

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### REJECTED OF MEN

*"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.*

*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."*

As far as we know, there is not one prophet in the entire Old Testament who saw the suffering Christ as Isaiah saw Him.

I say: as far as we know. It is possible that Abraham knew more of Him than is written. There are indications. For one, he saw His day, according to Jesus' testimony. Also: after he offered up Isaac, it is said of him in Hebrews 11 "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; *from whence also he received him in a figure.*" That last clause surely means that Abraham knew that Christ was to rise from the dead. And so, also Abraham may have known much more about the suffering servant of Jehovah than is actually written in Scripture.

And then there is the greatest prophet of all, Moses. He saw the pattern of the heavenly things; and unto him was given revelation regarding the whole of the blood cultus. He may have known more about the suffering Christ than is revealed to us.

But as far as revealed truth is concerned, there is not one like Isaiah.

It seems as though he has stood in front of the cross and saw it all. Then he went home, and wrote his classic chapter 53.

And he knew also that his report of the suffering Christ would be unbelievable. Hence the introduction: Who hath believed our report?

Salvation through suffering and death.

Salvation through a Messiah who would be rejected of men, of all men.

\* \* \* \*

He saw the Christ of God stricken, smitten and afflicted. Stricken is the word for the dreaded disease of leprosy: the hateful disease!

Smitten of God!

That is to beat with a continual beating.

And: afflicted. That is: to be in a place that is altogether too narrow for us, so that we are pressed from all sides, and in all ways.

Hence, He is the Man of sorrows.

That is a man whose life is so sorrowful that this characteristic ruled His whole Personality. He was sorrow personified.

Also He was acquainted with grief. And that is terrible. It expresses close intimate association. It expresses that grief was the constant companion of Jesus. And if we let the light of other Scripture shine on this portion, then we hear a dreadful commentary. See Heb. 5:7, 8: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that he feared: though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

And also the Heidelberg Catechism emphasizes that Christ suffered His entire life on earth. Indeed His constant companion was grief.

\* \* \* \*

And what was the result?

He was despised.

What does that mean? It means that we decided that there was no worth in Him. Nay, that He was the very opposite of worthiness.

Man despises the offal, the garbage, the offscouring, the abominable.

Look at the dreadful stories in the four Gospels, and shudder.

There you read of this despising of Jesus of Nazareth.

He was denied by His beloved disciple Peter.

He was betrayed by the only disciple of whom we know with certainty that he was from the princely tribe of Judah.

He was an offense unto the totality of His followers. They all forsook Him and fled.

He was maltreated by everyone. The Gospels vie in showing that every class of men, even the passers-by, mocked and derided Him. He was spit upon, buffeted, set at nought, tortured, scourged.

Despised?

He received the most shameful sentence of death: He was to be crucified. There He hangs: between heaven and earth. Expressive of the despising of His fellow men. They meant to say: neither heaven nor earth desires Him.

Such a Christ is good riddance when killed and buried!

Oh yes, He was despised alright!

\* \* \* \*

We esteemed Him not.

Pardon, we did esteem Him.

To esteem is to weigh a person with and in the balances of worthiness.

But the result of our esteem was entirely negative: We esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God!

He was so bad that God had to smite and strike Him.

And therefore, our Christ was utterly rejected. Even His own disciples forsook Him.

He was finally alone: in utter desolation.

We hid as it were our faces from Him.

That is a graphic description. You do that when the object is so miserable and filthy that you are afraid that men will associate you with his worthlessness. Thus you treat the abominable.

And that actually occurred.

Attend to this: He is placed on an impossible duo: Barabbas and Jesus. The first is a robber, a rebel and murderer.

The other is our Jesus of Nazareth. He is that Holy Thing of which angels sang. He is the sweetest and the most lovely Thing God has ever shown to man.

And what did we do?

We hid our faces from Him.

There was not one vote for Jesus.

No, I do not think that Peter, John or James, or the other apostles voted for Barabbas. But they were silent. No one spoke for Him.

We all hid our faces. We were ashamed to be reckoned with Him. And so: "He was numbered with the transgressors!"

Oh, yes, we hid our faces alright!

And shall I tell you why we hate Jesus by nature?

Because He comes thus to us: a worm and no man, and says: Thus I am your salvation! I am taking your place.

\* \* \* \*

How must we explain all this?

Well, *explain* is a difficult word. Perhaps I should say: I will try to explain it. That's as far as I can go.

Attend to this:

We could bear with this Jesus if He were stricken for His own sin. We could also bear with Him if He were stricken for His own sin, but claimed to be innocent.

But this is utterly unbearable to us: He says throughout all His ministry: I am suffering your hell!

And that is the truth which Isaiah so long before the actual event saw and declared: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows!"

And that is a matter of imputation. First in the decree, and then in history.

The decree is first. It is from before the foundation of the world. There is a Scripture that says how this Jesus is the Lamb of God that is slain from the foundation of the world. As old as God is, so old is this imputation.

In the decree of God's eternal counsel He gave Jesus a present, and the present were you, my brother and sister!

But in history you became sinner and worthy of hell. And that was not only foreknown, but also determined, so that it might serve the goodpleasure of God. He must become glorious, and all other things must serve that purpose.

And so unto Him was imputed all your sin as guilt.

Surely!

Note that word. It emphasizes the eternal wonder of this marvellous substitution. It is the substitution of eternal lovingkindness.

And why?

1) That sin and guilt of the elect church might be paid.

2) That God's righteousness, holiness and truth might be satisfied. You see, we had stricken God in the face by our sin. We finally sit in the Temple of God and declare to all that we *are* God. And God is God. That heinous crime must be paid for. That virtuous God must be entirely satisfied. And the only satisfaction is death, eternal death. Behold your dying Christ! He is satisfying God!

3) That the host of God's people might be redeemed. You see, God saw you as you will eternally be in the new Paradise of God. Don't you know that you were and are engraved in the palms of God's hand? Around about the engraving of the face of His anointed Son? You must become conformed to the image of the Son. And the only way to such beauty is through the death of the Son of God.

4) That the basis of the New World may be laid. You see, Jesus did not just pay for your sins, and fulfill the law. Oh no, but because He is God He added an infinite worth to both the paying of your sin and the fulfilling of the law. And the result is that He does not merely set you in the first paradise, but He exalts the heavens and the earth and makes them new. We are now infinitely closer to God. Adam

could fall. You can never fall again. The tie binding you to God is Divine.

5) That the mystery of the love of God may be revealed. If you would have asked Adam: Adam, what do you know of the love of God, his answer would have been: all things around me and within me speak of the love of God. And that would be all. Now ask any of God's children, and their answer is: God loved me so much that He went to hell for me! Oh yes, the knowledge of the love of God is now excelling!

6) That God might be praised forever! Attend to II Cor. 5:18. There you read that "all things are of God!" And the reference is to the things Paul wrote about, namely, the reconciliation through Jesus Christ. God wanted to show His suffering Servant, and all things connected with Him, so that millions and millions might say unto all eternity: O God, how wondrous art Thou in Thy love.

Adore God, my brother! It is the only purpose of the whole universe and of all history! Amen. G.V.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 22, 1959, our dear parents,

MR. AND MRS. HENRY HELMHOLDT

expect to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to a loving Father Who has kept them for each other and for us. We also want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for their love and sacrifices on our behalf. God bless them in their remaining years.

Their Children,

Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Helmholtz

Mr. and Mrs. John Post

Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Alspaugh  
12 grandchildren

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to its fellow elder, Mr. John Docter, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. H. DOCTER

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Romans 8:37.

Rev. R. Veldman, President  
John Veltman, Clerk

#### IN MEMORIAM

The sympathy of their brethren and sisters in the Lord is extended to the family of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Kortering, and their children in the recent home-going of a beloved mother and grandmother,

MRS. MINNIE KORTERING

May the Lord grant His grace to ease sorrowing hearts in the knowledge of the blessed state of the righteous in glory: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." (I Thess. 5:9, 10.)

The Men's Society of Holland

The Ladies' Aid Society of Holland

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## EDITORIALS

### About The Three Points

We were discussing the passages from the Confessions, particularly from the Canons of Dordrecht on which the Synod of 1924 attempted to base the doctrine of the First Point.

It referred, for this purpose to Canons I, 5, which we have already discussed. But it also mentioned III, IV, 8, 9.

We will first of all quote III, IV, 8. It reads as follows:

"As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called should comply with the invitation. (This last clause is a corruption of the text. In the Latin original we read: *ut vocati ad se veniant*, i.e. that the called should come unto him. The Dutch translation has correctly: *dat de ge-roepen tot hem komen*.) He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life, and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him."

It strikes us again that the composers of this First Point confuse the so-called "common grace" with the general, saving grace as taught by the Arminians. For the article quoted above speaks about the preaching of the gospel. And to be sure, our fathers never thought of making that preaching of the gospel "common grace" still less "general grace." To teach this would have been a contradiction of all the rest of the Canons which emphatically teach that saving grace is particular and is only for the elect. It is true that they speak of an external calling through the preaching of the gospel, and this external call of the gospel comes to all to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel. But this external calling is by no means grace for all. On the contrary, they teach "that others who are called by the gospel, and obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for grace and conversions, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance," etc. Canons III, V, 10.

Here the Canons teach: 1. That not all receive grace even through the preaching of the gospel. There is no "common" or general grace in and through that preaching. 2. That this grace through the preaching of the gospel comes only from God and that it is only for the elect.

The same truth is expressed in Art. 11 of the same Canons: "But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades

the inmost recesses of the man" etc. Canons III, IV, 11.

From all this it ought to be very plain that the Canons do not and cannot teach that the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear it.

In III, IV, 8 to which the Synod of 1924 referred in support of the First Point especially three things are taught:

1. That the preaching of the gospel and its call are unfeigned. God does not "make believe" but is serious, when He calls men to repent and believe. Even though He would not give to any of those that hear the preaching of the gospel the grace of faith, He would still hold men responsible and the call to believe would still be unfeigned.

2. That it is acceptable to Him that those that are called should come unto Him. To refuse to come is, therefore, a grievous sin even though no man can come unto Christ unless the Father draw him and give unto him the true and saving faith.

3. That He seriously promises life and rest to as many that come to Him. The promise, therefore, is not general but particular; it is not for all that hear the call of the gospel externally, but only for those that believe.

But the question is: what grace do the reprobate wicked or unbelievers receive, who cannot spiritually hear the call of the gospel. The answer is: none whatsoever. The preaching of the gospel is not "common grace" according to this article of the Canons, but it is saving grace only for those that come and believe.

The same truth is taught in III, IV, 9 to which the synod of 1924 also refers in support of the First Point. There we read:

"It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ, offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel, and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the word, refuse to come, and be converted: the fault lies in themselves; some of whom when called, regardless of their danger, reject the word of life; others, though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression upon their heart; therefore, their joy, arising only from a temporary faith, soon vanishes, and they fall away; while others choke the seed of the word by perplexing care, and the pleasures of this world, and produce no fruit. — This our Saviour teaches in the parable of the sower."

It is difficult, indeed, to understand how the theory of "common grace" finds support in this article.

In general, the article simply teaches that, not the gospel, nor Christ, nor God, but the unbeliever himself is responsible for his rejection of the gospel. Man is a rational-moral being. God bestows even on the unbeliever various gifts of intellect, understanding, reason and will so that he can certainly understand the gospel when it is proclaimed unto him. Hence, when he rejects the gospel, he does so knowingly and willingly. He refuses to come to Christ, to repent and to believe. He prefers to continue to walk in his own sinful way, the way of rebellion against God. And we may add that he will

never and cannot will to do anything else, for he is dead in trespasses and sins, unless God by His Spirit implants into his heart a new life and the principle of regeneration and bestows upon him the gift of saving faith. Nevertheless, he is responsible for his rejection of the gospel.

But what grace, then, does the wicked unbeliever or reprobate receive through the preaching of the gospel? None whatsoever.

The only possible outcome or result is that his heart is hardened. And this surely cannot be called grace.

Grace is never common but always particular. It is freely bestowed on whomsoever God wills to bestow it, i.e., on the elect only. H.H.

### Evolution, Long Periods, or Days

On the fourth day God created sun, moon, and stars by the word of His power. The account of this we have in Gen. 1:14-19: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule by day, and the lesser light to rule by night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

In the narrative of creation as we discussed it thus far, there is nothing that is contrary to any reasonable interpretation of the origin of the universe, provided we believe in and start with God. For those that do not start with God, on the other hand, it is quite impossible to explain the origin of the world. They can never reach "the beginning" mentioned in Gen. 1:1. The difference between the believer and the unbelieving evolutionist is not that the latter offers a reasonable interpretation of the origin of the universe, while the former believes, contrary to all reason and experience, in nonsense and foolishness; but that the Christian proceeds from God and from the faith that He in infinite wisdom formed all things according to His sovereign will, while the latter alleges to proceed from nothing and attempts to show how all things developed from nothing, which is not only extremely unreasonable but also absolutely impossible.

It is reasonable, as far as the origin of the world is concerned, to start with the almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth; it is unreasonable and also impossible to start with nothing. It is reasonable to believe in the various creative acts performed by God in six successive days, limited by evening and morning, according to which God called into being all things and every separate creature; it is contrary to all reason and also in conflict with all reality and experience to maintain that the various creatures, however widely apart

they may be, evolved from one-another. It is reasonable to believe that God first called into being the raw material of the universe, the Chaos, that from that chaos He first separated the light by the word of His power; then separated from that chaos the firmament, the world-ether, in which all the heavenly bodies float and move, and caused the dry land to appear; that from it, by the word of His power, He separated the various plants each producing seed and fruit after its kind. But it is extremely unreasonable to maintain that all these separate creatures came into existence through a long process of development, and that, too, out of nothing. And thus it is quite reasonable to believe that the whole kosmos and all the various creatures came into existence immediately, the moment God spoke, in six successive days of twenty-four hours, while it is unreasonable to maintain that God spoke for millions and billions of years before the creatures came into existence.

It stands to reason that there are many things, also in the narrative of creation that we cannot fully understand. We can expect this in view of the infinitude of the divine and the finitude of the human mind. But there is nothing in the account of creation in Gen. 1 that cannot be conceived: all is in harmony with reality and full of wisdom.

On the fourth day God created the heavenly luminaries, sun, moon, and stars. The wisdom of the world objects that the account in Gen. 1 cannot be true. So-called scientists have many objections. They object that Gen. 1 makes the earth the center of the universe which cannot be true. They call attention to the fact that the creation narrative makes the distinction between day and night before the creation of the sun which is absurd. They object, too, because it puts the creation of the world of vegetation prior to the heavenly bodies, which is, according to them impossible. Besides the account in Gen. 1 presents the matter in such a way the innumerable large worlds are called into existence in one day while six entire days are devoted to our little earth, which is absurd.

What about these objections?

It is true that Gen. 1 presents the universe as geocentric, earth-centered. Well, I would say that this is true, not locally, but certainly as to its significance. For not only did God create the highest creature, man, on the earth, but He also sent His only begotten Son into our earthly world and into our flesh. And He is the Lord of our entire universe. In Him all things will ultimately be united. From this point of view, therefore, the universe is certainly geocentric.

As to the second objection, namely that of the priority of day and night before the heavenly luminaries were created, we answer that on the first day light was created and must have been concentrated somewhere so that night and day or, as the text has it, evening-morning, did follow each other before the sun was created. And as to the priority of the world of vegetation even before the sun was called into being, we answer that the world of plants thrived in the light which God had created on the first day. In regard to

the objection that all the heavenly bodies were created in one day while six days are devoted to the creation and formation of the earth, this is somewhat the same as the objection that is concerned with the fact that the earth is geocentric, but we wish to add that all material of the heavenly luminaries was created in the beginning. Besides, they had already been separated into definite bodies on the second day, when God created the firmament, and these different bodies became luminaries when, on the fourth day, God caused the light which He had created on the first day to be concentrated in these different bodies.

For the rest, we do not want to concentrate our attention on the different luminaries which God created on the fourth day. All the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, the planets, and all the stars were created on that day. Their purpose, according to the text is: "to divide the day from the light." Besides, they must be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. Then, too, the text has it that they rule the day and the night. Our purpose is to point out once more, that also the fourth day is not a long period but a day of twenty-four hours. And this the text proved abundantly. First by the fact *God said* and by that Word of God heavenly bodies came into being immediately. Then, too, by the emphasis placed upon the division of day and night in the entire text. And, finally, by the closing statement of the passage: "And the evening and the morning were the fourth day." H.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Southwest Prot. Ref. Church extends to two of its members its sympathy, to Mr. A. Talsma in the death of a son-in-law, and to Mr. R. Morrow in the death of a father-in-law. May they experience the assurance and comfort of Psalm 34:19.

Rev. M. Schipper, President  
Mr. R. Van Til, Secretary

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society "Eunice" of the Southwest Prot. Ref. Church extends to two of its members, Mrs. J. Piper and Mrs. R. Morrow, its sympathy in the death of a dear husband and a father:

#### MR. JACOB PIPER

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

I Peter 5:7

Rev. M. Schipper, President  
Mrs. B. Hafer, Secretary

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Southwest Prot. Ref. Church extends to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Lotterman their deepest sympathy in the death of

#### MR. JACOB PIPER

Mrs. Lotterman's father.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." II Cor. 12:9.

Rev. M. Schipper, President  
Mrs. J. Van Beek, Secretary

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER VI

#### *An Interlude*

#### Revelation 10:8-11

If we glance over the rest of the book and notice what things John must still prophesy concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings, we soon surmise why indeed he was in need of this special preparation. For it is not a pleasing message, it is not a message of peace and gradual development which he brings. But it is a message of judgment and battle and destruction and vengeance. He speaks of the fate of the holy city and of the temple and of the two witnesses that are killed in the city and taken to heaven on account of the testimony which they give. He speaks of an awful conflict between the woman that brings forth the manchild and the dragon that attempts to destroy the child but fails. He speaks of the beast that comes out of the sea and the beast of the earth and the terrible things that they do in the earth. He speaks of the development and power of Antichrist and his war upon the people of God, of tribulation and oppression for the sake of the cause of Christ and His kingdom. He makes mention of Babylon, the great harlot, describes her greatness among the nations of the world, but also pictures her final destruction. He pictures the effect of the outpouring of the seven vials of wrath and of the complete drying up of the great river, so that the nations rise for war against Zion. He speaks of the binding, but also of the loosening, of the devil and of all that follows. And only after all this has happened, and all these terrible things have been predicted, it pictures the heavenly Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, and the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell. In a word, the message which John the prophet must still bring is a tremendous, a terrible message. It is not a message that concerns but part of the world and of creation, but that is as wide in its significance as creation itself and that involves many peoples and nations and tongues, that involves with special mention kings, the great and powerful of the earth. It is, moreover, a message that is awful in its significance for all that do not really belong to the people of the kingdom, a message that does not speak of peace, but very definitely conveys the truth, "There is no peace for the wicked, saith my God." No peace till the end of the world, no peace as long as Satan and his kingdom of darkness still exist and wage war against the kingdom of the Lord may be expected.

It is a message of judgment and affliction and tribulation and vengeance, a message of persecution and sacrifice even



for the people of God, a message that will separate the spirits definitely. And only through all these things, awful and dark for the world, it finally appears as a message of joy for all that love the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. And of that universal, tremendous, awful, but also joyous message John must be witness, a living witness, together with all the ministers, and finally together with all the church of God. And therefore he must be prepared; and not only he, but the minister and the church of God must be prepared. And the way of sound and thorough preparation is indicated in the rest of the text.

What must John do with the book? He tells us that he heard the same voice from heaven which he heard before. It is the voice that had spoken to him when he heard the voice of the seven thunders and when he was about to write down what they spoke. It is therefore a voice that directs him in this entire scene of preparation. First it warns him not to write down what the seven thunders spoke. These seven thunders, as I surmised, spoke very plainly. But John cannot become prepared truly by simply writing down what they said. He must not merely be informed as to the truth of the future, but something else must take place. And therefore this directing voice he now hears again. And it instructs him to approach the angel that stands upon the sea and upon the earth and that holds the little book in his left hand and to ask for the book. And as John does so, and asks the angel to give him the book, the latter instructs him further as to what he must do with it. The book is open, and therefore can simply be read. But he must not read the book, but must do something else with it. The book is open, and it contains the revelation of the future no doubt. And therefore John might simply copy it and inform the church of its contents. But he must not copy it. No, he must do nothing less than take the book and eat it, swallow it, and thus make it part of himself.

Once more, in order to understand this scene and its significance we must bear in mind that here we have the symbolical signification of the preparation of John and every true witness of Christ in the world as a prophet. John must be a prophet. He must be a living witness of the truth of God. He must bear the truth of God into the world and speak of tremendous things in which the church and the whole world, in which nations and kings, are involved. And the message he must bring is not one that will be sweet to the taste of the world, but one of woe and judgment. Hence, the message that he must deliver will meet with hatred and opposition in the world. And, of course, the same will be true of the prophet that bears this testimony. The bearer of this woeful message must not expect that all will accept the message unconditionally or stand for its contents. On the contrary, it will be contradicted and opposed. It will be opposed by the wicked world and the power of the Antichrist, that persecutes the church and that hates the truth and will speak of "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. It will be opposed, however, also by the church as it exists in the

present dispensation. For many there are in that church that do not truly belong to Christ and His kingdom and that will hate and deny and oppose the message of tribulation and judgment. Also they will shout, "Peace, peace," though there is no peace and though there cannot possibly be peace. Nay, still stronger: it will sometimes be opposed by the true people of God, who do not always see and understand that in this world the church militant must expect tribulation and judgment in order that the kingdom may come. And therefore it requires spiritual courage, the courage of faith, to be a prophet of this message. For in spite of all the opposition, the prophet, the bearer of this truth, must insist: "Not a message of peace can I bring, but a message of war and trouble unto the end of the world." And in order that in spite of this opposition the prophet of this message may stand firm, he receives the command to take and eat the book of this prophecy.

We have a scene similar to this recorded in the book of Ezekiel, where the preparation of that prophet for his message is told us. In Ezekiel 2:8 to 3:3 we read: "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat the roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." From this passage it is plain: 1) That it speaks of Ezekiel's preparation as a prophet. He must first eat the roll and fill his bowels with it; then he must go and speak to the house of Israel. 2) That he also must not bring a pleasant message, but a message of woe and mourning and lamentation, and therefore of judgment upon the house of Israel. 3) That the house of Israel is a rebellious and stiffnecked people, so that he must expect opposition and persecution when he comes with the message of woe over them. And naturally this is a reason that the prophet may become discouraged and afraid. 4) That for that very reason he must eat the book and fill his bowels with it, so that the message may become part of his very system.

If in the light of this Old Testament passage we turn once more to the text we are discussing, all will be plain. The revelation of the future, the message which John must bring, may not remain outside of him, so that he indeed is acquainted with its contents but for the rest is not influenced by it. That would have been the case had he merely quoted what the seven thunders spoke. He would have understood what the future would be, but it would not have controlled him. That would also have been the case had he merely read the little book or copied it. Its contents would still have remained

outside of him and would not have influenced his heart and mind and entire life; but he would not have been a true prophet, a living witness, that would stand for the truth in the midst of the world and that would uphold its testimony in spite of opposition and suffering and tribulation. And then he would easily have been silenced by the world of sin and by the hatred against the truth. And therefore the truth must be thoroughly appropriated by the prophet. John must eat the book. He must digest it. He must fill his bowels with it. He must take it into his very system. It must become part of his flesh and blood, of his soul and spirit. It must transform him, change him, make a different man of him, and so strengthen him to bear the testimony which he must give in the midst of the world. Or to speak in terms of reality, John must assimilate the contents of this prophecy unto himself. He must understand it, labor with it, believe it, be convinced of its truth and also of the supreme significance of that truth. He must love it and embrace it. Nay, still stronger: the truth of this prophecy must take hold of him. He must first take it to himself and eat it, appropriate it by faith. And after he has thus assimilated the contents of the book, he must come under its power and influence, so that the truth of this prophecy so impresses and dominates him that he can never believe anything else, that he can never say anything else, that he must speak about it, and that he can never be silenced, but boldly testify of all that it reveals in opposition to the world of wickedness and in spite of all it might do to silence the testimony of the prophet. This is the meaning of the entire passage.

This is the meaning of the passage for John himself. However, this was not merely revealed for John, so that the passage would have no significance for us at the present time. On the contrary, in the broader sense of the word the church of Christ is the prophet, the living witness of the name of Christ and of His truth in the midst of the world. And in that broader sense, the passage undoubtedly contains a lesson for us all. It teaches us what we must do with the testimony of the Word of God in general, but especially with the testimony of the book of Revelation. We can study the book and listen to its interpretation from more than one point of view, and also from more than one motive. Perhaps we find some intellectual enjoyment in its interpretation. Perhaps we find our curiosity somewhat satisfied. Perhaps, however, we do not appropriate it at all. But all this is not sufficient, and that for the simple reason that the message of the book also demands a positive stand. This is always the case with the testimony of the Word of God. But it is such especially with respect to the book we are now discussing. The question is whether you believe all these things. When that book speaks of the development of the world of sin and iniquity, how it will fight to the last against Christ and His kingdom, the question is: do you actually take these things to be the truth? When the book speaks of the apostate church and pictures that it will ultimately have an alliance with Antichrist, the question is: do you believe that

it will be thus? When the book speaks of wars and judgments and tribulations, will you accept that through them all Christ brings His kingdom and that His kingdom will not and cannot come in any other way? If so, the book of this prophecy will determine your stand over against the world. You cannot understand and believe and love the truth of this book and at the same time cry along with the false philosophy of the world. And if the world continues to deny the truth and to trample under foot the blood of Christ and in spite of it maintains that the glorious kingdom of blessing and righteousness will come and dawn upon the world by gradual development, then you will oppose that world, condemn it uncompromisingly, because it stands against the Christless philosophy of the world and testifies of woe and mourning and lamentation. But then, you understand, it is not sufficient merely to listen to the sound of this book. Then you must eat it, appropriate it. It must become part of your entire system and control your life, so that you know of only one life, the life of the kingdom of God.

At first sight we would probably think that it was strange that this little book had such an effect upon John. The angel that gives him the book warns him that it will be sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly. And thus John actually experiences the effect of his eating of the book. This phenomenon is generally explained by the different parts of the contents of the book. True, thus interpreters have it, the little book speaks of woe and mourning and lamentation, of bitter things. But it also speaks of joy and peace and everlasting life, of the new heavens and the new earth, of the heavenly Jerusalem that cometh down to stay forever. In a word, the contents of the book are bitter, but also sweet. Thus John experiences it. The book tastes sweet to his mouth, as sweet as honey. But afterwards he realizes the bitter element; it is bitter in his belly. Yet this interpretation does not satisfy, for various reasons. If that was the truth, then John naturally would taste both the bitter and the sweet from the beginning. If the contents of the book are the cause of it all, then there is no reason to believe that he would taste only the sweet in his mouth and only the bitter in his belly; but then he would notice both elements from the very start. And if it is argued that it is very well possible that one follows the other, I should think that the bitter element would naturally come first. For not the heavenly Jerusalem and the kingdom of peace are first in the experience of the Christian, but the tribulations and judgments are first while the heavenly Jerusalem follows them.

And therefore it seems to us that a different explanation must be preferred. Now it is an obvious fact that the Word of God is more than once presented in Scripture as being sweet to the mouth of the believers. The psalmist sings of this in Ps. 119:103, when he says: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." And again, in Ps. 19:10 the ordinances of Jehovah are spoken of as "sweeter than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb."

H.H.



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Appointed to Stumble

*"And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."*

I PETER 2:8

We have received a question in response to our article of February 15 which appeared under the title "That Election Might Stand." We appreciate such response because it gives us an opportunity to learn of the reaction which our articles arouse as well as of the questions which they raise within the minds of the readers. The question to which we have reference we believe to be of sufficient importance to warrant separate consideration in this article.

The question singles out especially the last paragraph of the Feb. 15 article which we can quote in whole. "It is not surprising that the Arminian should put forth so much effort to try to find some other meaning for this text. (The text is Romans 9:10-13 which treats the election and reprobation of Jacob and Esau respectively.) But the ultimate reason for that also is that they 'stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.'" The question asked is, if we should meet such people as stumble at the truth of election as explained in the article, should we tell them that the reason for their stumbling is that God wants them to do so? The problem centers, therefore, around the proper implications and applications of I Peter 2:8.

The difficulty with this text is found mainly in its last phrase, "whereunto also they were appointed." A brief study of the text within its context will soon satisfy as to the proper meaning of the preceding elements in the text. Thus the "stone of stumbling" and the "rock of offense" refers to Jesus Christ as mentioned in verse 5. Those who stumble are those who reject Christ as, for example the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, who rejected Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah and brought Him to Pilate to be crucified. Our text broadens the thought out even more to include all those who stumble at the Word of Jesus Christ, the Gospel. The text refers not just to those who were living in Palestine at the time that Jesus dwelt on earth in the flesh and thus rejected Him as He stood before them in the flesh; it includes people from every age of time who have heard the gospel of Jesus and refused to believe it. These all are disobedient. Men at all times and in every place have a moral obligation to believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever they hear it. If they reject the Scriptures either in whole or in part they are disobedient and guilty before the just judgment of God. This all is rather easily gathered from the text. But when we come to the appointment unto this disobedience in the last phrase, we feel the need for further elucidation.

The Greek word which is translated "appointed" here has a basic meaning of "to set" or "to place." The word appears quite frequently in the New Testament but often with different shades of meaning so that in our English versions it is translated with entirely different words. To gain the full weight of meaning intended in the use of this word it is well to examine various places in Scripture where it appears. In a number of places it is translated by the same word as used in our text, the word "appoint." This translation appears in II Timothy 1:11 where Paul wrote, "I am *appointed* a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." It is found also in Hebrews 1:2, "(God) hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath *appointed* heir of all things." In these texts the idea of our English word "appoint," to decree or prescribe a state or position to a person, is quite evidently on the foreground. Yet further study reveals that the translation with "appoint" does not do full justice to the real meaning of the original word. Another facet of its full meaning comes to the fore when we notice several other passages in which the word is translated "set." So Acts 13:47 reads, "I have *set* thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." This implies more than mere appointment; it includes the idea of placement and qualification. This same idea is found in I Cor. 12:28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets . . ." In places the translation is made with the word "make." Frequently it is used in the phrase "I *make* thine enemies thy footstool." It is used in Romans 4:17 with reference to Abraham, "I have *made* thee a father of many nations." Gathering these various thoughts together we gain somewhat the full meaning of the word we are considering. It means not only "to appoint" but also "to set in position" and "to make or to bring to final fulfillment."

When we apply this meaning to our text, we learn what is meant that some are appointed unto disobedience to the Word of God. It means that God has decreed and determined this disobedience. It means that God places certain people in the position where they should stumble at the Word of Jesus Christ. It means that God brings it to pass that they should do so.

This is not a popular doctrine. There are, in fact, very few that are willing to talk in these terms. Yet, this doctrine follows directly from the truth of the sovereignty of God which so many claim to believe. According to His sovereignty God has ordained in His eternal counsel all things which come to pass in time. In His providence He provides that this counsel may become realized. Nothing escapes the almighty power of His rule.

Furthermore, this is a current teaching in Scripture, by which we mean, it is not unique to this text but is found frequently, forming a current of thought throughout the Word of God. We can do little more at this point than quote a few instances in which this same thought occurs. We have seen that the first reference of Peter in this chapter was to

the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. Concerning that we read in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Much the same is expressed in Acts 4:27, 28, "For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." In Ezekiel 14:9 we read, "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet." Similar are the frequent statements in Exodus that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh in reference to which Romans 9:18 concludes, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Besides these there are many others, such as II Chron. 18:21, Luke 22:22, Jude 4, II Thess. 2:11, Prov. 16:4, and others, which we do not have space to quote.

Having then concluded that God has determined and provided that there should be people that stumble at His Word, the question next arises whether it is proper to say that God wants these people so to stumble, or, in other words, does God desire such people to live in disobedience? In answering this question we must be very careful to distinguish clearly what we mean by God's "want" or "desire."

If we mean to ask by this whether God desires or finds pleasure in the existence of sin and sinful people as such, the answer must be no. God is not a being that rejoices in the existence of sin. For example, we could not conceive of the possibility that God might desire to bring forth a world in which there would be no Christ, no salvation, and no goodness whatsoever. God does not find pleasure merely in the fact that there are wicked that perish.

Nonetheless, there is a sense in which we can properly say that God desires that there should be sin. If it were not so, God would never have created a world that could fall into sin. In this sense God desires the existence of sin in the world, not as an end in itself, not as something which affords Him pleasure in itself, but as a means to the accomplishment of that which does afford Him pleasure. God has determined that there should be sin in the world because as a means in His hand He uses it to the accomplishment of the salvation of His people and the glory of His own Name. So we read in Rom. 9:22, 23, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." So to Israel God said in Isaiah 43:3, 4, "For I am the Lord thy God the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Also in Rom. 9:17, "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up,

that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

We might illustrate this point with the example of a farmer. A farmer may not derive a special joy from the hot and difficult work of preparing, seeding, and keeping his field. Nevertheless, he does desire to do this work, not because he finds pleasure in it as such, but because he anticipates through the means of this work the pleasure of the harvest which is to come. So God determines the deeds of the wicked not as ends in themselves but as means to the glory of His Name through the salvation of His people.

Should we, therefore, meet such persons as stumble at the Word of God, it would not be improper to tell them that God has determined their sin. It is after all a truth taught in Scripture of which we need not be ashamed. Nonetheless, in doing so we should be careful not to leave the impression that we teach a God who finds pleasure in the existence of sin. God does not desire sin in the world as an end in itself; but He has determined that it should be there as a means to an end, as a means to the salvation of His people and the glory of His own Name. Furthermore, we should assure them that, insofar as they refuse to receive any of the clear teachings of Scripture, their lives are not pleasing to God. If they desire to live Christian lives pleasing to God, they should repent from their refusal to receive that which He has revealed.

But let us bear in mind that this is not a point of doctrine which is easy to understand. In many senses it goes beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Therefore, when we present it we should be careful to do so clearly, intelligibly, and above all with proper humility. In so doing we may hope that our testimony may be used to bring some of God's people to a greater understanding of revealed truth. It is the sad lesson of both Scripture and experience, however, that there are many who profess to be Christians, and even Reformed Christians, who will not receive these doctrines which God has revealed. They will repeatedly retort that, if God controls the ways of sin, He has no right to be displeased with the sinner. They echo the accusation which was brought to Paul, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" Rom. 9:19. Neither can we improve on the inspired answer which the apostle provides, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. 9:20.

B.W.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Barney Haak and family in the loss of her father,

MR. JACOB PIPER

May our God, who is gracious, comfort those who mourn.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, President  
Mrs. P. S. Poortinga, Secretary

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### XIV.

(Matthew 25:31-46)

##### a.

This passage in Matthew 25:31-46 is not simply a *last* section in Jesus' eschatological discourse; it is really the consummation of his discourse, giving the final answer to the question of his disciples concerning the time of his Parousia. The Lord Jesus, when he utters these words, is on the mount of Olives. Yet two days and he will hang upon the accursed tree. However the Son of man must suffer all these things and thus enter into his glory (Luke 24:26). For the joy of this glory which is set before him he endures the Cross and despises the shame and is set down on the right hand of the majesty on high (Heb. 12:2).

In this passage the Lord lets the light of the prophetic word shine more and more unto the perfect day. And we do well to give heed unto it as unto a light shining in a dark place—until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.

When we pay rather close attention to this passage we notice that Jesus is really not introducing a new subject here, but rather is bringing to its consummation the subject he had touched upon and further elucidated in Matthew 24:42 through Matthew 25:30. Had the Lord not touched upon the judgment of the righteous and of evil men in the Parables of the "Faithful and Prudent Servant" in Matthew 24:45-51? And, again, had the Lord not portrayed the need of faithfulness and watchfulness in the Parable of the "Ten Virgins" in Matthew 25:1-13? And was this not against the backdrop of the coming of the Lord to receive his church in glory and to cast out those whom he "never knew"? And, finally, had the Lord not portrayed the need of being watchful unto prayer and diligent in "few things" in order that we may be set in the day of judgment over much in the Kingdom? Such was the teaching in the parable of the "Talents," wasn't it?

We noticed the "warning" note in this all. It is an exhortation and inducement unto faithfulness in the righteous. And, let it not be forgotten, this warning "pertains" to the wicked also, and that, too, in the church! It will be brought into reckoning in that day. For he that has known the way and has not walked it shall be beaten with many stripes! (Luke 12:47). However, these evil are *promised* nothing. They are assured that as long as they walk in sin they shall not inherit the Kingdom prepared for the blessed of the Father. The promise is to the faithful now and in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Since this passage too is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, in order that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work, let us proceed with our inquiry into its meaning.

The passage here in Matthew 25:31-46 is rather lengthy. We shall quote it in part. We kindly request the attentive reader to read the passage in his own Bible. We quote: "*But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats . . . 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 . . . Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels . . .*"

What a scene the Lord here foretells!

"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory"!

It will be the realization of what the God of heaven showed to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, when he had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. It is the scene of the Throne of God in the midst of world-history, all the "nations of the world."

Who is this Son of Man? Why does he sit upon the Throne to judge? And why is his Throne called a "throne of glory"?

Let us quote Daniel 7:9, 10. There we read: "I beheld till the thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: and his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: and the judgment was set and the books were opened." It is evident that this is the same Throne as seen by John in the book of Revelation, Chapter 4.

But notice further the place that the Son of man has in Daniel's vision upon his head. "And I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto the son of man, and he came even unto the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," Daniel 7:13, 14.

When Jesus speaks to Nicodemus, who came to him by night, he tells this teacher in Israel, the heavenly things, that is, the heavenly and eternal background and plan of salvation. This is the great love of God. And this great love is

such that the Son of Man must be lifted up on high in the deep way of the Cross, death, resurrection and ascension at God's right hand, Lord over all (John 3:14, 15). For do we not read in John 12:31, 32: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (*out* of the earth) will draw all men unto myself. But this he said signifying what manner of death he should die."

From the foregoing we may learn the following concerning the Son of Man:

1. That He is really the Son of God, who is the true God and real and righteous man in one person. He is very God of God. I John 5:20.

2. That He is the Mediator of God and man, who will be perfected through suffering. He must suffer all the weight of the wrath of God against the sins of the "whole human race," and thus be exalted on high. Thus He is "brought to the ancient of days" according to Daniel 7:13.

3. His being lifted up does not merely refer to his being lifted on the Cross but implies his exaltation at God's right hand through death, the resurrection and ascension.

As such a Son of Man, exalted in the deep way of the sufferings of the inexpressible anguish of hell, has his *own peculiar glory*. In Matthew 25:31 we read: "But when the Son of man *shall come in his glory* . . . ! What is this glory? It is quite evident from Daniel 7:14 that the glory is, as to its content and nature, nothing else but the "dominion given him." The *glory* of the Son of Man that He had all "authority" in heaven and on earth given to him (Matt. 28:18). It should not be overlooked that this glory is not the glory which the Son has by virtue of His Godhead as such, but rather the glory which is his by virtue of being the Son of God, the person of the Son, in our flesh. The man, Christ Jesus, is "crowned with glory and honor"! (Hebrews 2:9). Wherefore we read that he is thus crowned with glory and honor "because of the suffering of death"! And, again, we read: "though he was the Son, yet learned [he] obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

And, truly, of this "glory" Jesus is very conscious during all his suffering. It is the subject in the temptation by the Devil in the wilderness. Is not the final temptation of Satan couched in the following language: "To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it"? (Luke 4:6). Was not the *issue* which way to the glory? And is not glory also here in the mouth of Satan to have "authority" over all things! And does this not emphasize for us the tremendous urgency in Christ's soul, who "for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross and despised the shame, and thus set down on the right hand of the majesty on high"? (Heb. 21:2).

Here is the glory of him "who is (in his human nature) the very effulgence of God's glory, the expressed image of his being"!

And is this not the theme of the song of the angels in Revelation 5:11, 12, where we read: "And I saw and heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a great voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Here, too, the "glory" consists evidently in "power, riches and wisdom." Yet, the "key-note" of this glory is "power"! It is the great "ability" of the Son in our human nature that is the theme of the song of the angels. And, let it not be overlooked, that these angels are singing the praises of their Lord. See Colossians 2:9, 10, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power." The latter "principality and power" refers, no doubt, to the angel-world! Confer Colossians 1:16.

In the light of all this teaching of Holy Writ we may once more say: what a scene that will be when the Son of Man comes in his glory! A glory which Satan could not give him. But it is a glory of which Jesus speaks in the sacerdotal (high-priestly) prayer in John 17:1, 2, where we read: "These things spake Jesus: and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life." And, again, in idem, verse 5, we read: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Or, again, we read in the same chapter in verse 10: "and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them." And, finally, not to forget the beautiful passage in verse 24, "Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world."

From this all it is abundantly evident that this *glory* of the Son of Man is:

1. It is the glory which he has as the Person of the Son, truly God, in his human nature. The man, Christ Jesus, is glorified.

2. It is a glory which consists in the exhibition of power, might, dominion which the Father gives him over all things.

3. It is because of this glory that Christ suffered many things. He is perfected through suffering that many sons may be brought to this glory. It is the ever repeated theme and refrain of the High-Priestly prayer in John 17.

4. It will be the exhibition of the "throne of glory" in the day of judgment, when God shall judge the world through one man, Christ Jesus.

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Provoking One Another

(2)

To provoke, in the sense in which we are using the term at this time, is to incite, to stir up and spur on to certain activity. And it is a thing which the Scriptures demand of us. We are not looking at it now as something to be condemned but as something that ought to be practiced. Then too, it is being viewed as that which is possible only among the children of God. Believers can provoke one another and an unbeliever can never be provoked by a believer to the activity with which we are now dealing.

That activity is presented by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews as good works and love. That is indeed a broad field, and we can comprehend under it our whole life inwardly and outwardly, physically and spiritually. Quite generally good works are considered to be nothing more than works of charity, works whereby man is befriended. That these works are good is not to be denied. However that does not mean that every work whereby a man is befriended and helped is in itself a good work. Solomon says in Proverbs 12:10, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." A thing is good or evil according to God's opinion of it in its deepest motive. That which looks so good to the eye and which would surely be branded as a good work by us may well be the very deed for which God punishes everlastingly in hell. When Judas protested the spending of a goodly sum of money for the costly ointment wherewith Mary anointed Jesus' feet, the disciples were greatly inclined to agree with Judas and to consider these words of Judas as evincing a heart of tender compassion for the poor. It looked good to them, so much so that when Jesus announces at the table that one will betray Him, no one thinks that this will possibly be Judas. All readily conceded the best place at the table to John, whom they also knew as the disciple that Jesus loved. But they also agreed that the place of honor on His left side should be for Judas to occupy. And in full confidence of his integrity, they let him carry the bag. He was their trusted treasurer. His works were good in their eyes; and they trusted him with the good work of caring for the poor. But Jesus read the heart and rebuked him. Indeed, his tender mercies were cruel. Or again, if you will, a parade of great pomp and majesty is traveling down the road. Thirty thousand soldiers and the king himself are in the group. A new cart driven by a yoke of oxen and the ark of the covenant are on their way to Jerusalem. The oxen stumble. The ark begins to shake on that cart and appears liable to fall off the cart. A young man walking nearby quickly reaches out to steady that ark. But he falls down in sudden death, smitten by the hand of God with a swift and terrible blow.

Even that king, who is none other than David, the man after God's heart, is perplexed. He was afraid of the Lord that day and said, "How shall the ark of the Lord come unto me?" II Samuel 6:9. That deed looked differently as seen through the holy eyes of God, Who sees into the heart, and through the eyes of man who judges only by the external deed. God never smites and punishes for a good deed. When He punishes, you may be sure it is for sin. And the Scriptures teach us that many shall be told to depart from the presence of God and shall be cast into weeping and gnashing of teeth even though they shall claim to have done this and that in the Lord's name, Matthew 7:21-23.

In fact that first element of the two explains that good works are only those that are done in love to God. Thus we find it also in the Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 91. We quote it, "But what are good works? Only those which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or institutions of men." If a man does not consciously and willingly perform a deed for the glory of God, it is not a good work. God will not consider it to be such; and therefore it is not a good work. As we said, a thing is good or evil according to God's opinion of it in its deepest motive. Those founded on man's imagination and man's institutions are wicked in spite of man's opinion and the judgment of the natural eye.

Now we can and must provoke one another to these works, which are good because they are deeds of love to God, by means of speech. We are to speak to one another. Of course our walk should be such that it does not deny or militate against our words. But the way to stir up, to incite one as to doing or feeling is through words. This is plainly the meaning of that passage wherein we find literally the calling to provoke one another unto love and to good works. We will quote it fully, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching," Hebrews 10:24, 25. You may note that in explanation of this provoking the author commands that we exhort one another. And exhorting is done by means of words. The word "exhort" literally means to call to one, to stand near, alongside and beside one to call to him and thereby either encourage and comfort or instruct. The idea here plainly is that of speaking, using words.

That word which we use is, of course, the Word of God. All other provoking is not only to be condemned but will fail to produce love and good works. Remember that we wrote last time that the root meaning of the word that is translated "provoke" is "to sharpen, to make sharp." Only the word of God can do that to His people. It is the new man in Christ who can be stirred up to love and to good works. He is spiritually alive; and the old man is spiritually dead. And it is Christ Who is revealed in that Word and

Who incites and stirs up His people unto love and to good works. Recall that beautiful answer of the Heidelberg Catechism to the question, "What is thy only comfort in life and in death?" The answer is, "That I with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; Who . . . makes me sincerely willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him." Christ is the one who stirs us up to love and to good works. Therefore only as we speak the Word wherein He is revealed to us can we fulfill our calling to provoke one another to love and to good works. By man's word, by philosophy, by false religions and heresies we may induce and persuade men to love the lie, to love self and the flesh, to do what men call good; but we will in no wise incite any to love to God and to works that are good in His sight by anything less than His Word.

For that reason also we who are being provoked must be careful of our reaction and attitude to this Word of God which comes to us from the mouths of others who seek to provoke us unto good works and to love. It is not at all difficult for us to resent any speech of a fellow citizen of the kingdom of heaven when he seeks to provoke us to love and to good works. Let that be an individual in the congregation, we will easily brand him as our enemy and avoid him. That must have been the case also among the Hebrews who are exhorted in the passage wherein we find this expression, "provoke one another unto love and to good works," for the author quickly adds, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." O, we do that so easily. We shun; we avoid, we steer clear of those who have spoken a word to us whereby they have sought to turn us from our evil way and to point us in the right direction, seeking by the use of the Word of God to excite in us a walk in love and in good works. Or maybe, instead of receiving the word and being appreciative of the exhortation, we dismiss it from our minds in order to be ready and "under full steam" to turn the tables and tell this one a few things about his walk of life. We, too, quote the Scriptures and show that we have been considering the life of the other. Only our intention is not to stir up and incite unto love and to good works but to get revenge, to defend ourselves in our wickedness and to turn the attention off our sins and on to those of the one who sought to spur us on to a more godly walk. Such are the ways of our flesh. And then we are not simply doing this brother a gross injustice, we are also rebelling against the Christ Who is revealed in that Word that has been presented to us in the exhortation to walk in love and in good works.

How true is this not when we consider that area of our spiritual life wherein the offices in Christ's Church are involved! Let a committee be sent from the consistory to provoke one whose way has been that of despising the means of grace, to more faithful church attendance. Let it be because of any other evil work which manifests a lack of love

to God and enmity against Him and His law. All too often such a visit is resented. And the work which was meant to serve the purpose of provoking unto love and to good works reveals instead a rebellious attitude over against God. No, such a visit does not provoke to hatred and rebellion. That hatred and rebellion were already there. Forth from them sprang this action for which it became necessary to send a committee with the express desire of inciting, stirring up to love and to good works.

The same is true in the preaching of the Word. Often what is said with the express purpose of provoking to good works and to love is the occasion for the one already walking in sin to rebel against that Word, to despise and hate the one who has proclaimed it and to consider him to be an enemy. It will become manifest, perhaps, in this that he will no longer assemble with the saints. Either he will stay away from church entirely or he will seek affiliation with a church where there is no interest in provoking to love and to good works and where his sin is tolerated.

Such things ought not to be.

Not only is it so that one who seeks to provoke you unto love and to good works is doing his duty before God and is fully aware of the warning of God in Ezekiel that "if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand"; but he is indeed walking as your friend. Do not treat him as an enemy. You do yourself tremendous harm and also all those whom you, by your words, provoke unto evil works of hatred towards God, when they, too, are led to deem the one who seeks to stir them up as their enemy.

Fear God and keep His commandments; and welcome the act of love performed by those who seek to provoke you unto love and to good works. And be thankful before God for them.

Do so in His fear.

J.A.H.

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### Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet Wednesday, April 1, 1959, at 9 a. m. in the Creston Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Consistories will please take note!

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

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### Announcement

Attention, all office bearers, present and former. Office bearers' conference to be held March 31 at Creston Prot. Ref. Church. Topic, "Where did the Custom Originate that the Consistory Meet with the Minister before Services and Sit Separately and should it be Continued?" Speaker: The Rev. M. Schipper. Let's all attend.

Ted Engelsma, Secretary



## 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)

"They ascribe divine perfections and render divine honours to a creature, and therein consists the essence of idolatry. In like manner Romanists teach that *latreia*, the worship due to God alone, is to be rendered to the host, or consecrated wafer. This worship, of course, is not rendered to the wafer as such, any more than the worship of Christians was rendered to the body and blood of Christ, when He was here on earth. But Romanists worship the host on the assumption that it is the body of Christ, with which his soul and divinity are inseparably connected. If their doctrine of transubstantiation be false; if the host be no more the body of Christ than any other piece of bread; if his soul and divinity be no more present in it than in other bread, then they must admit that the worship of the host is as pure and simply idolatry as the world has ever seen. As all Protestants believe the doctrine of transubstantiation to be utterly unscriptural and false, they are unanimous in pronouncing the worship of the consecrated elements to be idolatry."—end of quote from Hodge.

#### *An analysis of Rome's doctrine of Transubstantiation.*

Rome's arguments in support of its doctrine of Transubstantiation are derived partly from the Word of God and mainly from Tradition. One of these Scriptural passages to which appeal is made is John 6:48-65. In this familiar passage the Saviour declares of Himself that He is the Bread of Life. He continues to set forth that He is the Living Bread that came down from heaven, that if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and that the bread that He will give is His flesh. And in the verses 53-56 we read: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." In connection with this discourse of the Saviour a certain Roman Catholic Cardinal, Gousset, lays down two propositions: first, that it is to be understood of the Lord's Supper; and secondly, that the eating of which it speaks is oral, by the mouth, and not merely spiritual by faith. If this be true, then it follows that our Lord here is speaking of a literal eating of His flesh, and therefore that His flesh must be eaten in the literal sense of the word at

the Lord's Supper. However, it is surely evident that this argument cannot stand. In the first place, it is surely evident from the words of John 6:48-65 that the eating and drinking of Jesus' flesh and blood whereof the Saviour speaks is essential and vital to our salvation. Except we eat this flesh and drink this blood there is no life in us. And, whoso eateth this flesh and drinketh this blood has eternal life. However, that a participation in this sacrament is absolutely essential unto salvation Rome, we understand, explicitly denies. Romanists teach that spiritual life is as necessary to an experience of the benefits of this sacrament as natural life is to the body's being nourished by food. Moreover, they further teach that baptism, which precedes the eucharist, conveys all the saving benefits of Christ's redemption. Hence, they cannot make the eucharist essential. In addition to this, does not Jesus speak in John 6 of His "flesh" and "blood"? And do we not read in the Scriptures that flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? In connection with this, if we are to understand the words of the Saviour in the literal sense of the word, do not the words "flesh" and "blood" refer to His body as He stood before the Galilean multitude? And is it not exactly this literal and materialistic conception of Jesus' flesh and blood that was entertained by His Galilean listeners, as expressed in verse 52: "The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?" This is exactly the opinion that was entertained by the Jews, and certainly was not meant by the Christ. Finally, do not the Scriptures abundantly testify that "whosoever believeth in the Christ hath eternal life," and that therefore this believing is the same as the eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood? In other words, this eating and drinking of Jesus' flesh and blood must be understood in the spiritual sense of the word.

Another Scriptural argument of Rome is derived from the well-known passage of the Word of God: "This is My body." When the Saviour speaks these words at the time of the last supper in the upper room immediately before His death upon the cross, He not only changed the bread and wine into His body and blood at that time, but He also appointed at that time His disciples to be priests and laid into the words which He spoke a power which could cause the change of the substances of bread and wine. The eucharist as celebrated by Rome, is not only a sacrament, but it is in the first place a sacrifice to which we will presently call attention. Whereas Christ's body and blood are not to be separated from His human nature and His human nature cannot be separated from His Godhead, the entire Christ is present in each element and also fully present in each particle of the elements. However, it must surely be evident that Rome's appeal to the words: "This is My body," is completely in error. It must be evident that when the Saviour declares: "This is My body," He is referring to the bread He has taken into His hand. The words: "My body," certainly refer to His own body which He has assumed from the virgin, Mary, and which He would presently sacrifice

upon the cross. Secondly, let us presuppose that, as according to Rome, the words: "This is My body," refer to Jesus' own flesh and blood which, then, are hidden, we understand, in the bread and wine which merely have the form and taste and color, etc. of bread and wine. Then it must also be true that the bread and wine had already been changed into Jesus' flesh and blood before the Lord spoke the words: This is My body. Jesus does not say: Become My body but: This is My body. Hence, these elements had already been changed into Jesus' own flesh and body when He spoke the words: This is My body. Hence, the words as spoken by Jesus did not effect the change at all. To this may be added other arguments in refutation of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation and Rome's appeal to the words: "This is My body," to which we may return when we discuss the period of the Reformation. We may conclude with the remark that if Jesus' words: "This is My body," must be understood in that literal and natural sense of the word, why not also explain expressions such as, "I am the door," in that same literal and natural sense of the word?

Rome, however, in attempting to prove its doctrine of Transubstantiation, appeals mainly to Tradition. Rome contends that there are many doctrines which Christ and His Apostles taught, which are either not revealed at all, or but very imperfectly in Scripture, and which are to be received on the authority of Tradition. On that authority they rely for their support of all their peculiar doctrines. This we reject. Whatever doctrine is not taught in the Word of God can never be an object of our faith. And, as far as tradition is concerned, that which has been handed down and taught throughout the ages is valid only when it is in harmony with the will of the Holy Spirit and as taught in the Word of God. The history of the development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation can be traced. And it can also be shown that Rome, in its celebration of the Lord's Supper, has departed from the clear injunction of Christ Himself, as in its doctrine of Concomitance, the withholding of the cup from the laity. Rome admits that this is in conflict with the original institution of the Lord's Supper and the practices in the early New Testament Church. Rome, however, does not hesitate, if need be, to ascribe all authority to tradition and elevate it, if need be, above the Word of the Lord itself.

This doctrine of Transubstantiation is absurd and impossible. It was invented, as the late Dr. H. Bavinck suggests in his Dogmatics, to maintain Rome's priestly hierarchy and give undue prominence to that office. We can easily understand that it is pleasing to the flesh to have as much power as must be present in the priestly office when, through his intercession, the bread and wine are actually changed into the body and blood of the Lord. This implies, we understand, that the efficacy of the sacrament, and salvation also, are absolutely dependent upon the priest. And when once this power has been given to this office, to men, it is so extremely difficult to divest them of this power. When office-bearers in the Church have been endowed with great power and have

become an absolutely necessary hierarchy, we can rest assured that they will do all within their power to maintain themselves in this power. The impossibility of this conception is clearly set forth by Hodge in his Systematic Theology, which we now quote, Vol. III, pages 683-685: "It is a valid objection to this doctrine that it involves an impossibility. The impossible cannot be true, and, therefore, cannot, rationally, be an object of faith. It is impossible that the accidents or sensible properties of the bread and wine should remain if the substance be changed. Such a proposition has not more meaning in it than the assertion that an act can be without an agent. Accidents or properties are the phenomena of substance; and it is self-evident that there can be no manifestations where there is not something to be manifested. In other words nothing, a 'non-ens' cannot manifest itself. Romanists cannot turn to the theory that matter is not a substance; for that is not their doctrine. On the contrary, they assert that the substance of the bread is transmuted into the substance of Christ's body. Nor can they help themselves by resorting to the pantheistic doctrine that all accidents are phenomena of God, for that would upset their whole system.

It is moreover impossible that the well-attested testimony of our senses should be deceptive. If it once be assumed that we cannot trust to the laws of belief impressed on our nature, of which faith in our sense perceptions is one of the most important, then the foundation of all knowledge, faith, and religion is overturned. What has Catholicism to say for itself, if the people cannot trust their ears when they hear the teachings of the Church, or their eyes when they read its decrees? It has nothing to stand upon. It is engulfed with all things else in the abyss of nihilism. To believe in transubstantiation we must disbelieve our senses, and this God requires of no man. It involves disbelief in Him who is the author of our nature and of the laws which are impressed upon it. There is no more complete and destructive infidelity than the want of faith in the veracity of consciousness, whether it be consciousness of our sense perceptions, or of the truths involved in our rational, moral, and religious nature." (And how about the theory of Common Grace which would have us believe contradictions in the Bible because the reason why we do not understand them is because of the defectiveness of our mind? As when we must believe that God loves and hates the same person at the same time.—H.V.) We will continue in our next article.

H.V.

### Notice

#### NEXT EASTERN MEN'S LEAGUE MEETING

Speaker: Student J. Kortering

Topic: *Preaching to the Spirits in Prison*

According to I Peter 3:19

Place: Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church

Time: Monday evening, March 30, at 8 o'clock.

The Board

## 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 8. Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of God's free mercy, that they do not totally fall from faith and grace, nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings; which, with respect to themselves, is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since his counsel cannot be changed, nor his promise fail, neither can the call according to his purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual, nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated.

There are only a few minor points of correction to be made in the above translation. The last part of the first sentence should read: "nor finally (i.e. with finality) remain in their falls or perish." The second clause, beginning with "which" should read: "which, with respect to themselves, not only could easily happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God . . ." Our final correction concerns the word "preservation" in the last part of the article. The Latin expression here is *custodia*. The Dutch has *bewaring*. The proper English translation is not "preservation" but "keeping" or "custody."

This is the last article in this chapter that deals with the doctrine of perseverance as such. Article 9 begins the subject of the assurance of preservation, which continues through Article 13. Article 14 treats the means of preservation. And Article 15 is a concluding statement as to the church's faith of perseverance. This eighth article forms at the same time a conclusion or summary as to the entire subject of perseverance as it has been treated thus far, and a final statement as to the radical difference between the Reformed and Arminian views of perseverance. The entire formulation of this article shows very plainly that the fathers had in mind the Arminian heresy, and that they intentionally set the two views over against each other. Hence, we can very readily draw a comparison in the form of several propositions, as follows:

1) The Arminians teach that perseverance is by our own merits and powers; the Reformed faith denies this, and maintains that it is of God's free mercy.

2) The Arminians teach the possibility of a total fall from faith and grace; the Reformed faith denies this, and teaches the certain perseverance of the saints.

3) The Arminians teach that such a final fall can easily happen as far as man is concerned; the Reformed faith teaches that as far as man is concerned such a final fall is not only possible, but inevitable.

4) The Arminians teach that with respect to God also such a final fall of the saints is possible; the Reformed deny this, and teach that with respect to God it is utterly impossible that the saints fall.

5) Hence, the following consequences must be drawn:

a) The Arminians teach that God's counsel can be changed; the Reformed faith teaches the unchangeability of God's counsel.

b) The Arminians teach that God's promise can fail; the Reformed faith teaches that God's promise cannot fail.

c) The Arminians teach that God's calling can be recalled; the Reformed faith teaches that God's call cannot be revoked.

d) The Arminians teach that the merit, intercession, and keeping of Christ can be rendered ineffectual; the Reformed faith teaches that these are effectual.

e) The Arminians teach that the sealing of the Holy Spirit can be frustrated and obliterated; the Reformed faith teaches that this is impossible.

It is plain, then, that according to our *Canons*, the Reformed and Arminian views stand diametrically opposed to one another.

We deal in this article with the very essence of the doctrine of perseverance. Article 7 teaches us concerning the elements of perseverance. If you ask the question as to what remains absolutely untouched, undamaged, even in the deepest falls of the saints, Article 7 gives you the answer: God preserves in His saints the incorruptible seed of regeneration. And if you ask the question as to how the saints rise up again out of those deep falls, Article 7 answers: God surely and effectually renews them to repentance. But Article 8 clinches the matter. It shuts out all possibility of Arminianism. It emphasizes the truth that our perseverance is a matter of God's free mercy, but then in such a way that the character of that free mercy is plainly set forth. After all, the Arminians could also prate about mercy and grace. They not only had to, but they purposely did so, in order to cover up their heresy and give it the appearance of Scriptural doctrine. But Article 8 speaks of free mercy in distinction from our own merits or powers. It speaks of God's sure preservation in distinction from any work of man. It brings out the truth that the preserving grace of God is absolutely unconditional. The perseverance of the saints is invariably initiated by God's preserving grace. And that preserving grace of God is itself initiated by nothing and by no one outside of God Himself. It is unconditional.

Let us give our attention to the forceful way in which our *Canons* formulate this truth.

In the first place, we may notice that our fathers go out of their way to mention the wonderful blessing of preservation once more. They might have been satisfied merely to state: "Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of God's free mercy, that they obtain this," allowing the pronoun "this" to refer to the blessings mentioned in Article 7. But this is not enough. They define that "this" once more by adding: "that they do not totally

fall from faith and grace, nor remain finally in their falls and perish." They rejoice in this truth. They find a special element of comfort in it. And for that reason purposely mention this truth once more over against the Arminian heresy that the saints do totally fall from faith and grace, remain in their falls finally and perish. This is exactly the issue at stake, involving the very salvation of our souls: do we, shall we, fall from faith and from grace and perish? The answer of the Reformed faith is an absolute and divinely guaranteed: No!

In the second place, let us notice that the fathers here put the Arminian heresy in its true light. The Arminians always present their view of the perseverance of the saints thus, that it is possible that the saints fall away, and even very easily possible. Perhaps they would even admit that the falling away of the saints is highly probable. At least, they not only teach that the saints can easily fall away, but that there are many instances of those who actually do fall away. The fathers point out that this is not really the Arminian doctrine, but that the consequence of the Arminian heresy is that there is no perseverance of the saints possible. They point out that as far as the saints themselves are concerned, they not only easily can, *but undoubtedly would fall away*. This is the consequence that must be accepted as soon as you deny the Reformed doctrine of perseverance. It must be remembered that the Arminians exactly maintained that the saints are left to themselves in the matter of perseverance. O yes, the Holy Ghost assists them. And Jesus Christ assists them in all temptations, and extends to them His hand. But they must be ready for the conflict, must desire His help, must not be inactive. And only then does He keep them from falling. Hence, in the last instance the perseverance of the saints depends on their own will. From this the Arminians derived their doctrine of the possibility of a fall from grace. But our fathers go a step farther, and they insist that as soon as the perseverance of the saints depends on their own will, that perseverance becomes impossible and their fall from grace becomes inevitable. This we must plainly see. The issue is not a sure perseverance over against a possible perseverance, but a sure perseverance over against no perseverance at all. As soon as you adopt the Arminian position, perseverance, — and with it the whole of salvation, — becomes a hopeless case.

It is in this connection that this article emphasizes, in the third place, that the perseverance of the saints is not in consequence of their own merits or powers. This stands in close connection, of course, with the preceding, and is not in need of much explanation. The Arminian teaches that the saints are preserved on account of their own worthiness to be preserved: they are willing to be preserved, and therefore God preserves. And he teaches that the saints are preserved in consequence of their own powers: Jesus Christ extends His powerful hand to them, but they must grasp that hand. Hence, the saints are really left to themselves when it comes to perseverance.

The important point to remember, however, in this connection is that throughout this article the fathers are speaking of the saints, the believers. This is crucial. The issue is not whether the natural man, the man utterly devoid of grace, the man in whom God has never worked unto salvation, the man in whom is not found the seed of regeneration, can persevere if left to himself. The question is not merely whether the natural man has any merits or powers unto perseverance. No, we are concerned here with the saints, the believers. The question is: what would happen to them if they were left to themselves? Do those saints, who have been received into the fellowship of God's Son, who have been regenerated, who have been delivered from the dominion and slavery of sin, but who have within them the remains of indwelling sin, — do they persevere, are they kept from finally falling away, in consequence of their own merits and powers? Or, if you will, is there any condition that even a saint can fulfill unto preservation? This article concerns so-called "Reformed conditions." The saints are in fellowship with Christ. They have the new life. They have freedom from the dominion and slavery of sin. Now then, can they through this grace fulfill any conditions unto preservation? The Arminians taught that this was possible: "God does indeed provide the believer with sufficient powers to persevere, and is ever ready to preserve these in him, if he will do his duty; but that though all things, which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God will use to preserve faith, are made use of, it even then ever depends on the pleasure of the will whether it will persevere or not." *Canons* V, B, 2. This is nothing less than the theory of "Reformed conditions." God gives us grace; through this grace we fulfill the conditions; and then we receive the blessings of salvation. But the fathers rule this out completely. Not only the natural man, but the saint, the believer, the man endowed with grace, if he is left to himself will undoubtedly fall from faith and grace totally and fall into everlasting perdition. There is absolutely nothing of man, — not even of believing, saved man, — in the wonder of perseverance. And is not the child of God taught to pray exactly in harmony with this truth in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, according to our *Catechism*? There we read: ". . . since we (the saints) are so weak in ourselves (again: the saints, regenerated children of God), *that we cannot stand a moment* . . . do thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory."

H.C.H.

### Attention, Sunday School Teachers

The inspirational mass meeting will be held at Hudsonville Church Friday, March 20, at 8:00 p. m.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Classical Jurisdiction

For some time now we have been busy in this department with the decision of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1926 in which they took the position that it is proper for a Classis to depose elders, deacons and ministers of the Word. This decision was based in part upon Article 36 of the Church Order. It followed the reasoning that since this article speaks of the *jurisdiction of the Classis over the Consistory*, this jurisdiction includes the prerogative to exercise the power of deposition from the office. In this connection we have given the lengthy reports of a divided committee that was appointed in 1924 to study this question and also the report of the committee of Pre-advice to the 1926 Synod. The latter report contained the conclusions drawn from a study of the two parts of the divided committee report and its summation was, in effect, the basis upon which Synod finally arrived at its decision.

At this time we are not going to discuss in detail the contents of these lengthy reports. Our purpose in presenting them was informative and we can leave our readers judge for themselves as to which side of the issue they wish to take. It is our own conviction that the Synod erred in this matter and should have followed the advice of the second part of the study committee report which concluded as follows:

*"We are yet of the opinion that there is a way for us to come to the desired agreement. The whole committee is of the opinion that the Classis according to Reformed Church Right has the right to set a refractory consistory outside the denomination . . ."*

Even this, however, does not yet touch upon the essence of the evil perpetrated by the Classis and Synod in connection with the origin and history of our Protestant Reformed Churches in these years. We will come to this a bit later but before doing that we want to show that in Reformed circles and even within the Christian Reformed Church there is no unanimity with regard to the question of Classis' jurisdiction. For example, in connection with Article 79 of the Church Order, Monsma and Van Dellen raise the question: *"May a Classis Depose Elders and Deacons?"* This is found in the *Church Order Commentary*, pg. 327. We want to quote their writing on this question in full because of the significance of this matter. They write as follows:

"Some have contended that a Classis may depose Consistories. The present authors feel that no major assembly, according to Reformed Church polity and the Church Order has the right to depose a minor assembly. The deposition of a Consistory, for example, by a Classis or Synod would seem to be a violation of the integrity and of the rights of the particular church concerned, whereas the Church Order in more than one article seeks to safeguard this integrity and these rights. (Cf. Arts. 30, 84.) Moreover, Reformed Church

government does not tolerate group-disciplining. Discipline, according to our Reformed conception, is always individual and never communal.

"Is it then permissible for a Classis or Synod to depose individual office-bearers? Regarding Ministers Article 79 clearly stipulates that a dual Consistory meeting may suspend a minister. Furthermore, the article reads, 'Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis, with the advice of the delegates of the (Particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11.' This provision is clear. No minister shall be deposed unless the Classis concerned judges that deposition is in order. Deposition of ministers 'shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis.' And Classis shall be guided in rendering its opinion by the advice of the Synodical delegates according to Article 11. Without the concurring advice of these delegates, no Classis may decide that a certain minister should be deposed. This last provision was added to Article 79 as an additional safeguard by the Holland Churches in 1905, and by our Churches in 1914.

"Regarding elders and deacons Article 79 specifies that these shall be suspended or expelled from their office by sentence of their Consistory and that of the nearest Consistory.

"If any case is so involved and so complicated that the two Consistories concerned judge that the judgment of all the Churches of the Classis is needed, then the matter should be brought to Classis. In such a case the Consistory is expected to abide by the decision of Classis. The Consistory follows the advice of Classis. The Classis in such a case has a full right to appoint certain delegates who are to serve the Consistory with advice and who are to help the Consistory to carry out the conclusions of the Classis.

"If the case of an elder or deacon is brought to Classis by way of appeal on the part of individual members of the Church, or on the part of one or more consistory members, the appellants feeling and claiming that the Consistory as a whole is negligent or in error, then what is the correct procedure? The Classis deliberates and draws its conclusions. If the decision is to the effect that the Elder(s) or Deacon(s) should be suspended or deposed, the Consistory concerned is informed regarding this decision and proceeds to execute the judgment rendered. Again, the Classis has a full right to appoint a committee to help the Consistory in the execution of its task. If a Consistory feels that it cannot in good conscience accept the advice, it may appeal to Synod. If Synod sustains the Classis the Consistory should give immediate execution to the judgment of Classis. That is to say, the Consistory should suspend or depose the office-bearer in question. Failure to do so would bear dire consequences. For in such a case those Consistory members and individual members of the Church concerned who desire to adhere to the decisions of Classis and Synod should meet and declare the deflecting or recalcitrant Consistory members to be out of office, and new Elders and Deacons should be elected in

their place forthwith. An extraordinary congregational meeting of this kind should be called under the guidance of classical delegates, or of a neighboring Consistory, preferably the former, to give assurance that all things will be done in good order.

"If any Consistory member thus deposed refuses to acknowledge his deposition and seeks to exercise his former rights, he makes himself liable to discipline as an individual member.

"If one or more deposed Consistory members, together with certain adherents belonging to the Church concerned, refuse to honor the acts of deposition and the election of new office-bearers, and when these moreover begin to hold separate meetings for worship, Classis should declare these members to be a schismatic group, outside of the Christian Reformed denomination and having forfeited all rights and privileges.

"It is true that Article 30 specifies that matters which cannot be finished by minor assemblies, though rightfully belonging to their domain, become the business of the major assemblies. But in view of the fact that the disciplinary articles of the Church Order clearly specify how discipline regarding office-bearers is to be exercised and in no way intimate that Elders and Deacons can be suspended or deposed by the major assemblies, we do not believe that the appeal to Article 30 is justified. We believe that it is reasonable to assume that the early Synods at which our Church Order originated purposefully refrained from incorporating a provision in the Church Order that would allow our major assemblies to suspend and depose Elders and Deacons. As has been pointed out before, the early Reformed Churches were eager to safeguard the integrity and the rights of the particular Churches. The significant 84th article of our Church Order used to be Article 1! Let us also recall that it was not until 1581 that the Churches decided that henceforth no Consistory would suspend or depose an Elder or Deacon without the concurrent judgment of its nearest neighbor Consistory. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the question of deposition of Elders and Deacons is an important one. It is not unreasonable to assume that a provision permitting major assemblies to depose Elders and Deacons was left out of Article 79 purposefully. For notwithstanding the fact that Article 79 tells us how Elders and Deacons shall be deposed it does not provide for the deposition of Elders and Deacons by Classes or Synods. And yet the same Article does specify that Ministers shall be deposed by the judgment of the Classis.

"We believe, moreover, that it can be contended successfully that the deposition of minor assemblies by major assemblies constitutes a negation of the general office of all believers, which should begin to function when certain abnormal situations arise, and that it likewise involves an infringement upon the right of reformation which should ever be held inviolate by the Church of God.

"We realize that both during the formative period of the Reformed Churches and during their more advanced history, Classes and Synods have sometimes deposed Elders and Deacons and even Consistories. But no one would dare to claim that the Reformed Churches have always been true to themselves in matters of church government and that they have always interpreted their own Church Order correctly. Precedents do not decide this issue either one way or the other. We should seek to determine the basic principles fundamental to Reformed denominationalism, and we should seek the correct historical and exegetical interpretation of the various articles of the Church Order which concern this question. Then we should draw our conclusions as to what is proper and improper."

Our comments on this position of Monsma and Van Dellen will have to wait until next time. In conclusion we would observe that if the Classes of the Christian Reformed Church had maintained this position in the Hoeksema-Danhof-Ophoff history instead of following the corrupt practices they did, the pages of history would today record a brighter picture than they now do. Likewise, in our own history of 1953 ff. the principle of Classical jurisdiction was flagrantly violated. Had this not been the case, that history too might have followed a wholly different course. But to all of this we must come back in later writings, D.V.

G.V.D.B.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 6, 1959, our dear parents,

MR. AND MRS. JUSTIN H. KORTERING

celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. Our heartfelt thanks are to God for sparing them these years, in order that they might train us in the way we should go. Our prayer is that He may bless them and us together unto the day we shall be gathered within the fold of the Lamb.

Their children,

Lafert

Erma

Jess

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Schuitema

Mr. and Mrs. Jason L. Kortering

Ervin

#### "OPEN HOUSE" for MR. GERRIT BERGSMA

In grateful acknowledgement of the eighty-fifth birthday of Mr. Gerrit Bergsma, occurring this month, we, his children invite his relatives and friends to greet him at "Open House" in his honor on Saturday, March 28th, between 2 and 4 p. m. and between 7 and 9 p. m. Place: 1942 Sherman St., S. E. (Corner Laurel), East Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mrs. Aldrich Bergsma

Mrs. Henry G. Keegstra

Stuart and Mildred Bergsma

Joseph and Rena Alberts



## ALL AROUND US

*Report of American Bar Association.*

We are indebted to a friend and brother who sent us a copy of a pamphlet entitled "Report Of American Bar Association, Special Committee On Communist Tactics, Strategy, And Objectives." The report is prefaced with a brief note informing the reader that though the American Bar Association took no action on the report, Senator Styles Bridges succeeded in having the report inserted in the Congressional Record.

We have read and re-read the pamphlet rather carefully and feel that it contains information on the threat of communism which every citizen of the United States should know. If our readers are interested in obtaining a copy, they can write to: American Opinion, Belmont 78, Massachusetts, and include 20¢ in your request for a single copy.

This pamphlet is one of the most informative on the subject we have yet come across, and we understand that it is being widely commented on by our citizenry. Its description of the communistic ideology is so vivid and appalling that one shivers to think that it should ever succeed. We hasten to add that, according to the pamphlet, much of the communistic plan is already achieved or in the process of development. The pamphlet, which contains some 21 pages, is naturally too large to quote in its entirety. However, we wish to give our readers a general survey of its contents, and a few pertinent quotes.

The Report contains five main chapters which have a brief introduction under the subtitle of "Paul Revere Are Not Always Heeded." The purpose of this introduction is to impress the reader with the menacing nature of communism and the warning not to let this alert go unheeded. We remember from our history books that the Paul Revere of the days of the American Revolution sounded the warning that the British were coming, and how the colonists responded to that warning. But, the pamphlet shows, all Paul Revers have not always been heeded. Illustrations of this are given in the case of the Titanic which sank in the Atlantic bringing 1635 people to an unexpected watery grave on April 15, 1912. We are told that "five iceberg warnings were sent by wireless to the Titanic. When the sixth message, 'Look out for icebergs,' came in, the Titanic's operator wired back: 'Shut up, I'm busy.' Just thirty-five minutes later, the ship, whose captain had said 'God Himself could not sink it,' was sinking."

The Report goes on to say "The phrase 'Remember Pearl Harbor' should remind us that we, people and leaders, were cocksure and complacent before the afternoon of December 7, 1941. The FBI had warned of frequent messages from the Japanese consulate at Hawaii to Tokyo telling of the presence and absence of American warships at Pearl Harbor. Dies

Committee reports of Japanese espionage by fishing vessels were ridiculed as headline hunting. Capt. Laurence Safford, who was recently awarded \$100,000 by a grateful Congress for his World War II coding and decoding inventions, had decoded all the Japanese pre-Pearl Harbor war messages for his superiors. Yet, the attack came as a stunning surprise.

"Most persons who are informed on communism think our country is now in greater danger than were the Titanic and Pearl Harbor. The thesis of J. Edgar Hoover's new book, *Masters Of Deceit*, is:

'Communism is the major menace of our time. Today, it threatens the very existence of our western civilization.'

"In his speech to the 1957 National Convention of the American Legion, Mr. Hoover warned:

'To dismiss lightly the existence of the subversive threat in the United States is to deliberately commit national suicide. In some quarters we are surely doing just that.'

"On July 6, 1958, Prof. J. Sterling Livingston, a Pentagon consultant, stated:

'The doctrine of pre-emptive war is definitely a part of Soviet strategy. The Russians plan as part of their strategy to strike a forestalling nuclear blow against their enemies.'

"The lawyer-author of the Gaither report to the President on national security recently told our association:

'Our security is in unprecedented peril . . . The ultimate objective of international communism is world domination, and the Soviet Union will pursue this objective ruthlessly and relentlessly, employing every possible political, economic, subversive, and military strategem and tactic.'

The five chapters of the pamphlet are headed by the following titles: I. Court Decisions On Communism. II. Communistic Tactics. III. Hindsight Or Foresight. IV. Current Fallacies About Communism. V. Safeguarding Our Republic.

Chapter I makes it very plain, on the one hand, that there have been Supreme Court Justices who assumed a very rigid attitude and policy against any and all communistic infiltrations into our system; while, on the other hand, it shows with twenty concrete cases how our courts have often quashed the decisions of lower courts and the efforts of anti-subversive committees whose purpose it was to stop the communistic effort in its tracks. We receive the impression from the reading of this chapter that our courts are generally hamstrung when it comes to stopping the communistic effort. Also we were impressed with the fact that the reporting committee of the American Bar Association has very little respect for the Fifth Amendment which can so easily be invoked to hide the guilty.

Chapter II of the Report was most enlightening, containing several quotations which summarize communist tactics, strategy and objectives. We quote here rather liberally:

"Communist Russia has been called 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.' This is true only for those who are ignorant of Communist writings. The Communists have set forth their master plan of world conquest even more forthrightly than did Hitler in *Mein Kampf*. The Com-

munist Manifesto said: 'The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.' Communists have never deviated from the theory enunciated by Marx and the strategy devised by Lenin.

"For those who want to understand communism, we prescribe, not a fifteen-day trip to Russia, but fifteen days in a library studying the Communist conspiracy. The following are an accurate summary of Communist tactics, strategy, and objectives.

"The Communist master for world conquest was stated by Lenin in these words:

'First, we will take Eastern Europe, then the masses of Asia, then we will encircle the United States, which will be the last bastion of capitalism. We will not have to attack. It will fall like an overripe fruit into our hands.'

"During the last twenty-five years, the United States has had 3,400 meetings with the Communists, including Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam, Panmunjom, and Geneva. The negotiators spoke 106 million words (700 volumes). All this talk led to fifty-two major agreements, and Soviet Russia has broken fifty of them. The Communists have followed Lenin's dictum about treaties and agreements:

'Promises are like pie crusts — made to be broken.'

"During the last three years, the United States has met seventy-three times at Geneva with the Chinese Reds to negotiate the release of 450 American prisoners. Not one American serviceman has been accounted for or released. The Communists have followed Stalin's principle of diplomatic intercourse:

'Words must have no relation to action — otherwise what kind of diplomacy is it? Words are one thing, actions another. Good words are a mask for concealment of bad deeds. Sincere diplomacy is no more possible than dry water or iron wood.'

"Marx and Engels stated this objective in the Communist Manifesto:

'The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.'

"Lenin gave this command to Communists: 'We have to use any ruse, dodges, tricks, cunning, unlawful method, concealment, and veiling of the truth.'

"On another occasion Lenin added: 'As long as capitalism remains we cannot live in peace. In the end one or the other will triumph — a funeral requiem will be sung over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism.'

"On September 17, 1955, Nikita Krushchev warned us: 'If anyone thinks that our smiles mean the abandonment of the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, he is deceiving himself cruelly. Those who expect this to happen might just as well wait for a shrimp to learn how to whistle.'

"Krushchev made this statement to Western diplomats at a Moscow reception on November 18, 1956: 'If you don't like us, don't accept our invitations and don't invite us to come to see you. Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you.'

Much more is quoted in this section, but this will suffice to show the awful objectives Russia has in mind. The following are the major Communist tactics: 1. Nullification of the Smith Act and other anti-Communist legislation. 2. Muzzling the FBI and congressional investigations. 3. Elimination of Federal and State security programs. 4. The peace offensive. 5. Summit conferences. 6. Cultural exchanges. 7. Recognition of Red China. 8. Halt nuclear tests. 9. East-West trade. 10. Propaganda. 11. Humiliation. This last refers to the method they use of deprecating our government and its leaders.

Some of the major fallacies about Communism which the pamphlet mentions in chapter IV and explains, are the following: 1. "Communism in the United States is dwindling in power because the party is dwindling in numbers." 2. "The Communist Party is just another political party." 3. "Poverty breeds communism." 4. "The only alternative to peaceful coexistence is World War III with nuclear destruction of our cities."

Chapter V treats of "Safeguarding Our Republic." The Report recommends the following actions be taken: 1. Remedial legislation: Under this heading the committee urges that "careful consideration be given to congressional legislation or judicial construction which will: Restore to congressional committees the right to determine whether the questions asked of pro-Communist witnesses are pertinent. Restore to congressional committees the same freedom to investigate Communists and pro-Communists that these committees have always had to investigate businessmen and labor leaders. Restore to the States the right to enforce their own antislavery laws. Restore to the Smith Act the provision which makes it a crime to teach or advocate the violent overthrow of the Government. Restore to the Smith Act the meaning of 'organize' which includes organizational work done after '45, so that Communist organizers cannot hide behind the statute of limitations. Restore to the executive branch the right to determine and to dismiss security risks in both sensitive and nonsensitive positions of the Government. Restore to the States the right to set standards high enough to exclude from public employment and education those who refuse to testify about their Communist activities and associates. Restore to the executive branch the right to question aliens awaiting deportation about subversive associates and contacts, and the right to deport aliens who are Communists at any time after entering the United States. Restore to the executive branch the right to deny passports to those who refuse to sign a non-Communist affidavit. Restore to the States the right to exclude from the practice of law those who have been members of the Communist conspiracy or who refuse to testify about Communist activities."

2. Re-evaluate the policy of recognition of Soviet Russia and its satellites. 3. Be prepared with a plan of action. 4. Study Communism.

We found the pamphlet very helpful to interpret and to keep abreast of the times in which we live. M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

1125 Franklin St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan  
March 9, 1959

Rev. Herman Hoeksema  
1139 Franklin St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

Esteemed Editor:

In the March 1st issue of *The Standard Bearer* I read an article above the signature of Rev. M. Schipper that I felt degraded the quality of *The Standard Bearer*.

I am convinced that articles of this nature should not appear in a periodical of the caliber of our *Standard Bearer*. I do not believe that *The Standard Bearer* is or ever was intended to be a medium to propagate material in which motives are misrepresented or are not investigated. This, I believe, Rev. Schipper did when he called the name and reputation of Christian High School into question by referring to an article in *Literary Cavalcade* which was supposedly assigned to all the students of a particular class.

I am convinced that a writer may never rush into print unless he has first consulted the party in question and in this case I am sure Rev. Schipper never did. If he did he should tell us.

I do not believe that such journalistic ethics may be left unchallenged nor should they be tolerated. Matthew 18 always applies, it seems to me, whether we are dealing with one personal or a communal organization.

The statement which follows is also very unnecessary, it seems to me.

"We are primarily critical of our Christian institutions of learning that will resort to this type of literature as a means of instruction, and the teacher who most likely believes that due to the common grace of God we have here a work of art which our covenant children should *appreciate*. (Italics mine.)"

This statement is highly questionable because the writer, Rev. Schipper, assumes something that he cannot prove because he apparently never talked with the teacher who "assigned" the work. Rev. Schipper assumes that the teacher thought this was a work of art which the student should *appreciate*.

Literature is not always intended nor used for mere appreciation. Literature must also be evaluated. Does Rev. Schipper know whether the teacher intended to evaluate the literature in question?

Rev. Schipper used it and he then evaluated it and the institution that used it. How about that?

May we measure with two measures?

In closing I want to say that I too believe that we *must* have Protestant Reformed Education. I too believe that the time is come that we have a Protestant Reformed High

School, but not because some teacher "assigned" a section of literature which is not to be appreciated but is to be evaluated and criticized.

Yours in Christ,  
Agatha Lubbers

March 5, 1959

Dear Mr. Editor:

The English Staff of Grand Rapids Christian High School was sorely disappointed this past week to read the column entitled *All Around Us* in the March 1 issue of *The Standard Bearer*. We were disappointed because we feel that our school has been misrepresented and that our good name has been maligned. The purpose of this letter is to set the facts straight. We call the attention of the readers of this periodical to the following:

1. The *Literary Cavalcade* is a monthly magazine of contemporary literature for senior high school English classes. At G. R. C. H. it has been used with considerable profit over the past many years — long enough to establish our faith in its regularly high-caliber offerings.

2. Presently, the *Literary Cavalcade* is being used in three of our English classes, all for non-college preparatory seniors.

3. In reference to the play under attack, *The Green Pastures* by Marc Connelly, the Reverend M. Schipper errs when he charges that one of our teachers has "compelled the student to read this kind of stuff." To set the record straight — no assignment was given at any time to have the students read *The Green Pastures*. In fact, the teacher involved deliberately avoided this selection and even cautioned at least one of his classes concerning its use. In the light of this, we find especially objectionable Reverend Schipper's censor of "the Teacher who most likely believes that due to the common grace of God we have here a work of art which our covenant children should appreciate."

4. We also sometimes use *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, and *The Reader's Digest* as supplements to some of our courses. No one of these is free from occasionally objectionable material, no more than is the newspaper which comes into our homes.

Apparently the Reverend Schipper has been misinformed. This is not surprising in that he himself says that he received his information secondhand. We close with the suggestion that, in deference to the spirit of brotherly love enjoined upon us by Scripture and out of concern for the good name of our Christian schools, those taking exception to any report or rumor concerning the educational program of our school should consult us directly. It is at this level, rather than in our church papers, that remedial action can best be taken if and whenever it is needed.

The English Staff of Grand Rapids  
Christian High School

Rev. Schipper will answer this in the next issue of *The Standard Bearer*.  
M.S.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

March 5, 1959

Creston's Men and Ladies' society was guest at the Young People's Society meeting of Feb. 24. The after recess program consisted of pictures of Miss Borduin's world travels; the twice postponed toboggan party with Kalamazoo was finally held Feb. 17 at Echo Valley in Kalamazoo; and, Cornelius Lubbers, son of our Missionary will be inducted into the Army March 5 for a six month duration.

Rev. H. Veldman has requested the following to be his contribution from Edgerton: The church of Rev. P. DeBoer has requested admittance into the Christian Reformed Church. The Minnesota Classis, convening Feb. 25 appointed a committee to confer with DeBoer and his consistory.

Edgerton rejoices in the ownership of a two-manual reed organ donated by a local piano company, while Oak Lawn still struggles with the raising of necessary funds to purchase an instrument for their services; and, despite the reputation of the Northwest for having severe blizzards, Edgerton has not cancelled a single catechism class due to winter weather.

Seven young people of First Church made confession of faith before the consistory Feb. 23; further, the consistory has decided to resume the former practice of taking collections without congregational singing. The purpose being to recognize the sanctity of both offertory and congregational singing.

The Smorgasbord put on by the Mothers' Club of Adams School is history and will live long in the memory of the diners. The Mr. and Mrs. Society of South East Church used that opportunity to sell household necessities in one of the other rooms, the proceeds going into their Organ Fund.

The Young People's Society of Holland scheduled Glen Windemuller on the after recess program with an essay on "Religious Beliefs of Youth."

From Hope's bulletin we learn that service-man Dale Mensch has returned to the States and is hospitalized at Great Lakes where he must remain for some time.

Hull's Young People's Society was host to a combined meeting with that of Doon and of Edgerton. That meeting represented a lot of mileage — even across State lines! The communion of saints on the young people's level also surmounts those (to us, Easterners) huge distances. Hull's new clerk is J. Hoekstra, Boyden, Iowa; and the Treasurer is H. Hoksbergen, Hull, Iowa.

We note that this winter has produced quite a crop of broken bones; arms, legs and hips. First's bulletin, for instance, welcoming back a member who has not been in church for months due to a broken hip, while another member is hospitalized for the same malady. Truly calling for an echo of Ps. 39:4 when David prays, "Lord, make me to

know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."

DO YOU AGREE, *that*

When the minister, in the Communion service, says, "The bread which we *bless*," or "The cup of blessing which we *bless*," he means, "which we *praise*"; and, when he holds his hand above the bread, or the wine, he thereby merely indicates the object of praise, and does not pronounce a *blessing* upon it like a Romish priest does upon the first spadeful of dirt at a dedication ceremony; and, therefore it might be preferable that he would hold his hand, palm up, so as not to give children a wrong impression?

Rev. Harbach of Lynden, spoke in the Christian High Library for the Mothers' Club, Feb. 20. His topic: "Understanding And Teaching The Five Points of Calvinism To Our Children"; further, Lynden will hold the annual Prayer Day service a week early because the pastor has a classical appointment at Redlands, March 8 and 15; and, despite the pleas to the contrary, the radio station that carries our program out there has transferred all week-day religious broadcasts to a Sunday spot.

In Oak Lawn's bulletin, the Church Extension Committee reports, via News Letter, that they send out 75 copies of *The Standard Bearer* on a six month trial basis; having covered the DeMott, Ind. area, they now are reaching people in Highland, Ind., and Western Springs, Ill. They have also sent out 2,000 copies of "The Unbreakable Bond Of Marriage," by Rev. H. H., besides their other activities. The purpose of the committee is "to disseminate the Protestant Reformed Literature, which we believe to be the Word of God, and our mandate in the world."

Loveland has welcomed into their communion a family with two baptized children, coming to them from the First Presbyterian Church in Hastings, Nebraska; and, an announcement was made that a meeting has been called for March 23 for all those interested in a Christian day school of our own! A three week advance notice of that meeting was given in order that they might have ample time to provoke (Rom. 11:14) one another towards that worthy goal.

Rev. Emanuel quotes Rev. Hoeksema (speaking at a *Standard Bearer* Annual meeting) in his Feb. 21st bulletin under "Worth Thinking About" as follows: "All our people ought to be readers of *The Standard Bearer*, . . . All of our people should be *readers*, you must not put the magazine on the shelf . . . neither must you select certain articles that perhaps strike your fancy. You must be readers of the whole *Standard Bearer*."

Grand Rapids area folks are looking forward to March 19 and April 5 when Easter programs will be rendered by Adams school, and Hope Choral Society, respectively.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.