive value of the blood of Christ Jesus? If not, the world stands condemned by our testimony. For it, and it alone, is the truth. In the second place, a word of admonition with regard to the relation of the church to its ministers. They are the olive trees. They must enlighten the minds of the congregation with the light of God. The congregation must receive this light. Do not be satisfied with a little siren-song of gospel that cannot establish you in the faith, but be eager to receive the whole Word of God. For you will need its full, abundant light. And, in the third place, a word of warning and admonition to the servants of God in the church: they are the olive trees. They must bring the light of the Word and nothing else. They, first of all and above all, must stand and be faithful. They shall have a hard time in the day of judgment if it should be proved that they have given the congregation stones for bread and serpents for eggs. Many have been the false prophets of all times. Many are the false prophets today. Fearful wrath and condemnation, no doubt, there will be in store for those that have pretended to preach the truth of God and have filled the pipes of the bowl with the darkness of hell.

Revelation 11:5-13

5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.
6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.
7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.
8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.
9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.
10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11. And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

It seems to me that in the words of our text quoted above we have a very strong corroboration of the conclusion we reached thus far in regard to the two witnesses. In our first discourse on the present chapter of the Book of Revelation we reached the conclusion that Jerusalem and temple and worshippers must not be taken in the literal, but in the symbolical sense of the word. Jerusalem in its all-comprehensive sense stands for the new dispensation, that is, for Christianity in its broadest and most inclusive sense. The city outside of the temple and the court is used as being typical of the false church, representing the masses of Christianity that still have the seal of the covenant on their forehead and that perhaps would deem it a shame if they were not baptized. But they have renounced the real essence of Christendom, the blood of atonement. The outer court, we found, must be understood to symbolize the show church, the church outside of the real sanctuary, but outwardly belonging to the real people of God, that is, therefore, the hypocrites. And finally, the temple building proper is symbolic of the real, spiritual body of Christ, the elect of God, that certainly shall be saved. We found, further, that the ultimate outcome of this three-fold form of Christendom will be that the show church identifies itself with the false church, and together they shall trample under foot the holy city all through this dispensation, but especially toward the end.

Now I said that in the words which we are about to discuss I find a very strong corroboration of what I have explained in regard to the two witnesses. What is here said cannot be taken as referring to two single persons for the simple reason that they are pictured in universal features, as having a universal influence, noted by all the world, and being the object also of universal hatred and contempt. And their death appears also as an object of universal joy. Neither Enoch nor Elijah created such a stir as these two witnesses. Nor is it conceivable that two single human beings in a single city would cause so much commotion. No, only when we conceive of these two witnesses as the candlesticks and the olive trees, according to Scripture, shall we be able to understand and appreciate to the full all that is told us in the text we are now discussing. And we note immediately, of course, that this passage still speaks of the two witnesses.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Blessing of Jacob and Esau

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? — GEN. 27:37

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. — HEB. 11:20

That Rebekah and Jacob succeeded in deceiving Isaac raises questions in our minds. Considering the circumstances we can hardly imagine how it could have been so. We realize, of course, that Isaac was blind and therefore limited to the use of four senses instead of five. But nonetheless, it would seem that the four senses, all of which he made use, should have been sufficient to see through the imposture of his son. In the first place, there was the matter of the voice. We all know how easy it is to distinguish between the voices of various people, especially of those with whom we are very intimately acquainted. We know that there was a very marked difference between the physical characteristics of Esau and Jacob, and it would be expected that that difference carried through also in the peculiarities of their voices. We are told that Isaac noted Jacob's peculiar voice, but we wonder why it was not sufficient to convince Isaac that there was fraud. In the second place, there was the hair on Jacob's arms and neck. It was the hair of a kid used for the purpose of deception. However, it is well known that a person who is blind has a very keen sense of touch. Why, then, was not Isaac able to distinguish between the crudely attached goatskins and the real hair of a man? Finally there was the venison. Isaac had always been particularly fond of the venison which Esau was able to prepare from the wild meat which he caught in the field. Jacob came with the meat of their domesticated flocks. It was the very ordinary meat which formed the mainstay of their diet in preference to which Isaac had always favored the venison prepared by Esau. Why at this time did not Isaac notice the difference?

In attempting to come to an understanding of this matter, we should remember that Isaac was a man who was troubled in heart. He had a guilty conscience. For many years he had tried very hard to convince himself that Esau should receive the blessing and not Jacob. With his mind he was ready to believe it; but always in his heart he knew that he was wrong. Finally determined to bring the matter to an end, he convinced himself that he was about to die, and he called for Esau so as to bless him. But even as Esau entered his tent, Isaac's conscience began to clamor more loudly than ever, and his courage slipped away. Remembering then that always in the past he had been best disposed toward Esau when eating of his venison, he sent Esau to prepare once

again such a meal, hoping thereby to regain his courage. While waiting for the return of his son, he tried to get hold of himself and be patient; but the turmoil in his soul would not let him rest. Conflicting thoughts kept on forcing themselves into his consciousness. In our day we would maybe say that he had become nervous and jumpy; in reality, he was spiritually troubled and uncertain. Isaac's mind told him one thing; his heart told him another. He wanted to give the blessing to Esau; he knew he should give it to Jacob. His soul had become a spiritual battlefield.

When these troubled thoughts were interrupted by the voice of Jacob, Isaac was in no state of mind to make clear and sound decisions. He heard the voice and it seemed to be the voice of Jacob; but when he inquired, the voice insisted that it was Esau's. Isaac with his troubled heart and mind did not trust himself sufficiently to challenge it. Still the doubt persisted; and when the person approached, he reached forth to feel if his arms were hairy. He felt the hair but without enough presence of mind to note that it was the fur of an animal and not the hair of a man. He took of the meat that had been prepared and ate; but, in his troubled state, it seemed unpalatable and tasteless. His sense of taste, otherwise so discerning, could not even distinguish between the flesh of a goat and the venison of a wild animal. One thought only persisted, he wanted this to be Esau because he wanted this troublesome affair to be over. So too he took no special note of the reason which was given for having procured game so quickly, namely, "the Lord thy God brought it to me." Such an appeal to God was unlikely from the lips of the spiritually insensitive Esau. Ordinarily Isaac would have noted; but this time his mind was pre-occupied. He wanted only to be through with the matter. When there came through to his senses the smell of Esau's garments, he wishfully wanted to believe what he said, "the smell of my son in the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." So having begun, he hastened on to add what was on his mind. "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

So the blessing was given; and yet, not really. There were elements of the blessing in what Isaac had said; but there were other elements noticeably lacking. The reference to God was short and in passing; missing was all mention of the covenant which God had established with the family of Abraham; there was no assurance of fellowship and friendship with the Most High God. These were the spiritual elements of the blessing. They had afforded Isaac his greatest joy; but he knew that they would not be appreciated by Esau. Isaac's sanctified heart would not let him promise those things where it knew that they would not be appreciated. What came forth from Isaac's faltering lips was not the true promise but only a mutilated caricature.

As Jacob left his father's tent, two troubled souls were parted. Jacob went in fear of what would happen when his deception would be discovered. Isaac remained in painful awareness that as a covenant father he had withstood the will of God.

As Jacob left his father's tent, two troubled souls were parted. Jacob went in fear of what would happen when his deception would be discovered. Isaac remained in painful awareness that as a covenant father he had withstood the will of God.

It is a painful thing when a believer refuses to do the will of his God, whether it be Isaac who thought himself to have given the covenant blessing to unbelieving Esau, or Jonah who took to the sea rather than to preach repentance in Nineveh, or Peter who for his own safety cursed the Name of God rather than defending his Lord. Peter went out and wept; Jonah asked to be cast into the sea; can we imagine the pangs that gripped the heart of Isaac sitting alone in his tent?

But Isaac was not left long to his painful meditations. Jacob had hardly left when Esau made his jubilant entry. He was filled with eager anticipation. In former years he had not thought much of his father's blessing; it had seemed so far away. But now he could look forward soon to being heir to all his father's wealth, and it felt good. He anticipated being appointed head over his scheming brother, and it was sweet. With high spirits he entered his father's tent and said, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me."

Those words pierced like a sword into Isaac's troubled heart. There was no doubt about whose voice this was that spoke. As strongly as he had wanted it to be the voice of Esau the previous time, this time he wanted it not to be. Almost as though trying to withhold the truth from his own mind he answered back, "Who art thou?" But the question really didn't need an answer. Isaac knew who it was that stood before him this time, and "Isaac trembled very exceedingly." At that moment he knew for sure that he had been deceived; and yet it was not so much that knowledge that made him tremble. At that moment Isaac knew that he had given the blessing to Jacob instead of Esau; but it was not even that which made him tremble. At that moment Isaac perceived that the hand of the Lord had intervened in his life. God had caused that his intention to bless Esau had somehow been brought to the ears of Jacob. God had through the use of some means instilled into the mind of Jacob the plan to impersonate his brother. God had caused that in spite of his own intentions his youngest son received the blessing instead of his eldest, and Isaac trembled very exceedingly. He trembled because he, the guardian of the covenant, had been found fighting against his God.

As soon as Isaac perceived this, a remarkable transformation took place in his attitude. It is this change that marked him as a true child of God. He understood the fact that

Jacob had received the blessing, in spite of his own contrary intentions, to be a confirmation of the prophecy which had been given many years before to Rebekah. It was the will of God that Jacob should have the blessing and therefore it had to stand. Isaac was a true child of God and once he had perceived this truth he held to it tenaciously. It implied a repudiation of his former position and a confession that he had sinned, but nonetheless he said in no uncertain terms to Esau, "Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed . . . Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" Isaac saw it to be the will of the Lord, and, being a child of God, he acceded to it.

This is the only possible explanation of the action of Isaac. We can not conceive of it that Isaac might have thought that his mistaken blessing of Jacob was irrevocable. If Isaac had still thought that Esau should have the blessing, he could have very easily nullified the previous bestowal on the grounds of Jacob's deception. But now Isaac understood that it was God's will for Jacob to receive the blessing; therefore, he said with such finality, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." The blessing was given to Jacob by God.

It was for this reason also that Isaac could say nothing to alleviate the bitter pleading of Esau. Esau wanted the blessing, or at least part of the blessing, very badly. Tearfully and with touching words he sought it, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father." But Isaac had come to faith; and, although before he had been so susceptible to the desires of Esau, now he stood firm even against such tender pleadings. Esau had no room for repentance even through his tears; and there could be no place in the covenant blessing for one who did not confess his own sin. With firm words Isaac assured Esau of his future, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be away from the fatness of the earth, and away from the dew of heaven from above; (this translation with *away from* is to be preferred to the rendition of the A.V.) And by the sword shall thou live, and shall serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." Thus by the power of faith Isaac came to see before hand the reality of which Malachi wrote many years later, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, the border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." Mal. 1:2-5.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

XVI.

(Matthew 25:31-46)

c.

We ended our former essay in this series with the observation that there is a vast difference between the *ground* of the *verdict in judgment* and the *ground of our salvation*!

Let us attempt to listen to the text here in Matthew 25:31-46 on this point. We quote the following from this passage: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me . . ."

There are those who read this text and miss the point of Christ's teaching entirely. They are the *antinomians*. They err grievously when they read this text. And one gets the impression that they err willfully. For they read but half of the text.

Let me explain.

Attempting to maintain the thoroughly Scriptural teaching that Christ has fulfilled the law for us his people on the Cross once and for all they allege that any attempt to have the law have meaning for our Christian life as a rule of conduct must by its very nature be a denial of grace. Hence they deny that the law of God has any meaning for the Christian, except that it is fulfilled in Christ. And all that must be preached is: Christ has fulfilled the law for us, and he is our intercessor with the Father. That is the extent of salvation. One must not preach the law in the church. For that would be a denial of grace.

When *such* antinomians are confronted with this Scripture passage in Matthew 25:31-46 they read only what sustains (in appearance) their position and fail to read the rest. They wrest the Scripture to their own destruction. They read only the part, "Then shall the righteous say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee to drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee

in? Or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick or in prison and came unto thee?"

So much they quote. No more.

In so doing they, by partial quotation, misquote and attempt to change or avoid the thrust of this instruction of Jesus. And they argue that here it is clearly taught that the "righteous" will, even in the day of judgment, not have any consciousness of having performed any good works. And such they boldly allege and defend even though the Heidelberg Catechism clearly teaches that: "the most holy, while in this life, has only a small beginning of the new obedience, yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live not only according to some, but all the commandments of God." Question 114.

What these *antinomians* fail to understand is that Jesus does not present the righteous as having done no good works at all, which God rewards in this life and in the life to come (Questions 63, 64), but the text presents these righteous as having been unaware of the *greatness* of their labor of love, in that these labors of mercy were performed not merely to their fellowmen, some humanistic philanthropy, but that it was *Christian mercy*, which Christ accounts as having been performed to Himself, since it was performed to the little ones which were given Him by the Father!

The questions: when saw we *thee* an hungered and fed thee, etc., have therefore not the thrust of denying the works of faith, works of thankfulness. Such is the contention of the antinomians! In the name of grace they deny a great part of the work of God's grace. O, the pity of it!

And when one points out to them that the righteous have these works, while, according to the clear teaching of Jesus, the wicked do not have them, one is told that he does not want Christ but is guilty of teaching self-righteousness! Blind to the meaning of the Scriptures they neglect the beautiful Question and Answer 86 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, *why must we still do good works?*"

In this eighty-sixth Question there is indicated the vast difference between the *ground of salvation* and the "good works" which form the ground of the judgment of Christ in that day! For these "good works" are the evidence of being a good tree. From the fruits they shall be known. And these "good works" are works *of grace*, out of faith, according to God's law and unto the glory of God's grace. They are the proof of our possessing a *living* faith.

It is remarkable that on the very surface of the text Jesus teaches that mercy boasts against judgment. Thus we also read in James 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed not mercy: and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." And always the wicked persecute the Church, those little ones, given to Christ by the Father.

In that day the Church will be saved completely.

She shall receive her reward. It will be purely a reward of *grace*. Nonetheless it shall be a *reward*. It will be the crown of life. The *inheritance* shall be theirs. It shall be openly stated in the hearing of those on the "left side" that the reason for the inheritance of the kingdom is that they *shewed mercy*. For blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth, and blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy!

It is not true that in that day the righteous will deny that they visited the sick, the poor, the indigent and the dying. They will be told the greatness of their labors of love. Thus we read in Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye shewed toward his name, in that ye ministered to the saints and do minister." For notice that the rule of the saints is that "through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured not receiving deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trials of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawed asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth" Shall these saints in that day deny that they suffered for righteousness' sake? Did they deny that they were to walk before the Lord in holiness and newness of life? Will they say: We *are* dead, but Christ *is alive*? Or will they say: we live because he lives in us, the hope of glory?

O, yes, these saints are *by nature* dead. They once were darkness but now are they light in the Lord!

Listen to the Confession of the saints in the days of the Reformation when the true picture of the life of the church was as portrayed in Hebrews 11:33-38! Ask the suffering saint, who suffers for righteousness what his hope is! Hear the beautiful note of the earnest expectation in Question 52 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head I look for the very same person, who before offered himself for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me, to come as judge from heaven: who shall cast all his and mine enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones into heavenly joys and glory."

How conscious were the Reformers of their suffering for Christ's sake. How they breathed in the atmosphere of the living hope that the Lord will avenge his people, yea, that the death of God's saints is precious to Him! The believers

claim the promise of God as taught in this parable of the judgment by the Son of Man in that day.

Here the account of the hope which is in the composer of the Belgic Confession, Guido De Bres, in Article 27 of the Church Order: ". . . And therefore the consideration of this judgment, is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and the elect: because these *their full deliverance* shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labors and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed and tormented them in this world; and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences, and being immortal, shall be tormented in that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angles. But on the contrary, the faithful and the elect shall be crowned with glory and honor: and the Son of God shall confess their names before God his Father, and his elect angels: all tears shall be wiped from their eyes . . . And for the *gracious reward*, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory, which never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Therefore we expect that great day with a most ardent desire to the end that we may fully enjoy the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus. Rev. 22:20."

Thus is the hope of the faithful.

And this is the hope of the faithful in the same measure that the road grows more dark and dreary, strewn with the thorns of the sufferings of Christ.

And thus Christ will in judgment say to the wicked: "In as much as ye have not done it to the least of these of mine ye have not done it unto me!"

Here is implied admonition, encouragements, and correction in righteousness. Is it not true that every one who has this hope upon God purifies himself as he is pure?

The end is not yet by and by. But the victory is sure. Let us gird up the loins of our minds and be sober, and hope perfectly for this revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day.

Herewith we have ended our exposition of these two chapters.

If they contributed just a little toward a better understanding of the Parousia of Christ and the final hope which is ours, the writer of these lines will account himself richly rewarded.

G.L.

The righteous in His glorious day
 Shall flourish and increase;
 The earth, until the moon shall fade,
 Shall have abundant peace.

IN HIS FEAR

Waiting or Weighted

A little reflection will reveal how much of our time we spend waiting for this thing or for that.

We live fast.

In the short span of our lives we do so much more than our grandparents could possibly do. We hurry from one end of the country to another, or even from Europe to America or America to Europe. We are constantly on the go. The business executive is always on the go, speeding from one thing to another and pausing only briefly to catch his breath with a brief vacation. Even the modern housewife because of modern means of transportation leaves her home and even the county in which she lives to return again to her home and do more in one day than her grandmother did in weeks and in months.

And yet, we spend so much time waiting.

We go to church and wait for the service to begin. The song is announced and the organist plays the melody over; and we wait for the key for us to begin to sing. We wait for the car to be brought in front of church so we can speed homeward. We wait for dinner to be ready. We wait for the rest to finish their meal so we can read and close with prayer. We wait for the store or bank to open on Monday morning or we wait for the neighbour whose turn it is to take the car to work.

We wait our turn in the doctor's or dentist's office. We wait for a letter from a distant point. We wait for the phone to ring to inform us that the awaited grandchild has arrived and is a boy or a girl. We put in a phone call, and here surely even the business executive who loses no time, if he can help it, must also wait till the party on the other end picks up his receiver and answers. We wait for the train, for the conductor to let down the steps and open the door, for the people to detrain and for a glimpse of the loved one or friend whom we came to meet and transport to our home. We wait for the traffic light to change from red to green. We wait for that broken arm to heal so that the heavy cast may be removed and we may learn to use that arm again. We wait for our children at school. We wait for the vegetables in our garden to ripen so we can eat them. And so we could go on. In every phase of our life we find that we wait for things, persons, a moment of time or a condition to be reached.

None of all this do we have in mind, however, by our theme, *Waiting Or Weighted*. We have in mind the words of David in Psalm 27:14, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." And we have in mind Hebrews 12:1, "Where-

fore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Are we waiting on the Lord, or are we so weighted down with the pleasures and treasures of sin, with worldly ambitions and distractions that we are running away from Him instead of waiting on and for Him?

We wait on the Lord in more than one way.

In Psalm 104:25-28 we read, "So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These all wait upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good." And though we are not always conscious of it, we wait each morning for Him to bring up the sun in the East. We wait for Him to send the cheering rain. Indeed, how long sometimes He makes us wait for it. When the rains come in their usual amounts and at their set times, we easily forget that we wait upon the Lord for it. Yea, we may even complain that it comes too soon. We wanted God to wait! But when, as at present in this section of our country, the rain is scarce and the ground contains — according to latest figures for the general area — only fifty percent of its normal moisture content, we are very consciously waiting for Him to send that cheering rain. And we wait for Him to ripen our crops in the field; and as we said, we wait for Him to heal our broken bones and our diseased bodies. We wait for Him to bring recovery through the medicines He has created in this earth. We depend upon Him. We depend upon His power to sustain us and to heal us. But we depend also upon His will. As James writes, ". . . if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that," James 4:15. Because His will is sovereign and independent while ours is relative and dependent upon His, we can only wait to learn His will with us. And we must wait to learn His will. It is our solemn obligation before Him to submit to His will. As the waiter seeks to learn your wishes and orders from the kitchen the food you desire, so we are called to wait on the Lord, to learn His will with us and walk accordingly.

But no different is it in the spiritual realm. We are reminded of the versification of the Psalms which frequently is sung in our churches:

*"My soul in silence waits for God,
My Saviour He has proved;
He only is my rock and tow'r;
I never shall be moved.
My honor is secure with God,
My Saviour He is known;
My refuge and my rock of strength
Are found in God alone.*

We wait upon the Lord for our salvation. And because He saves us through His Son, we wait upon Christ when

we wait upon the Lord. How the Old Testament Church waited for His birth! For four thousand years the saints in the Old Dispensation waited for the coming of that Seed of the woman that would crush the head of the Serpent, the devil, and bring salvation to God's Church. Generations came and generations went the way of all flesh. The wait was long. But He came, according to that will of God upon which we must wait, at the right moment and justified us by His blood and atoned for all our sins. And then He left this earth to be crowned with glory and honor at God's right hand. Before He left Jesus told His disciples that they should "wait for the promise of the Father" which they had heard of Him, Acts 1:4. And they did wait until He came back in the Spirit on Pentecost. Then the fulness of the truth was revealed to them and they saw His first coming and His death as the fulfillment of God's promises to them. Then, too, they began to look for Him to return at the end of time and to wait for Him to come in judgment upon the world and usher in His spiritual kingdom. And in this New Dispensation the Church indeed waits for that return of the Lord. We wait for Him as well as upon Him. We wait for all God's promises to be fulfilled by Him; for the resurrection of our bodies from the dust; for the new heavens and the new earth; for the New Jerusalem to descend out of heaven; for the tabernacle of God to be with men; for the wiping away of all tears from our eyes; for the glorious realm of perfection in which in a perfect environment and as perfect creatures we shall be able to serve God perfectly.

How true the word of God in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Waiting upon the Lord and believing that when He comes all this blessedness will be ours, we faint not but by the grace of God continue to look and wait for this glory. We shall run and not be weary. We shall walk and not faint. And as the tireless eagle soars in the trackless sky, so shall those who wait on the Lord renew their strength. These are not weighted down with the folly and evil of this world. They wait rather than are weighted down.

And you?

Are you weighted down with the things of this world? Is this earth and its vain treasures and pleasures your ambition and goal? Is your life characterized by waiting for them as an end in themselves? Then as far as the things of God's kingdom are concerned; then as far as Christ in His glorious return is concerned; you are weighted down and not waiting. You may be waiting when you wait for the things of this life. All the world waits for the antichrist, and the things of this present day indicate how impatiently the world waits for him. But such waiting is sin and indicates a heart that is weighted down with sin. Such cannot run the race. Such will not run it, for they care not for the heavenly "prize." Such cannot say with Paul, "Yea doubt-

less, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:8, 14. Nor can they say with this same Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing," II Timothy 4:7, 8.

That is it! They that wait on the Lord love His appearing. They that are weighted love the world and the things in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, I John 2:15, 16. And John says that he who loves the world does not have the love of the Father in him. Filled with the love of God we wait for the fulfillment of all His promises. Filled with the love of this world and its deceiving treasures and pleasures our souls are weighted down so that they cannot soar to the higher heights of heavenly glory. Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matthew 6:21. How true! And when our treasure is in gold and silver, houses and land, earthly things our hearts are weighted down so that they cannot look to the heavenly and wait for its attainment.

And such will find that they do not renew their strength; they do not mount up with wings as eagles. They run after these things and become weary, O so weary that they cannot even enjoy the things after their flight after them. About the time they have amassed their hoard they can no longer enjoy the things it can buy. And soon the breath of life is gone from them and they lose it all. Yet He for Whom they did not wait came in judgment. Then they know they were weighted down instead of waiting for that which really counts. Do not walk in their way.

J.A.H.

LIFE WITH GOD

In sweet communion, Lord, with Thee
I constantly abide;
My hand Thou holdest in Thy own
To keep me near Thy side.

Thy counsel through my earthly way
Shall guide me and control,
And then to glory afterward
Thou wilt receive my soul.

Whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee,
To Whom my thoughts aspire?
And, having Thee, on earth is nought
That I can yet desire.

Psalm 73:1, 2, 3

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

(Continued)

We concluded our preceding article with a quotation from Hodge in which he criticizes the Roman Catholic view of the Popish Mass. And that writer had begun his criticism with the remark that no doctrine than the Popish Mass is more destitute of even a semblance of Scriptural support. The words of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me," are made to mean, "Offer the sacrifice which I myself have just offered." And the Romanists also appeal to the fact that Christ is said to be the priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And now we continue with this quotation from Hodge on page 688 of Vol. III of his Systematic Theology.

"They even argue from such passages as Malachi 1:11, in which the universal spread of the true religion is predicted by saying that from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, "in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." In this passage the English version of the original Hebrew renders "incense shall be offered." This expression is translated in the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, which is the Roman Catholic translation, by the word "sacrificed." Even if the Vulgate version were correct, and the prophet had said that "in every place sacrifice should be made," that would prove nothing to the point. The Old Testament prophets predicted the spread of the true religion under the Gospel dispensation in the use of terms borrowed from the Old Testament ritual.

Protestants reject the doctrine that the eucharist is a true propitiatory sacrifice, —

1. Because it is not only destitute of all support from the Scriptures, but is directly contrary to the whole nature of the ordinance, as exhibited in its original institution and in the practice of the apostolic church. There it is set forth as a sacred feast commemorative of the death of Christ.

2. Because it is founded on the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation. If the whole substance of the bread be not changed into the substance of Christ's body, and if the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood, and if the whole Christ, body, soul, and divinity be not really and truly present under the form (or species) or appearance of the bread and wine, then the priest in the mass has nothing to offer. He in fact offers nothing, and the whole service is a deceit. Just so certainly, therefore, as the impossible and

the unscriptural cannot be true, just so certain is it, that the mass is not a propitiatory sacrifice.

3. The Romish doctrine is that the Apostles were priests, and were invested with authority and power to continue and perpetuate in the Church the priestly office by ordination and the imposition of hands by which the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are conveyed. All this is unscriptural and false. First, because a priest is a man appointed to be a mediator between God and other men, drawing near to Him in behalf of those who have not liberty of access for themselves, and whose function it is to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. But there is no such office under the Christian dispensation, save in the person of Jesus Christ. He is our only, and all sufficient priest; everywhere present and everywhere accessible, who has opened for us a new and living way of access to God, available to all sinners of the human race without the intervention of any of their fellow sinners. Every believer is as much a priest under the Gospel, as any other believer, for through Christ they all have equal freedom of access unto God. It subverts the whole nature of the gospel, to make the intervention of any human priest necessary to our reconciliation with God. Secondly, Christian ministers are never called priests in the New Testament. Every title of dignity, every term expressive of the nature of their office, is bestowed on them, but the title priest, so familiar to Jewish and Gentile ears, is never given to them. Nor is any priestly function ascribed to them. They are not mediators. They are not appointed to offer sacrifices for sin. Every priest is a mediator, but it is expressly declared that Christians have but one mediator, the man Christ Jesus. There is but one sacrifice for sin, the all sufficient sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, who died once for all to bring us near to God. Thirdly, Christ Himself and the Apostles after Him in all their addresses to the people, instead of directing them to go to ministers as priests to obtain the benefit of redemption, uniformly assume that the way is open for the return of every sinner to God without human intervention. "Come unto me" is the invitation of Christ to every heavily laden sinner. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is the gospel preached by the Apostles both to Jews and Gentiles. The emancipation of the Christian world effected by the Reformation, consisted in large measure in freeing man from the belief that Christian ministers are priests through whom alone sinners can draw near to God. It was preaching deliverance to captives, and the opening of the prison to those who were bound, to announce that believers through Christ are all made kings and priests unto God; subject to no authority but the authority of God (and of course to such as He has ordained), and all having access by one Spirit unto the Father. If then ministers are not priests, the eucharist is not a sacrifice.

4. The Romish doctrine is derogatory to the sacrifice of the cross. It supposes that the work of Christ in making satisfaction for the sins of men, needs to be constantly repeated. This is directly contrary to Scripture, which teaches

that by the one offering of Himself, He has forever perfected them that believe. His one sacrifice has done all that need be done, and all that a sacrifice can do. Romanists say that the same sacrifice which was made on the cross, is made in the mass. The only difference between the two is modal. It concerns only the manner of oblation. Then why is the latter needed? Why does not the one offering of Christ suffice? Certain it is the Bible refers us to nothing else: and the believer craves nothing else.

5. The doctrine of the sacrificial character of the eucharist is an integral part of the great system of error, which must stand or fall as a whole. Romanism is another gospel. It proposes a different method of salvation from that presented in the Word of God. It teaches that no one can be saved who is out of the pale of that visible society of which the pope of Rome is the head; and that all are saved who die within that pale. It teaches that no one can be regenerated who is not baptized; and that there is no forgiveness for post-baptismal sins, except by the sacrament of penance and absolution at the hands of a priest. It teaches that no one can have the benefit of the Lord's Supper, who does not receive it at the hands of properly ordained officers of the Church of Rome. It teaches that there is no valid ministry, and that there are no valid ordinances except in the line of the apostolic succession as recognized by the pope. It follows men beyond the grave. It teaches that the souls in purgatory are still under the power of the keys; that their stay in that place or state of torment, can be prolonged or shortened at the will of the Church. The pope assumes, and has often pretended to exercise, the power of granting indulgences for even a thousand years. This whole theory hangs together. If one assumption be false, the whole is false. And if the theory in its primary principle of a perpetual apostleship, infallible in teaching and of the plenary power in government and discipline, be false, then every particular doctrine involving that principle must be false.

Moehler, whose philosophical and mitigated Romanism, has called down upon him no little censure from his stricter brethren, represents the doctrine of the eucharist as the point in which all the differences between Romanists and Protestants converge. On the view taken of this doctrine depends the question whether the Christian Church has a true living "cultus" or not. With him the Church, of course, is the body, which, professing the true religion, is united in the reception of the same sacraments, in subjection to bishops canonically consecrated, and especially to the pope of Rome. For him, and all Romanists, this Church is Christ. He dwells in it; animates it; operates through it exclusively in the salvation of men. The teaching of the Church is his teaching; its commands are his commands; He regenerates only through the sacrament of baptism; He remits sin only through the sacrament of penance; He strengthens in confirmation; He nourishes his people with his body and blood in the eucharist; and in the ordination of priests. He ap-

points the organs through which all this is done by his ceaseless activity. "The Church" says Moehler, "is vicariously Christ manifested and working through all time. The Redeemer did not merely live eighteen hundred years ago, and then disappear, to be remembered only as a historical person as any other of the departed; on the contrary He is ever living in the Church." Romanists, therefore, practically take away Christ, and give us the Church in his stead. It is to be remembered that by the Church they do not mean the body consisting of true believers, but the external, organized body of which the pope is the head. It is this body represented in history by the Hildebrands, the Borgias, and the Leos, which Romanism puts in the place of Christ, clothing it with his prerogatives, and claiming for it the obedience, the reverence, and the confidence due to God alone. It is against this theory, which practically puts man in the place of God, that the most fearful denunciations of the Scriptures are pronounced.

CONFIRMATION

In Protestant circles the emphasis is laid upon the Word and the preaching thereof, and the sacraments are considered to be means of grace only through the Word, the sacraments receive all the emphasis in Roman Catholic thinking and theology. Absolutely necessary unto salvation, according to Rome, are the sacraments of baptism and penance, and the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and holy orders impart an indelible character. The grace of God, according to Rome, is inseparably connected with the sacrament itself, whereas the Protestant conception regards them as mere signs and seals of the invisible grace of God. And, lest we forget, according to Rome the priest occupies a most vital position. He is indispensable in the celebration of the sacraments. They alone can distribute and dispense the sacraments; confirmation and the consecration of priests can occur only through the bishop; however, baptism, because it is regarded as indispensable unto salvation, can be administered, if need be, by ordinary laymen. Rome has built its entire system of the truth upon a foundation of the strict and absolute necessity of the hierarchy, of the priesthood. There is no salvation possible outside of the Church, and Rome conceives of the Church as the hierarchy. Until now we have called attention to two of Rome's seven sacraments: baptism and the eucharist or Lord's Supper. We will now call attention to a third sacrament of Rome, that of confirmation. Our discussion of this sacrament will be relatively brief.

H.V.

Let all His creatures join
To praise His holy Name;
Let all that breathe, their Maker bless
And celebrate His fame.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Article 9 (continued)

We must still say a few words about the nature of the assurance of preservation and perseverance. This article has as its main purpose merely to state the fact that this assurance is possible and real for the saints, and therefore it does not go into detail as to the nature of assurance. Nevertheless, in stating the simple fact of assurance the fathers could not very well avoid saying something as to the nature of assurance. Besides, while the next article treats the subject of the way of assurance, a subject closely allied to that of the nature of assurance, it does not elaborate concerning assurance itself. Hence, we may very well treat this subject in connection with Article 9. This is the more necessary because the accepted English translation could very well lead one astray at this point, as we shall point out.

And then we want to emphasize, in the first place, as we also did in connection with the assurance of election, that faith itself is assurance. Assurance is not something over and above faith itself, as though it were possible to have faith but to lack assurance. The accepted English version of Article 9 would almost leave this impression when it states that believers may and do obtain assurance according to the measure of their faith, "*whereby they arrive at the certain persuasion that they ever will continue true and living members of the church . . .*" This leaves the impression that one first has faith, and that then one ultimately arrives also at a certain persuasion of perseverance. This, however, is contrary to the language of the original, which renders the italicized clause above by, "*whereby they certainly believe . . .*" Nor must we refer this assurance of faith to an assurance that we have faith. This too is often done. The all-important question is whether we are certain that we have faith or that we are believers. But this is really nonsense. To ask a saint whether he is certain that he has faith is like asking a living man whether he is certain that he is alive. One needs no assurance of such facts. And this article surely does not speak of the assurance of faith in that sense at all. We are concerned here with the assurance which we have through faith, not an assurance that we have faith. What, then, do the believers certainly believe? Not that they have faith, but that they are and ever shall remain living members of the Church, that they have the remission of sins and life

eternal. And this is the object, or content, of a faith that is itself assurance. For we are taught in our *Heidelberg Catechism* that faith is a *certain knowledge* of all that God has revealed to us in His Word, and an *assured confidence* that remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given me by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

In the second place, it is in this connection that we must understand the qualifying phrase in this article, "according to the measure of faith." This undoubtedly refers to faith from the viewpoint of its activity and its well-being, and it takes into consideration the fact that one who has the gift of faith in his heart has times when he fails to enjoy the healthy and conscious assurance of faith. Just exactly because faith itself is assurance, and just because the measure of faith from the viewpoint of its activity and well-being may vary, therefore the measure of assurance varies also. This variation in the measure of faith and the proportionate variation in the measure of assurance is closely connected with the way of assurance, treated in Article 10. And therefore we may call further attention to this in connection with that paragraph.

In the third place, we may notice that this article connects the assurance of perseverance with assurance of membership in the Church. This is not merely an incidental reference to the language of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Qu. 54, and therefore does not merely emphasize that the Arminians could not possibly subscribe to Qu. 54. But it emphasizes a very fundamental aspect of the assurance of perseverance. It is only as a member of the holy catholic church, the body of Christ, standing in living connection with Christ, the Head of that body, that I have all the blessings of salvation. It is only there that I have the forgiveness of sins and life eternal. And it is only in the assurance that I am a member of Christ's church that I can enjoy the assurance of forgiveness and life eternal. Outside of the communion of that body there is no remission of sins, and therefore no life eternal.

But then, in the fourth place, we must emphasize that the assurance of perseverance is primarily and principally always the assurance that we *are* living members of the church. This too is overlooked in our accepted English translation of Article 9. It speaks only of the "*certain persuasion that they ever will continue true and living members of the church.*" This is indeed a serious mistake. The assurance of continued and abiding membership in the church is inherent in the assurance of present membership. And therefore the assurance of my present membership in the church of Christ is primary. Without it I can have no assurance as to the future. This is beautifully expressed in our *Catechism*, Q. and A. 54: "and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof." And a correct translation of Article 9 would also express this, as we indicated earlier in our exposition of this article. The reason for this is not difficult

to see. The assurance of present membership by faith in the body of Christ is the assurance of all the blessings of salvation, a salvation that is completely of God, in Christ, and through the Spirit, and a salvation that has its fountain and cause in sovereign election. This last fact is also emphasized in our Catechism, Qu. 54. The Son of God gathers, defends, and preserves a church *chosen unto everlasting life*. And my assurance of present membership is an assurance of membership in that elect church! And it is exactly that unchangeable decree of election that is the deepest ground and cause of my preservation and perseverance. Hence, the relation is as follows. Assurance of present membership is the assurance of my calling. Assurance of calling is the assurance of election. Election is the ground and cause of preservation and perseverance. Hence, the assurance of election is the assurance of preservation and perseverance, or the assurance that I shall forever remain a living member of the Church of Christ, and in that Church enjoy the blessings of the remission of sins and life eternal. Thus, in conclusion, we may see once more why it is all-important that in speaking of the assurance of the perseverance of the true believers we begin, with Article 9, by speaking of the assurance of "this keeping of the elect unto salvation."

* * * *

Article 10. This assurance, however, is not produced by any peculiar revelation contrary to, or independent of the Word of God; but springs from faith in God's promises, which he has most abundantly revealed in his Word for our comfort; from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit, that we are children and heirs of God, Rom. 8:16; and lastly, from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience, and to perform good works. And if the elect of God were deprived of this solid comfort, that they shall finally obtain the victory, and of this infallible pledge or earnest of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.

We may make the following corrections in the translation: 1) The article is not introduced by "however," but by "hence" or "accordingly," so that the truth expressed in Article 10 is in harmony with that expressed in Article 9. 2) The translation "peculiar revelation" is all right, provided we understand it in the sense of "special" or "private." The Dutch translates by "bijzondere openbaring." 3) The original does not have "contrary to, or independent of," but "beside or outside of." 4) The original does not have "produced by," but simply, "This assurance is not out of any peculiar revelation . . ." The Dutch has: "En dienvolgens spruit deze verzekerdheid . . ." 5) The modifier "most abundantly" belongs not with "revealed" but with "for our comfort." Literally the original reads: "which in his word most abundantly unto our comfort he has revealed." 6) ". . .

from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience, and to perform good works" is in the original: "from an earnest and holy exercise of a good conscience and of good works." 7) "pledge or earnest" is in the original simply "earnest." 8) "And if the elect of God . . ." should be, "And if the elect of God in this world . . ."

We may well begin with the last statement of this article, a very warm and spiritually practical expression of the preciousness of the assurance of perseverance: "And if the elect of God in this world were deprived of this solid comfort, that they shall finally obtain the victory, and of this infallible earnest of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable."

This clearly shows that the entire dispute with the Arminians was not a mere cold, academic argument about doctrine, but that it concerned (and still concerns) the very faith and comfort of God's people. We ought always to keep this in mind. After all, when we are fighting the Arminian heresy, we are not merely concerned with the question as to who is right and who is wrong. False doctrine and its propagation is the attempt to deprive the people of God of their comfort, of their peace of soul, of their hope. That is why it is so extremely crucial to maintain the truth of the Word of God. And it is to this fact that the fathers call the attention of the Reformed believer in this statement. Many were being led astray. They did not see the practical seriousness of this error. And this statement is calculated to stir up the longing of the child of God for solid and infallible comfort and to open his eyes to the dreadful spiritual consequences of giving up the doctrine of perseverance and its assurance. The assurance that I shall forever remain a living member of Christ's Church is absolutely necessary for a happy Christian life. Without it I must always live in doubt and terror. As a child of God I have my hope and expectation entirely in another world, not at all in this world. In this world all I can expect is suffering and tribulation. My longing and expectation are entirely fixed on the world that is to come, the new and heavenly and glorious kingdom of Christ. And if now I am deprived of the certainty of perseverance, of the certainty that I shall surely at last obtain the victory and inherit eternal glory, I have nothing left but that suffering and tribulation. I have no expectation of the future glory; but neither do I have the false joy and pleasure of this present world. I have nothing. I am of all men most miserable. I would be far better off in such a case to adopt the slogan of the wicked, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Hence, let us beware that we do not allow ourselves to be deprived of this solid comfort of at last obtaining the victory and of this infallible pledge of eternal glory. Let us hold fast that which we have. And let us rejoice in the blessed heritage of God's sure and unfailing promises.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Question of Jurisdiction in 1953

It has been frequently alleged that in 1953 the Classis East of our Protestant Reformed Churches was guilty of the same violation of classical jurisdiction as the Christian Reformed Classis when in 1924, she deposed the Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Church. Charges of "*Classical Hierarchy*" and "*Popery*" have been voiced so vigorously by the leaders of the schism that many of the people have believed it. Even today there are some who claim that they are *doctrinally agreed* with the Protestant Reformed Churches but follow the schismatic group because they cannot countenance the *church-political evils* that have been perpetrated by the Classis in the case of Rev. De Wolf.

If these charges are true, they are not only serious blemishes upon our history as churches but they constitute gross sins for which our churches must repent before God and seek His forgiveness as well as the forgiveness of those against whom these evils were committed. If, however, these claims are spurious and the facts bear out that the charges of evil cannot be proved, these misguided souls sin grievously in continuing with their generations in the way of departure from the truth. For this they are themselves then responsible and they must seek forgiveness and in the way of repentance return to the way of the truth which they have forsaken.

It is the conviction of the undersigned that the latter of these alternatives is the case and we purpose in this article to briefly verify this with a few facts of the history.

To begin with, it must be remembered that there is one very fundamental difference between the case of 1924 and that of 1953. In 1924 the Classis deposed the entire Consistory, elders and deacons. That was certainly a hierarchical act. It was exercising church government from the top down and such illegal practice was in effect no deposition at all and, therefore, the Consistory, as the ruling body of the church, had the right to maintain itself and continue to function in spite of the action taken by the Classis. In 1953, however, it was not a question of deposing the Consistory but a matter in which one of the ministers of the congregation, together with some of the elders, was accused of malfeasance in office. Furthermore, it was not a matter in which Classis suspended or deposed but the Consistory did it with the help of the Classis in the legal way. There was no hierarchy at all and those that make this spurious charge do so without basis. In 1924 it was a case of the Classis exercising discipline and going beyond the bounds of the decisions of the Synod while in 1953 it was a case of the Consistory exercising discipline in accord with the advice of the Classis. That there is no parallel here is rather self-evident.

Let us briefly review the history. We will avoid the details by refraining from republishing countless documents which have a bearing on the issues involved because we are at present concerned exclusively with the matter of the jurisdiction of the Classis in the case.

It is well known that protests against the preaching and doctrine of Rev. De Wolf were brought to the Classis in April, 1953. Prior to this time these matters had been treated in the consistory for some two years. Of significance is it that these protests requested that the Consistory (and later then the Classis) "*seriously and prayerfully consider the matter and act accordingly.*" This can only mean, of course, that if the accused is found guilty, he must either confess his wrong and retract it or be suspended and deposed from his office. This was the question before the Classis since the Consistory, in treating the matter, had become deadlocked. They could arrive at no further decision in the matter. The Classis then, after much deliberation in which the accused was given every possible opportunity to defend himself, found Rev. De Wolf guilty of preaching heresy and advised the Consistory:

"a. to demand that the Rev. De Wolf make a public apology for having made the two statements in question.

"b. that the Consistory also publicly apologize for having supported the Rev. De Wolf with respect to the two statements in question."

And further:

"a. that in case the Rev. De Wolf should refuse to apologize, which our God graciously forbid, the Consistory proceed to suspend him from the office of the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, according to the pertinent articles of the D.K.O.

"b. that in case any elder or elders should refuse to submit to the proposed action as stipulated in (b) above, which God graciously forbid, such elder or elders be disciplined according to the articles of the D.K.O. pertaining thereto."

The Classis then appointed a delegation of three ministers and two elders to acquaint the Consistory with these decisions and advice. This, according to the *Church Order Commentary* (Monsma and Van Dellen) was and is proper as we have shown before.

When this committee, of which undersigned was a member, met with the Consistory, the Consistory adopted the advice of the Classis given above. To this decision there was recorded only one negative vote.

Now it ought to be and undoubtedly is plain to all when the Consistory adopted this advice of the Classis, the matter was settled. The Consistory might have conceivably refused this advice and appealed the decision of the Classis to the Synod. This, however, was not done and, in fact, there was not even an attempt made by any member of the Consistory to show that the advice of the Classis was not proper.

The adoption of the advice of the Classis left nothing more to be decided by the Consistory. All that remained was the execution of this advice. It was at this point only a question whether those found guilty would confess and acknowledge their wrong or whether they would have to be suspended and deposed from their offices. Time was given to determine this and when it became evident that no retraction was forthcoming, the Consistory proceeded to *execute its own decision* and on June 23, 1953, Rev. De Wolf was suspended and the supporting elders deposed from their offices. No one can rightly claim that this procedure was hierarchical or a departure from the orderly way of church polity.

At this point the Rev. De Wolf and his supporters made themselves guilty of another evil, the evil of *schism*. There was still one way . . . orderly and proper way . . . opened to them which they refused to follow. They might have (and should have) submitted to this disciplinary action. This, from their point of view, would have to be done under protest but then the way would have been opened for them to appeal their case to the Synod. However, as we said, they refused this orderly way and attempted to continue to function in their offices. Very clearly, therefore, they severed their relation with the Protestant Reformed Churches for they could not function in the offices in those churches again until their case had been heard by the Synod and only then if the Synod acquitted them and condemned the prior action of the Consistory and Classis.

The schism spread. In September of the same year, Classis West entered into the picture. We will refrain from entering into the question of whether or not Classis West had any right to treat the matters they did. Where Classis West erred grievously is in the fact that they refused to recognize the action of the sister Classis and the action of the Consistory in which they followed up the advice of the Classis. We do not say that Classis West was bound to *agree with that action* but they were bound to recognize it as *legal action which was settled and binding and which could be undone only by way of protest or appeal*. This they did not do. The Classis West should have seen the schismatic rebellion of Rev. De Wolf and his group and, if they were to meddle in the affair at all, told him to submit and appeal to the Synod. At the Synod Classis West also had representation and there is the proper place where they would then be called upon to judge his case. But they did not do this. They became impatient and jumpy in their evil determinations and ways. Instead they joined his schism and made it impossible for the case to ever be brought before the highest ecclesiastical gathering. Had the schismatics walked in the orderly way, the history would undoubtedly have had a different sequence.

Because the Classis West joined the schism, the element of that Classis that wanted to remain in fellowship with the Protestant Reformed Churches had no alternative other than

to withdraw themselves. This they did and although our churches, through this schism, have been numerically decimated, we continue to this day in the fellowship of the truth which we have learned to love dearly and for which we have been cast out of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. And we know that God is for us and have peace in and through all our struggles.

Meanwhile, it makes no difference what the courts of the land have decided and will yet decide as to the name *Protestant Reformed*! The whole church world knows that we (not they) represent the true principles and practices that are Protestant Reformed. For this there is abundant proof. Further, by this time, whether they will admit it or not, it is certainly evident that the schismatic group that left our churches in 1953 knows it! They know that they are not Protestant Reformed and have no intentions to be in the future. The leaders know it and a number of them are no longer hiding it. The people know it as is evident from the fact, admitted in public print, that many of them are hastening to seek greener pastures in the Christian Reformed and other churches.

Hence, I want to close this discussion of the question of Classical jurisdiction with two remarks directed especially to those who have followed the schismatic way and perchance may still read *The Standard Bearer*. Firstly, you are reminded of the fact that your allegations of church political error against us are not true. You have been misinformed, misled and you continue to be misguided away from the truth. We would urge you to investigate and you will find out for yourselves. Secondly, if you for your own sake and for the sake of your future generations and, above all, for God's sake, still have the desire to abide in the truth, we urge you to return to the fellowship of the *Protestant Reformed Churches*.

G.V.D.B.

OUR NEED OF DIVINE HELP

Lord, hear the right, regard my cry,
My prayer from lips sincere;
Send Thy approval from on high,
My righteousness make clear.
Thou in the night my heart hast tried,
Nor found it turned from Thee aside.

When I in righteousness at last
Thy glorious face shall see,
When all the weary night is past,
And I awake with Thee
To view the glories that abide,
Then, then I shall be satisfied.

Psalm 17:1, 4

ALL AROUND US

War And Peace.

There is considerable discussion these days in the newspapers and magazines both of a secular and religious nature about the question whether we will have war or peace. While on the one hand there is an almost universal opinion that we are heading for another world conflict that will have annihilating consequences, there is on the other hand a strong but apparently hopeless desire for peace. It is with a view to this situation that the April 13th issue of *Christianity Today* devotes almost all of its contents to this subject.

Perusing the pages of this periodical one finds the following topics discussed: The Peace Drive in the Churches; The Layman and his Faith — Peace; Can We Meet the Red Challenge? Meeting Communism in the Far East; The Search for Peace on Earth; The Biblical Vision of Peace; Reflections on Communist Atheism.

It is apparent from these titles that Communism is conceived of as the greatest threat to peace. And because Communism in its very nature is atheistic and anti-Christian, the question is posited: What can Christianity with its Christian nations, churches, and peoples do not only to combat this evil menace and negate its power, but also to effect and maintain the peace?

The main editorial under the title: The Peace Drive in the Churches, takes the National Council of Churches to task for its latest Cleveland pronouncement according to which it was decided to recommend that the United States recognize and the United Nations admit Red China. The editor points up that even the majority of the N.C.C.'s constituency is not in agreement with the latest pronouncement of that Church organization.

Dealing more specifically with the problem of war and peace, the editor gives his views in the following statements:

"In coping with problems of world order and peace, modern formulas of 'reconciliation' show the outlines of speculative theories of man and society, and betray their neglect of the biblical view of the Church and its sacred task in the world. Recent issues of *Christianity Today* have pinpointed the peril to the church of neglecting its basic commission to call out a new race of twice-born men, of relying on world systems (softened by religious idealism) for reconciliation and redemption, of pragmatic pursuit of social change. Corporate Protestantism stumbles into these unhappy lines of thought and action through its indifference to the great principles and precepts of revealed religion . . . The Christian religion, above all others, is on the side of peace. Its faith is fixed upon 'the Prince of Peace' who in turn has pronounced a special benediction upon the peacemakers. Repugnant to Christianity, however, and contradictory of it, is the 'peace at any price' philosophy that infects a self-

indulgent people too often, bent on immediate ends. The blood of the Cross is a reminder that peace, in Christian dimensions, carries its distinctive price. War is no Christian weapon for world conversion, nor is foreign aid. The world's predicament is moral and spiritual; this calls for moral and spiritual redemption."

Lt. General William K. Harrison (U.S. Army — retired) writes the following under the title: The Search for Peace on Earth.

"Christians should be definitely concerned with the peril the world faces in this day of war risks. Nuclear weapons, if used to their full extent, would have a devastating effect upon all mankind and civilization. With such a possibility, is it any wonder that Christians ask themselves what they can do to help prevent such a catastrophe and establish a basis for real peace among nations? Surely Christianity has the answer to this problem. But what is it, and how can it be put into effect?

"Specifically, our immediate threat is Soviet Russia. The United States and Russia are the chief military powers today, and in their mutual antagonism and arms race lies the potential of a world war, despite the fact that both peoples fear and would avoid such war. Regardless of the numerous economic and political elements that lead to conflict, war itself results from a decision on the part of the ruler of a state to launch his military forces against a nation which he considers his enemy. The latter has only two choices: to fight or to surrender. Unless the ruler on the aggressive side makes the decision for war, there is no war, except in cases where a subordinate military commander has precipitated action through panic or mistake. In the United States such a risk is slight because of the precautions that have been taken against the danger. Far more likely is the event that extreme difficulty of keeping a defensive force or nation on the alert may some day lead to a relaxation of watchfulness, thereby offering to Russia her opportunity for successful surprise attack.

"The danger of nuclear war results from the possibility that Soviet leaders will some day launch their armed forces either directly against the United States or against some object which the United States wishes to defend. To these Soviet rulers, war, when favorable to them, is a legitimate and necessary means of action.

"The means by which they have gained and maintained their own political positions and control over their own people reveal the nature of these men. They have proven to be ruthless criminals — murderers, thieves, traitors — in spite of the fact that they hold positions of prestige and great power. Krushchev survived Stalin's bloody purges only to participate himself in and profit by them. The social amenities and diplomatic phrases of these leaders have been merely a cloak over their real character. They have demonstrated their true disposition in past dealings with other nations, a fact that is known to all who read newspapers. The pages

of history are full of tyrants and conquerors. Soviet leaders are no different. Communism is the ideology or propaganda that motivates these men, and by it they justify their actions. Their actions, acceptable by Communist standards, have been violent, deceitful, and ruthless. Any American policy that views Khrushchev and his kind as other than the most treacherous of criminals is endangering not only the United States but the whole noncommunist world."

In answer to the question, What can be done to preserve peace? Gen. Harrison presents some of the ideas that have been advanced by men of authority; and having presented each in turn, he shows up the fallacy of them.

We mention only the ideas that have been advanced for the preservation of peace in order then to give Harrison's own answer to the question.

1. "That nuclear weapons have outmoded war."
2. "We should unilaterally reduce our armaments in order to demonstrate good will and both lessen Soviet suspicions toward us and reduce our own burdens."
3. "We should transfer our cold war to an economic and social competition which would include aid to backward nations."
4. "We by acquainting the masses of Russian people with our peaceful and friendly intentions would make them dissatisfied with their status and they in turn would compel their rulers to change their objectives and tactics."
5. We should "rely more on the United Nations for our security."

Harrison claims, and we believe correctly so, that all these "approaches to world peace are essentially pacifist." He concludes his remarks on these ideas by saying:

"It is to be noted that many of the pacifist ideas mentioned above appear in some form in the reports and recommendations of the Fifth World Order Study Conference held by the National Council of Churches in Cleveland in November, 1958, as reported in *Christianity Today*. That such ideas should be seriously advocated by leaders of this organization is incomprehensible. The best that can be said for these men is that they are incredibly naive. It is to be fervently hoped that pastors and laymen of the NCC who are able and willing to think independently will see the facts realistically, and will repudiate such disastrous proposals.

"Contrary to the foregoing pacifist proposals is the thought that we can gain peace only by a powerful military force constantly ready to retaliate with deadly effect. Any force of less strength than this is ineffective. But is not military power only a deterrent against Soviet attack? It possibly has the advantage of putting off war until the time domestic conditions in Russia cause a change in the kind of rulers there. This is faint and not very dependable hope. An armament race causes psychological and financial tensions which cannot endure indefinitely. Eventually explosion occurs. Were the strength of nuclear armaments to give hope for victory, such a victory would be of doubtful value."

Harrison closes his article under the sub-title: Christ The Hope of Peace.

"The fact of the matter is there never has been a human way of gaining and maintaining peace. If men who call themselves Christians would believe the plain language of the Bible, which is the sole basis of Christian faith, they would understand the reason for men's futility. It is sin, the sin of rebellion against God, the determination to live independently of him, and in enmity with their neighbor. Therefore, God has given them up to those moral evils which cause war among men (cf. Rom. 1:18-31). Men cannot undo what God has done. The Bible tells us clearly that our civilization will come to a disastrous end, involving, among other judgments, terrible wars, famines, disease, death, and destruction (cf. Matt. 24; Rev. 6-18). Our Christ-rejecting civilization is doomed (cf. II Thess. 1:7-9). The only hope for a peaceful world is in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any attempts to find other solutions by efforts of human will and action will be futile.

"What can Christians do in view of this analysis? First, we can surely use whatever influence we have to see that our country deals honestly and, as far as possible, peacefully with other nations. Second, we ought to warn people of the coming judgment of God which will fall inevitably on wicked humanity, including our United States. Third, we must spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of individuals from that final and eternal judgment of God, of which earthly sufferings and tribulations are only a vivid warning. Fourth, by God's grace we should live in a way that proves that we have conviction in our preaching. Finally, we may pray for peace in the hope that God will delay his judgment on it . . ."

Though we might say the things differently than Gen. Harrison has written them, there is nevertheless in his analysis, and that, too, coming from a retired general of the army, something remarkable and quite antithetical to the modern conception of the subject. What is so noteworthy is the fact that he has observed in the light of Scripture that war is always inevitable because of the sin and corruption of mankind and because of the judgment of God upon that sin and corruption.

How foolish then to think of world peace or to pray for it so long as this condition continues. According to Scripture, war has been with us almost from the dawn of history, and the history of the world will end in a final war. And in between these parentheses there is continual war and rumor of war. It is true what Harrison writes: "The only hope for a peaceful world is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." But then, it will not be this present evil world that lies under the power of sin, but the world of God's eternal love wherein righteousness shall dwell. In the meantime the Christian by the grace of God possesses in his heart the peace that surpasses all understanding. That's why we headed this article with the title: War And Peace, not, War Or Peace.

M.S.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

April 20, 1959

Rev. Harbach of Lynden has received and is considering the call to Redlands. During their vacancy he is serving as their moderator.

The Young People's Societies held their Spring Mass Meeting April 10th at Creston Church, with our Missionary, Rev. Lubbers, giving a talk on "Calvinism."

Rev. H. Hanko considered the question "Is It The Duty Of The Deacons To Look For The Poor?" at the Deacons' semi-annual Conference April 17.

The Hope Choral Society gave their Easter program April 5th. Under the capable direction of Mrs. John Lanning and accompanied by Miss Sybil Engelsma the choral group rendered a beautiful concert, an excellent vehicle to praise the name of our risen Lord. A talk by David Engelsma and singing by the Hope octette rounded off the program to the enjoyment of the audience, and all to the praise of God.

The Ladies' Aid Society of First Church was host to the Eastern Ladies' League Meeting held at First Church, April 16. All of the eastern churches were represented, and the ladies were easily identified by name cards on their lapels. Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, spoke on the topic, "Teaching Our Children To Pray." The speaker declared that prayer was a spiritual art which all children of God have, but the capability must be cultivated; that we must teach our children that prayer is the experience of conscious communion with God, and that we should pray for all things necessary. The Reverend further noted that we should also teach them that the proper attitude in prayer is marked by reverence, humility, sincerity and confidence; and, that praying mothers are an example to their children. The speaker concluded with the observation that prayer is necessary for the Christian because God gives His grace and Spirit to those who continually ask for it; and, that those who ask have experienced the need by virtue of God's gift, and that the fruit of such prayer is always peace.

In a recent Men's Society meeting at Holland an essay was given by Martin Casemier on, "My Attitude Towards Holding An Office In The Consistory."

The April *Beacon Lights* Hymnsing was held at Creston Church Sunday evening, April 19. Featured, were a girls' sextette from Adams St. School and Edward Ophoff, soloist. Mr. Charles Westra led the singing.

Hudsonville's Rev. Vos was down with the "flu" Sunday, April 12; Rev. C. Hanko occupied his pulpit in the morning, and Rev. Lanting was called in for the evening.

Hull's young people invited the congregation to a sing-spiration, March 29. An offering was taken to assist the young people with their conference expenses. Besides the group singing, a duet from Doon, a reading by Mrs. Broekhouse, and a male quartette assisted in making the program enjoyable.

Rev. Harbach has finished his series of sermons on the life of the prophet Elijah and is currently preaching a series on that of his successor, Elisha.

We note, in several bulletins, that the Western churches advertise the date of the coming of the church visitors, Revs. J. Heys and H. Veldman. This truly is an example that might be profitably followed by the Eastern churches.

Rev. H. Hoeksema again drew a capacity audience at a lecture given at South Holland, April 9. The topic of his speech was, "The Infallibility Of The Scriptures": a timely topic, indeed, when the church world is again raising questions regarding that truth.

Redlands is looking forward to the next three weeks when a classical appointment will be filled by the coming of Rev. Emanuel from Randolph. A vacant church, so far from the seminary, must often be satisfied with reading services; it's no wonder that they are eagerly awaiting Rev. Harbach's decision regarding their call.

Creston's Men's and Ladies' societies invited the Young People's society to be their guests at an evening meeting in April. It is the first time that we've ever noticed an arrangement such as this where the parents are hosts to the children of the congregation, but we predict that it won't be the last.

In the April 19th bulletin of First Church we find the paragraph, *Concerning Our Sick and Shut-ins* reporting the illnesses of twelve members of the congregation. At the end of the paragraph Rev. Hanko inserted the prayer, "May they realize ever more fully, 'It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.' Lam. 3:26."

This issue marks the close of the society season, so no more society news until next fall.

Do you agree with Solomon, ". . . that God hath made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions."

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of First Church held their April 16th meeting at the Children's Retreat. They conducted their regular Bible discussion in one of the rooms; after recess they were conducted on a tour of the entire building by one of the dedicated teachers of the Retreat. The offering received at this meeting was for the worthy cause of Christian Mercy represented by the Retreat.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

Held in Creston Church

April 1, 1959

Rev. M. Schipper, chairman of the January Classis led in the opening devotions. After Classis had been duly constituted, he was succeeded by the Rev. R. Veldman who acquitted himself well of his task.

All the churches of Classis East were fully represented by two delegates, and the work of Classis was carried out with dispatch and in the spirit of brotherly love.

After the routine business of the reading and adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting, and the reception of the reports of the Stated Clerk and Classical Committee, Classis treated the following matters:

1. The demand of the Archives of Classis East by the group that left us in the recent schism and represented by J. Blankespoor and A. Cammenga. This was given to a committee to formulate an answer, which answer was later presented to Classis and adopted.

2. The overture of Southeast Church to Synod re the time for the baptism of adopted children. After some debate, Classis decided to send this overture through to Synod with Classical approval.

3. The overture of First Church to Synod re the changing of Article 69 of the Church Order and the composition of certain hymns for use in our churches. This overture had been referred back to the Consistories for study at the January Classis. These Consistories reported their reactions to this Classis and on the basis of these reports Classis decided to send the overture of First Church through to Synod without our approval together with all the answers of the Consistories.

4. The overture of First Church to Synod re the proposal to send a letter to all those who left us in the recent split. Classis acted favorably on this overture and decided to send this on to Synod.

5. Voting for Church Visitors and two new members on the Classical Committee. The Revs. G. Vos and R. Veldman were chosen Church Visitors with Rev. C. Hanco as alternate for both. The terms of Revs. C. Hanco and R. Veldman having expired on the Classical Committee, the Revs. C. Hanco and A. Mulder were chosen to fill the vacancy.

The Rev. J. A. McCollam was appointed to thank the ladies of Creston for their splendid catering services.

The brethren T. Engelsma and B. Windemuller served as Finance Committee for this session of Classis.

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

Classis decided to meet next time on July 1 in the Southwest Prot. Ref. Church.

After the chairman had expressed his appreciation for the brotherly spirit evidenced and the cooperation given him in this session of Classis, and commending all our churches to the grace of God, the Rev. G. Vos closed this meeting with thanksgiving.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, Stated Clerk.