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MEDITATION

COVENANT YOUTH'S QUESTION

*"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to thy word."*

Psalm 119:9

It is quite generally believed that this Psalm was written by a young man. This is usually considered to be the case because it was obviously written for a young man. God prepared a youth to take heed to his way, to learn to take heed to it according to the Word of God, and to write a long and beautiful paean of praise for the youth of all ages who stand in the midst of God's covenant and ask the same question — Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

This is not to say that this question does not arise in the hearts and minds of all the saints in God's church. It matters not whether a youthful lad or girl takes his or her seat in the pew, or whether a grey-haired saint of many years lifts up his eyes to God. The question is equally important for them all. And there was never yet a saint who was not concerned about this all important matter of cleansing his way. Nevertheless, the older saints in God's church are veterans of many long battles and have transversed much of the "way" which once stretched before them. For them the battle is almost over; the weary fighting will soon enough come to its end; the sword of the Spirit will be changed to a crown of righteousness; the cry of the battlefield to a song of victory and triumph; the filthiness and dirt of life's pathway to a clean and holy life in their Father's home above.

But a youth stands in a unique way at the beginning of his life's path. He begins that path at birth; this is true enough. But it is in his youth that he comes to the consciousness of that path which lies before him, and especially the need for cleansing it.

* * * *

It is not every youth born in the generations of men that ask this question. All indeed are concerned about their "ways." They will also ask questions about their ways from

their parents, from their teachers, from older men, from psychiatrists, from anyone whom they think capable of giving the correct answer. But they ask questions concerning money and honor, position and security, success and gain; and this all according to the standards of the world. But these are after all foolish questions taken in themselves. What does a man have if he has money and success? if he has gained material security and position in life? Nothing that will save him from dying and ending in eternal desolation apart from God.

This question comes first because it is principal and fundamental. Money with a filthy way and success in a repulsive path mean nothing. But indeed if a man's way is clean the worldly success of which men speak today is of no concern.

Who can ask such a question? I can describe such a person to you because he is described on the pages of Holy Writ. He is a man who has received from God a place in God's covenant. This place is an eternal place, for God chose him from before the foundations of the world. But God comes to dwell within his heart also by His Spirit. He calls such a man very early in life out of darkness into light and out of the death into which he was born into the life of fellowship and communion with the only living God. He works in the heart of such a young person in such a way that gradually the consciousness of all the blessedness of salvation and grace for him grows and increases. God leads such a man to the knowledge of his sin, but leads him also to contemplate the wonder of the cross of Jesus Christ and to see that Christ died for him to take away all his sin before the face of his God and merit for him life eternal. He is therefore, a youth who stands consciously in the midst of God's covenant, brought there by an amazing wonder of grace. He has come to know his sin as the light of God's Word has laid it bare before his eyes. He has seen that sin clings tenaciously to all that he does for he carries with him his own corrupt nature. He understands that his sins are against God Who demands perfection within and Who hates terribly all sins which man commits. He longs with an intense and earnest longing to walk before His God in truth and righteousness, to make his way pure. This is of utmost importance

to him. The rest is secondary; his vocation, his success, his material position in life must wait. This is the all-important question of life.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

Wherewithal indeed!

* * * *

His way therefore from this point of view is important.

His way is first of all an entirely unique way. God has not placed him on a way that inevitably ends in hell, but God has placed him in the way in which countless millions of saints have walked before him. It is the way of all God's covenant people. It is a way in which he will always stand in a unique relationship to God because of his place in the everlasting covenant of grace. It is a way therefore in which he walks always in relation to God's church here on earth; a way in which the church is always the center of his life. It is a way that indeed has its center in the life of the church here below, but also ends inevitably in the church in glory with the saints made perfect and with Jesus.

Yet this same way is a way that is his own in a unique sense of the word. It is the way of his whole life to be sure. This includes all his life that lies beneath the surface of his body. It includes all that varied and intense life of his inmost being. What lives within his mind—all his thoughts and memories, his reasonings and ideas—all this is part of the "way." It includes all that arises within his own will—his aspirations and desires, his longings and hopes—this too is a part of that "way." Yet this same way includes all the deeds that he does. His whole life as it comes to expression by the work of his hands, by the words that he speaks, by the expressions and moods which are revealed to others is also part of that "way." Whether he be in his parent's home or in his own home, in the shop or office or school; whether he seek the fellowship of his companions or take his place in the congregation, he is walking his own pathway. He cannot stand still or sit by the side. Walk he must, and walk he does in all his life. This is his "way."

And yet it is uniquely his own. God has determined his way for him from all eternity. His way is exactly suited for him and fitted for his pilgrimage in it. No one else can walk that way for him. It is his own. He walks it and must walk it until finally death lays its hand upon him and he is called into his everlasting destination. The circumstances and experiences of it are his to bear and share. The sorrows and griefs, the joys and blessings are his in the unique way that marks his path as his own in distinction from the paths of all other men.

But how sadly does this way need cleansing. As he stands at the threshold of this way, contemplating it as it stretches before him from the portals he now enters, he knows that that way will indeed be very filthy and dirty. To him it appears extremely repulsive and forbidding. The way is a way of sin and unrighteousness if he walks it alone, for he himself is desperately wicked. He knows that he carries

around within him his own flesh which is prone to all evil and inclined to sin in such a way that his path will be nothing but a mire of depravity and a morass of iniquity. Yet he wants his way to be pure. He would like to see it clean and holy. For in the depths of his heart he has learned to love his God; and there is within him an intense longing to do that which is pleasing in God's sight.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? This is the burning question that arises within him. He cannot rest till he has found the answer; nor will peace be in his heart until he knows. How can his way be cleansed? How shall it be made pure? Where is the power to make his way without sin? What is the means to make it pleasing in the sight of God, pure, holy, bright and glorious? Wherewithal? indeed!

* * * *

But the answer comes immediately. This is not a question which remains for a long time unanswered. It is not a problem which is not solved until life has almost ebbed away. It is not a life-long search filled with doubt and anxiety, questionings and fears, with possibly the answer eluding him forever. The answer is there immediately. It comes spontaneously with the question. The question arises by grace? It is answered immediately by that same grace. God brings him to ask the question? Indeed! But God immediately causes the answer to ring within his own soul.

"By taking heed thereto according to thy word!"

This is the only answer that can possibly be given. We sing sometimes of this when we sing this Psalm in church.

"How shall the young direct his way?

What light shall be his perfect guide?

Thy Word, O Lord, will safely lead,

If in its wisdom they confide."

The Word of God can only be the answer. And this is true because it is emphatically *God's* Word. It is God's Word because God is the sole Author of it all. It is God's Word because in it God reveals Himself. There is the face of God shown to His people. There is the face of God revealed; however, not in wrath against our sins, but in the glorious face of Jesus Christ His Son. There is the face of God shown to us in love and in mercy which never changes eternally. For that face is shown us in Christ Who suffered and died on Calvary and Who rose again for our justification. There, on the pages of Holy Writ are all the glorious promises in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ for us. There also is described in detail the calling of God's people in all its testimonies and statutes. It is indeed the rule of faith and life.

But this is the only answer because this is the only authority and standard in life. This Word is truth, and this is truth alone. There are an increasing number today who deny the infallibility of God's Word in some measure and degree. And it appears as if the church will have to fight a battle for this truth once again. But if this is not truth, we might as well close our church doors and put boards over their windows. If God's Word contains error, the pulpit might just as well

be silenced, and we can stay home from church. Why then ask concerning our way? There is no purpose to it.

But this Word is God's Word infallible, and therefore (only therefore) is it the answer to the question which this young man asks.

The text speaks of "by taking heed thereto . . ." Literally this word means "to guard." The implication is obviously that our way is attacked by many enemies, and that when their attacks are successful is our way filthy and dirty. These enemies are many. There is only one enemy, and that enemy is Satan. But he uses so many ways to attack our way and life. He uses all his black horde of demons. He uses all the wicked world through which our way leads us. He uses men who are wicked and who will kill those who do not become wicked like themselves. He uses temptations and allurements, enticements and lusts to corrupt our way. And perhaps worst of all, he uses our own flesh. How dangerous our way is!

But the Word of God is sufficient!

Our way must be guarded according to the standard of that Word. That Word is the criterion of all that is truth and righteousness. It is the infallible standard, the glorious standard of all our way. And that Word is also within our hearts. For it is the revelation of God Who saves us through Jesus Christ. And therefore it is not only the standard according to which we measure our way, but it is also the power whereby we are able to walk in that way cleansing it constantly.

How shall we cleanse our way? By running speedily to the Word of God. It is applicable to all our life and is the power to carry us through. Oh, indeed, this does not mean that our way will ever be perfectly pure as long as we stay here below. This that same Word teaches us. But it does give us the victory over sin, for it shows us the cross of Christ to which we run with all our sins and uncleanness. There at the foot of the cross our sins are taken away and dismissed from the heart and mind of God. There peace steals over our hearts, a peace that passes understanding. There we are able to see through the gloom of our night of sin into a heavenly and perfect life in which our way shall be clean forevermore!

H. Hanko

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved Wife, Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother,

MRS. CORA SCHUT—nee DEKRAKER

aged 65 years and 8 months.

That God was her portion is our great consolation.

Mr. Jacob A. Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit B. Lubbers—Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Holstege—Schut
12 grandchildren
8 great-grandchildren

Hudsonville, Mich.

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EDITORIALS

The Three Points

According to Dr. Klooster, as we have seen before, the strongest Scriptural proof in support of the first point of the notorious "Three Points" is to be found in Luke 6:35, 36. We have already discussed this passage in connection with the similar text in Matthew 5.

We particularly explained the love of our enemies to which we are enjoined in these passages.

But certainly, neither of these texts teach common grace, that is, a grace of God to the wicked reprobate. To be sure, God causes His sun to shine upon all, the righteous and the wicked alike, and He sends rain upon the just and the unjust. No one denies this. But the question is whether the wicked receive grace in this rain and sunshine. If they do, then they will employ these temporal gifts, together with all things to the glory of God and with thanksgiving. And then all things will turn to their salvation. If they do not receive the rain and the sunshine in the grace of God, they will use all these temporal things in the service of sin and receive greater damnation.

Such is the teaching of Scripture throughout.

Now we must write just a few words yet about the text in Luke 6.

This passage plainly speaks of the fact that God is kind to the unthankful and evil. Is not this then "common grace"? Are not the reprobate wicked included in the unthankful and evil and is not God, therefore, kind and gracious and merciful to them as well as to the righteous? In answer to this question, I must once more refer you to the overwhelming testimony of Scripture to the contrary: God curses and is angry with the wicked every day. Hence, the text in Luke 6 cannot possibly teach this, for the Bible does not contradict itself. Now, God is surely kind to the unthankful and evil, but not to all of them, not to the ungodly reprobate, as is the teaching of the "First Point," but only to His own elect. That this is true is evident even from the immediate context of this passage as we have already pointed out. God's people belong, by nature, to the unthankful and evil. And even after they have been regenerated and called they are still often revealing the spirit of unthankfulness and sin. But that God is kind and gracious to the unthankful and evil by no means implies that He is kind to all of them without exception.

* * * *

However, the "First Point" does not confine itself to what is usually called common grace, but it lapses into the error of the Arminian theory of general grace when it speaks of the "general offer of the gospel" as grace to all that hear the preaching of the gospel. This is, evidently, the intent when as the grounds for the "First Point" appeal is made to the texts in Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:23; and also to the Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 8, 9.

Dr. Klooster does not discuss the above mentioned texts from Ezekiel: he merely mentions them. And as to the references from the Canons he has this to say:

"The Synodical decision seeks support for the well-meant offer of the gospel by an appeal to the Canons of Dort. The Canons (III, IV, 8, 9) are indeed quite explicit in asserting the doctrine of the well-meant gospel call, for they say: 'As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called.' But I do not think the Canons say much concerning the precise point at issue, namely, whether this well-meant offer of the gospel is evidence of an attitude of favor on God's part to mankind in general. Perhaps the statement that 'God calls men by the gospel and confers upon them various gifts' (III, IV, 9) comes closest to the point at issue."

All this does not leave the impression of certainty on the part of Klooster. Notice that he writes, not that the Synodical decision actually supports, but that it "*seeks* support for the well-meant offer of the gospel." Again, he writes: "I do not think the Canons say much concerning the precise point at issue." I ask: do they say anything at all concerning this point? I deny this. Once more, he writes, not that the statement in Canons III, IV, 9 proves the point, but that "*perhaps* it comes *closest* to the point at issue." Why all this weak and doubtful language? Is it proper to build doctrines of the church on the basis of such dubious language and then cast faithful Reformed ministers out of the church, an act for which also Klooster assumes responsibility to this very day?

My answer to this question is: absolutely not!

However, the chief question that concerns us here is whether it is true that the preaching of the gospel is grace and intended to be grace on the part of God to all that hear this preaching. That this is the teaching of the "First Point" there can be no doubt. Its main intention is to defend the doctrine of so-called common grace, that is, the doctrine that God is gracious to all men, the righteous and wicked alike. Hence, when in this connection it mentions the preaching of the gospel, it teaches that in the preaching God is graciously inclined to and bestows grace upon all the hearers.

It may be considered strange that the Synod of 1924 adduced this as a proof for the theory of "common grace." For, to be sure, rain and sunshine and all the other things in this present time are, indeed, common to all men; but this cannot be said of the preaching of the gospel which throughout the ages has come to comparatively few and that, too, both according to Scripture and the Confessions, only to those to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel. How, then, can the preaching of the gospel be "common grace"? And how could the Synod of 1924 possibly come to this conclusion? The only possible answer is: 1. The Synod felt that in order to maintain the doctrine of "common grace" as a Reformed doctrine and to condemn those that denied it, it must adduce proof from the Reformed Confessions; 2. The Confessions, however, do not speak of "common grace" at all in the sense that God is gracious to all men, wicked and

righteous alike, through the things which He bestows on them in this present time; 3. However, it does speak of the general preaching of the gospel and the Synod adduced this as a proof that God is gracious to all the hearers, which, by the way, is neither Scriptural nor Confessional.

The Scriptural and Reformed truth is quite different.

According to it, God loved and chose unto eternal life and glory a people in Christ Jesus their Lord and that, too, in distinction from the reprobate. In behalf of the elect God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; He suffered and died for their sin, arose to their justification, and is now exalted at the right hand of God. Moreover, He received the Spirit and by that Spirit He enters into and dwells in the hearts of all the elect, regenerating them and calling them efficaciously through the preaching of the gospel. To them, that is, to the elect, that preaching of the gospel is grace and to them only, while the rest are hardened. By that Spirit and through the preaching of the gospel, the elect are preserved unto eternal life and glory. They can never fall away from grace and be lost.

This is the teaching of all the Reformed Confessions and of the whole of Scripture. H.H.

Evolution, Long Periods, or Days

In the beginning of my articles on the above mentioned subject (and by the way there are some very excellent articles on the same subject in former *Standard Bearers* by the Rev. H. Veldman) I maintained that one who supports the theory of long periods and, consequently, of evolution, cannot maintain the infallible inspiration of Genesis 1 and, therefore, of the whole of Scripture.

If in Calvin College this camouflaged theory of evolution is taught, as it is, the inevitable result will be, that the students draw the very logical conclusion that Genesis 1 is not the infallibly inspired Word of God and that, therefore, the whole of the Bible is not infallibly inspired.

In this contention I was supported by a recent article, an editorial, in *The Banner*.

The Rev. John Vander Ploeg writes that a student at Calvin Seminary questions the infallibility of Scripture. That student, M. Hoogland, wrote an article in *Stromata*, a paper published monthly by the Calvin Seminary students, under the title "Infallibility Questioned." The article, according to Rev. Vander Ploeg, is an "attempt to prove that the Bible is not infallible." He quotes from the article of Hoogland as follows:

"By way of conclusion and clarification it might be said that the purpose here has not been to prove that there are as a matter of fact errors in Scripture so much as it has been to suggest that there is no need for us to assume at all costs that the Scriptures are 'infallible.' The writers of our confessional standards make no reference to infallibility in the sense in which it has come to be used by conservative theologians today. In view of the relativity which the meanings of words so often display, it may not be too far-fetched

to say that it even attests to the divine wisdom that in all of the many claims to inspiration, no claim is made to 'infallibility.'"

And Vander Ploeg also quotes from the *Calvin College Chimes* in which a certain William Brown highly praises Hoogland's article and concludes by writing: "Hoogland has had the good sense to question a doctrine that has become an idol of the Evangelical Tribe."

It is not my purpose to criticise the above quotations. This is not necessary for our readers. Besides, the Rev. Vander Ploeg promises to write more about the subject. My purpose is to show the connection between the theory of evolution or long periods instead of days and the denial of the infallibility of Holy Writ. How can one maintain the infallible inspiration of Gen. 1-3 and at the same time believe that the days of creation were millions or billions of years? And if the infallibility of Gen. 1-3 is denied, one can no longer maintain the infallible inspiration of the rest of the Bible. Hence, I am not surprised that if the theory of evolution or that of long periods (which, to my mind is the same thing) is taught at Calvin College, the students at the seminary deny the infallibility of Scripture.

I wish to make one more remark before I continue my discussion of the days of the creation week.

I believe that I made the remark in one of my articles that Darwinism is dead. But from an article in *Christianity Today*, Jan. 5, 1959, it appears that this is not quite true. Darwinism is now a hundred years old and this fact was the occasion of the publication of a book entitled *A Century of Darwin*. The writer of this article, Philip E. Hughes, reviews this book and he writes that "the editor claims this book shows that, so far from being dead, Darwinism is *respectable*." The writer, Hughes, adds: "Whether it is *right* is another question; and perhaps it would be unkind to suggest that there is no place more respectable than a cemetery!" According to the writer, moreover, "The effect of the whole is neither massive nor impressive." And the reason for this is that the structure of Darwinism is based on an "unverifiable assumption preached as an infallible dogma."

But the dogma of "natural selection" is still maintained. It is, according to one of the authors of the above mentioned book, the great force "through which operation organic life in the multiplicity of all its forms has come into existence." And Mr. Hughes adds: "Indeed, it might perhaps better be described as the new *god* which has supplanted the God of Scripture to whose creative activity the whole natural order used to be attributed—and still is by those who have been renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them" (Col. 3:10).

I will not discuss the article at length. It certainly is worth reading especially by students who, perhaps, entertain the false notion that the different species developed from one another. But I will conclude by quoting the closing paragraph of the article:

"It is the assumption unsupported and unsupportable by

factual evidence and indeed contrary to scientific knowledge, that life originated from lifeless matter and has, in all its variety and complexity, evolved ultimately from the simplest unicellular organism. With its dogmas, myths, and creedal mystiques, modern Darwinism quite certainly qualifies for a place in current religious thought."

It is my contention that those who make of the creation days of Gen. 1 long periods of billions of years must come to the conclusion that all things have evolved from a simple and single cell, that the species evolved from one-another, and that life originated from lifeless matter. To be sure, they will say that all this took place under the providence of God, but providence is not creation and neither is evolution. H.H.

THE QUESTION ABOUT CHURCH VISITATION

About this subject I received a question from the elders of Classis East to be answered on their meeting of Jan. 6. The question was: "What is the origin and history of Art. 44 of the Church Order, and how must it be applied." And now my own consistory asked me to publish the remarks I made in answer to the above question. You understand, of course, that I spoke only from notes. And it is from these notes that I will attempt to reproduce what I said at the meeting of the elders as nearly as possible.

More than once the Church Order speaks of ecclesiastical deputies that are assigned a certain task whether by the Classis or by the Synod. To these also belong the deputies that are mentioned in Art. 44 and which are known as Church Visitors.

You ask me, first of all, what is the origin of this article. To this I would reply that no specific origin of the custom of appointing church visitors can be designated. In general, however, I would say the origin must be found in the very nature of the church connection. The Reformed Churches do not lead a separate existence as individual churches but constitute a denomination. Although, to be sure, each congregation has its own consistory as its governing body, yet the churches are united on the basis of the Confessions and the Church Order. They have many things in common. It stands to reason, therefore, that seeing they have many common interests, they are also interested in one another's well-being and pay attention to one another. And this may be regarded as the origin of the custom of appointing church visitors and of Art. 44 of the Church Order.

As to the history of this article I may say the following.

We all know, of course, that it was composed, almost in its present form, and adopted by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-19. It took the place of an article about church visitation that was added to the Church Order by the General Synod of The Hague in 1586. Before this date nothing can be found about church visitation in the older editions of the Church Order.

This does not mean, however, that the matter itself was entirely strange to the churches before this time. As we said, it lies in the nature of the church connection in the Reformed Churches that they are interested in and pay attention to one another. Often this was done also by specific and intentional investigation. Thus there was already an act concerning church visitation in the province of North Holland in 1575. Also in the churches of North Holland and Zeeland it was, for that very reason, decided that the classical meetings should be held in all the different places of the Classis. It was thought that, in this way, the Classis would be in a position to learn as much as possible about the condition of the various churches.

This, of course, proved quite insufficient especially in view of the fact that, even at that time, many evils already existed in the churches both in regard to doctrine and life. Discipline was not exercised and the life of the churches was often very lax. Hence, in 1579 a gravamen or proposition was offered to the Particular Synod of South Holland requesting that each Particular Synod and Classis appoint deputies with the calling to take care of all cases that would occur between meetings and also to see to it that every one in the consistories execute his office faithfully. This proposition was not treated at the time because it was not handed in in time. But it shows that the need for church visitation was felt. A similar proposition was brought to the attention of the Synod of Middelburg in 1581. This, however, was rejected chiefly because the Synod was afraid of introducing hierarchy in the churches.

The General Synod of The Hague, however, held in 1586, introduced a rather strong article about church visitation in the Church Order, and also added some guiding principles for the church visitors that would be appointed by the Classes. The guiding principles were the following (my information I have from Rutgers' *Kerkelijke Adviezen*, Vol. I, p. 354 ff.):

1. They shall occasionally listen to the sermons of the minister, not only to find out whether he is pure in doctrine, but also whether he preaches in such a way that the sermons can be for the benefit and edification of the congregation. They shall further investigate whether the minister is diligent in the reading and study of Scripture, and finally, whether the minister makes use of the accepted forms for baptism and other ceremonies.

2. They shall carefully and with courtesy attempt to find out with the elders and deacons of the church in which the minister serves, or even from the members of the church, whether the minister is faithful in edifying the church, whether he exercises Christian discipline, and whether to that end the ecclesiastical gatherings are held.

3. They shall also have oversight over the life and walk of the minister, and find out whether there are any quarrels and disunity in the congregation or other disorders that are detrimental to the life of the congregation and that ought to be removed as quickly as possible.

4. Finally, if with the members of the consistory there

are found any faults with respect to the above mentioned instances, they shall first admonish them privately unto improvement and also help them unto that end, and if this is of no avail they shall report the matter to Classis.

From these principles we learn, first of all, that the church visitors were chiefly concerned with the work and walk of the minister, although the rest of the consistory were, of course, not excluded. Secondly, we also receive the impression that the church visitors were given considerable power even though it was only the power of advice. We may also learn something from this in our day. It would be a good thing, for instance, especially in some cases, as in 1952-53, that the church visitors visit the services to listen to the sermon of the minister (without his knowing that they are coming or that they are present) to see whether he preaches the Word of God to the edification of the congregation. There certainly can be no reasonable objection to this whatever. And the Synod of The Hague 1586 considered this quite proper. As it is today, church visitation is often nothing but a "wassen neus."

But about this presently.

Thus, finally, the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19, adopted article 44 and inserted it in the Church Order.

And the question is: how must this article be applied and carried out properly.

I will first of all quote the article:

"The classis shall authorize at least two of her oldest, most experienced and most competent ministers to visit all the churches once a year and to take heed whether the minister and the consistory faithfully perform the duties of their office, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, through word and deed, the upbuilding of the congregation, in particular of the youth, to the end that they may in time fraternally admonish those who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things to the peace, upbuilding and greatest profit of the churches. And each classis may continue these visitors in service as long as it sees fit, except where the visitors themselves request to be released for the reasons of which the classis shall judge."

To this article the following decisions were appended (in my talk before the elders I added some remarks to these decisions which I will now, too, append to each decision):

"1. Each classis shall appoint from her midst at least two ministers and their alternatives."

Remark: This is stated in Art. 44. Only it weakens the article considerably. The article does not simply speak of the appointment of at least two ministers but emphatically mentions "two of her oldest, most experienced and most competent ministers." To my mind, this is very important. The fathers did not consider church visitation the work of everybody, not even of every minister. It is, if properly conducted, a most difficult work that requires experience, tact and wisdom as well as strong conviction and clear insight into the

truth. For that reason Art. 44 speaks of the oldest, most experienced and competent ministers.

"2. The visitors shall give the congregations at least eight days' notice of the day and hour of their proposed visit."

I am glad that this decision speaks of giving notice, not the consistories, but to the congregations. This implies, of course, that also the members of the congregation are interested in church visitation. It implies, too, that the visit of the church visitors be announced from the pulpit so that any member of the congregation that has anything against the minister and his preaching or against the consistory and their functioning in their respective offices, may bring this to the attention of the visitors. As far as I know this announcement is never made from the pulpit, but it should be done nevertheless. It certainly was done in former years according to Rutgers and should be done according to Monsma and Van Dellen. It stands to reason that not everything can be brought by members of the congregation to the attention of the church visitors but only such matters as pertain to the office and walk of the officebearers as, for instance, the preaching of the ministers and the exercise of discipline by the consistory. Suppose, on the one hand that the members of the congregation voice a general complaint that they are not edified by the preaching of the minister, that he preaches the same thing all the time, and that the elders know about it but do nothing about this situation, then I think it is certainly the calling of the members to bring the matter to the attention of the church visitors and of the latter to investigate the matter. In a case like that it would even be proper for the church visitors to ask the minister whether they might see some of his sermons and to listen to some of them. Suppose, on the other hand, that in the congregation there are some chronic complainers for whom the sermons of the ministers are never edifying, let them bring their well-grounded complaint to the church visitors. If they do, and the latter find their complaints without ground, the visitors should admonish them. But if they do not bring their complaint, the consistory can announce that no complaint was lodged against the preaching and that the complainers may henceforth and forever hold their peace.

"3. The consistory shall see to it that all the consistory members are present at the meeting which is appointed for church visitation. Any member failing to be present shall be required to give the meeting a good reason for his absence. If one-half of the members are absent the visitation cannot be carried out."

On this I have no remarks.

"4. The consistory shall see to it that the record books are at hand for the inspection of the visitors."

On this, too, no remarks.

"5. Of the visitors, one shall function as chairman and the other as secretary. They shall record their findings and actions in a book, which can be consulted at the next visitation, and which can be kept in the classical archives."

Also on this I have no remarks provided the first part

of this decision be properly understood. I am afraid that it is often understood in such a way that the president of the visitors also functions as chairman of the consistory. This is not the idea. It is plain that the meeting for church visitation is a meeting of the consistory and not of the visitors. Hence, the chairman of the visitors should not even presume to be president of the meeting. That this is the meaning of this decision is also evident from the rest, namely, that the other shall function as secretary. This cannot possibly refer to the clerk of the consistory, but only to the secretary of the visitors.

"6. After completing the visitation of all the congregations, the visitors shall with requisite discretion, compose a report of their activities at the next following classis."

No remarks.

For the questions prescribed for church visitation see pp. 59-61 of the Church Order.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the church visitors should accomplish their task as faithfully and thoroughly as possible. In order to do this they should not confine themselves to the prescribed questions in the back of our Church Order but should be at liberty to broaden out on them and give advice as occasion requires. For instance, they could easily broaden out on the second question to the full consistory: "Is the Heidelberg Catechism regularly explained in the services for Divine Worship, so that no doctrine is left untreated?" It is easy, of course, to answer *Yes* to this question and let the matter rest. But suppose that the purpose of the question is, too, to find out whether the minister is faithful in studying the doctrine explained in the Catechism and whether he himself remains ahead of the congregation in knowledge so that he may be able to continue to edify the congregation. Then it becomes a different matter. Then the church visitors might ask such questions as these: "Do you always make new sermons on the Catechism or do you simply put the old pile upside down? What sources do you study in connection with your Catechism preaching? Do you preach on the Catechism from different viewpoints? From what viewpoint are you preaching on it at present?" The same holds for many other questions. For instance, the question to the elders and deacons in the absence of the minister: "Does the minister reveal himself as a worthy example?" Again, it is easy to answer *Yes* and let it pass. But suppose you enter a little more deeply into the matter and ask: "How is his family-life? Is there harmony between man and wife? Are the children obedient to their parents? Are they allowed to visit places of amusements, theatres and movies? Are they allowed to turn on all kinds of radio and television programs?" etc., etc.

In one word, I hardly agree with the method of church visitation as it is conducted today.

Often, instead of spending thousands of dollars for church visitation one might better send a copy of the questions to every consistory, ask them to fill in the answers and ask whether they need any advice.

But that is not the purpose of Art. 44.

And it certainly was not the purpose of our Reformed fathers when they inserted this article in the Church Order.
H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

The Glorious Body of Christ, by R. B. Kuiper. Published by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$4.95.

This is a good book which I may heartily recommend to our readers. It presents the biblical and Reformed view of the Church of Christ. It criticises in rather strong language the modern view of ecumenicity, in fact, it considers that view as contributory to the development and final realization of Antichrist, p. 48. It teaches that the true members of the Body of Christ are only the elect whom God has sovereignly chosen from before the foundation of the world, pp. 322 ff. And it defends this view over against all forms of Arminianism.

To my mind, the order of the book is not always logical. As an illustration of this fact I point to the place which the doctrine of election has in the book. It occurs almost at the end of the book after the whole subject of the Church, the sacraments, the offices, etc. has been treated. This is not correct. Perhaps, this may also be regarded as the reason why, in connection with the truth of election, the doctrine of reprobation is not mentioned.

The style of the book is very clear: it affords easy reading.
H.H.

God's River, by Donald Grey Barnhouse. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.50.

This book is the fourth volume of a series on the epistle to the Romans. It covers the verses 5-11 of chapter 5 of that epistle. It is not meant to be a commentary although it certainly offers an explanation of the text. I would rather say that this book is an explanation of the text together with many illustrations and practical applications. The book is quite sound in stressing the incapability of the sinner and the sovereign grace of God, although I would not subscribe to every statement. I fully agree with what the author writes on the idea of reconciliation on pp. 199-200.

I also agree with what he writes on the appeal of many evangelists to the human will. And he disapproves of such statements as: "If you do not receive Christ as your Saviour, you will be lost." But he thinks that the true proposition should be: "If you do not receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you will remain lost. You always were lost. You were born lost. You are lost, and now we invite you to be reconciled to the true God who is all love toward you." This last can never be truly said to any individual sinner or group of sinners. God loves, not every lost sinner, but only the elect lost sinner.
H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER VI

An Interlude

Revelation 10:1-7

Secondly, let us consider the similarity between this description and that in the first chapter of the book. There, so we found, we certainly have a picture of the mighty Lord Jesus. For He was the one that was dead and is alive and lives forevermore and holds the key of death and hades. And how was He described there? First of all, He came in the form of the Son of man. The description here in chapter ten indicates the same form. For although the text speaks of an angel, nevertheless the details of the hands and feet and face plainly picture the form of a Son of man. And in the second place, notice that there He was described as having eyes as flames of fire and that His face was as the sun shineth in his strength. So also here, in chapter ten, we read that His face was as the sun. In the third place, notice that there, in chapter one, we read that His feet were as burnished brass, indicating that they were like fire. So also here, in chapter ten, we read in a somewhat different symbol that His feet were like pillars of fire. The chief difference between the description in our passage and that in the first chapter is that there He wears the long priestly garb, while of it we read nothing in words of our text. But this difference is, as we shall see, in harmony with the entire occasion of the appearance of this angel. In this vision the Lord does not mean to reveal Himself as priest; and therefore the priestly garb is lacking. But if we consider the similarity in both descriptions, there can be but little doubt that here, as in chapter one, we have a vision of the glorified Lord, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, we cannot help to notice a striking resemblance between this passage and the last part of the book of Daniel. We read there that at the river Hiddekel a man appeared unto Daniel, clothed in linen. His "loins were girded as with pure gold of Uphaz, his body also was like the beryl, and his face was as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes were as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Daniel 10:5, 6. That in this passage we have a description of the Christ in His glory there can be no doubt. But what is of special interest is that of this man clothed in linen we read that as he stood above the river he lifted up his hands to heaven and sware by Him that liveth forever and ever that it shall be for a time and times and a half time. Dan. 12:7. There He performs somewhat the same act that is ascribed to Him in the words of our passage. There, in the passage from Daniel, He swears that the time is appointed,

and that after the appointed time His words shall surely be fulfilled. Here, in the passage of Revelation, He swears that the time of the end is approaching, that there shall be no delay any more. And therefore, if in that portion we have a description of the Christ, as undoubtedly we do have, then there can be no doubt that here too we have the same Son of Man performing a similar act.

But, so we ask, how, in what capacity does the Lord here appear to us? And also then there can be no doubt but that we see the Lord in glory as the King-Judge, and that with the emphasis on His being the Judge of heaven and earth. That He appears as the King is indicated, in the first place, by the general glory of His appearance. His face shineth as the sun, and the rainbow is His crown, while the feet are pillars of fire. In the second place, this is indicated also by what He does. He places His feet on the earth and on the sea, by which He indicates that all is in subjection to Him, as we hope to see presently. He is the King, to Whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. But it is especially the appearance of the Judge which is very prominent. The brightness of His face, the raiment of the cloud, and especially the fiery feet, ready to consume the enemies of His kingdom, all reveal to us that here the Lord appears especially as the Judge of heaven and earth, come to wreak vengeance upon all the host of His enemies. And this is emphasized all the more by the fact that there is no mention of the priestly garb of reconciliation. The time for the priestly work of reconciliation is drawing to an end. At any rate, the purpose of this appearance is not to reveal the Christ in that particular capacity of reconciliation. The interlude is especially connected with the last part of the preceding chapter, and it is at the same time preparing for what is still to come. In the last part of chapter nine we found that in spite of all the judgments that had already come upon the world, yet they did not repent, but continued in their sin of devil-worship, idolatry, murder, fornication, and theft, continued to trample under foot the blood of reconciliation that cried against them. And therefore, the purpose of this vision is not to reveal the Christ in His atoning power, as the Priest, but exclusively as the almighty Judge that is on the verge of wreaking final vengeance upon the world of sin and corruption. The entire purpose of this vision is to announce that judgment, terrible and final judgment, shall presently and speedily come upon the world, and that the enemies of the kingdom are about to be destroyed. But although this is true, there is no reason to fear: for still He carries the rainbow, the symbol of the grace of God with regard to His creation and to all His people. It is through these final judgments that creation shall completely be redeemed, that the covenant shall be realized and perfected, and that all the world shall be subjected to the Triune God in glory. When all the judgments of this mighty King shall be realized, so the rainbow informs us, then shall also the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell, be completed.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Birth of Isaac's Sons

"And Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." — Gen. 25:21-23

Rebekah, Isaac's wife was barren. She was like Sarah, her mother-in-law had been before her. She was like Rachel, her son Jacob's wife, was to be in years to come. It is surprising how often in Scripture we read of barren women, not only these three, but Elizabeth, and Hannah, and Samson's mother. All of them filled an important place in the history of God's covenant, and were married to faithful, Godfearing, covenant husbands. Each was ordained by God to bring forth a child which would fill an important place in the development of the covenant. Nonetheless, each in her own time was called to go through a period of hoping, longing, and anxious waiting such as only a barren woman can know, a period especially severe for a believing woman who longs to bring forth covenant children unto the Lord.

There was, however, a wisdom of God which caused this to be. As we noted each of these women was ordained to bring forth and raise a child which was to fill a special place in God's plan of redemption. Through their years of barren waiting God impressed on each of their minds in turn their own personal weakness and inability. Thus when the time finally came when they should bring forth their sons, they had been prepared by God to realize that the child came not forth from their own strength but from the riches of God's grace for His people. It is God's desire that His people should always understand that redemption comes to them not by the strength of the flesh but by His grace alone. This is generally true throughout the history of the Church; this was specifically true in the life of Isaac and Rebekah.

It speaks for the excellency of the faith of Isaac and Rebekah that all we read of the twenty years of waiting is, "And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren," Gen. 25:21. Abraham and Sarah under similar circumstances had yielded to the temptation of earthly wisdom to seek to raise to themselves a seed through the means of Sarah's handmaid, Hagar. Jacob and Rachel in later years did much the same with Rachel's handmaid Bilhah. Each of those cases arose out of the weakness of faith and gave rise to further sorrow and discord within the respective homes. Isaac and Rebekah did not yield to such wicked temptations. They realized that it was the hand of the Lord which withheld from them children, and before the Lord they made

their plea. By faith the entreaty was made, and at the proper time the Lord gave them answer. Rebekah conceived.

Immediately, however, there arose a new and different problem. God placed two children within the womb of Rebekah, and as they developed the children struggled together within her. This Rebekah took to be a foreboding of evil, and she was overcome with fear. This fear she expressed in the words, "If it be so, why am I thus?" If after all of the many years of waiting her conception was to come to nothing but evil, what was the good of her pregnancy? what was the good of her marriage? what was the good of her life?

It speaks once again of the faith of Rebekah that she did not let this fear prey endlessly upon her mind, but she went to inquire of the Lord, the only One who could give to her an answer to her problem. Neither did the Lord refuse to hear her prayer. He gave to her the remarkable answer, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."

This was a most significant revelation, not just for Isaac and Rebekah, and for Esau and Jacob, but for the Church of all ages and for all who have come in contact with it through the means of the Scriptures. It is filled with implications concerning God, concerning His relationship to men, concerning the nature of His eternal counsel. For those who will receive it, it is a rich source of instruction. For those who refuse it, it can only be a testimony against them.

As Paul was careful to note in his writings to the Romans, this revelation took place before the children were born or had done either good or evil. Already then God revealed very completely what the children would be like, what sort of seed they would have, and what their relationship to each other would be merely on the basis of the fact that He had determined it. From an earthly point of view the children were as yet as similar as two children could possibly be. They were both children of the same parents, brought forth in the same womb at the same time. They were not yet born and had not as yet revealed any difference in character or nature; neither had they performed any works for which they could be held responsible. Yet there was a difference between them, a difference so great that they already struggled together as enemies, a difference that caused them to be antithetically related to each other already in the womb. This difference could have only one source, the good pleasure of the God that caused them to be.

The words "elder" and "younger" as they appear in Gen. 25:23 are not actually complete renditions of the original Hebrew text. The former word does signify the thought of "elder" or "older," but it also implies the ideas "numerous, great, and mighty." The latter denotes "younger" but also "few, small, and insignificant." Actually what we have in this text, therefore, is a description not only of the two children personally but also of the nations that would come forth from them and follow in their footsteps. The oldest

son, which was Esau, would be great and strong and mighty; he would bring forth a numerous seed that would be like him. On the other hand the younger, Jacob, would be weak and insignificant; his seed would be few, petty and small. From their very inception there would be a marked distinction between the two sons. The oldest son would appear to have all of the advantages of earthly power and might. The youngest son would have the disadvantages of smallness, weakness and insignificance.

Nonetheless, in reality there was to be an almost paradoxical reversal, a reversal that would stand in direct contrast to earthly appearance and human wisdom. The older and stronger would be subjugated in service to the younger. In them was to be exemplified the strange rule of the kingdom of heaven so often mentioned by Jesus, "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first," Matt. 19:30. In them would become manifest the reality of which Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence," I Cor. 1:26-29.

When it comes to identifying the historical realization of this prophecy, it is not difficult to see that from the beginning Esau had the earthly advantage. At birth Esau was ruddy and strong; Jacob was not. For an occupation Esau chose that of a hunter adapted to his strength and cunning; Jacob was satisfied with the less challenging occupation of shepherd. In life Esau was forward and bold, confident in his own ability; Jacob made recourse to trickery and deceit. When Esau threatened his life, Jacob fled the land in fear. Even when Jacob returned to Canaan enlarged and wealthy, he came trembling because he feared the greater strength of Esau and his four hundred armed men.

When it comes to identifying the prophesied servitude of Esau to Jacob, however, the problem becomes more difficult. It seems impossible to find any point in Esau's personal life when he was subjected in service to his brother. In fact, even when the personal life of Esau is passed by and we look exclusively at the nation which came forth from him, the problem does not clearly resolve itself. There were, of course, times in history when the Edomites were subjected to Israel; but we also find the rather strange situation where at the close of Israel's history as a distinct nation the Herods sat upon the throne of the Jewish nation, and they were Edomites, children of Esau.

This difficulty arises when one tries to interpret this prophecy as being merely historical. It was at times realized historically; but then it was only typical. Being typical it was temporal and did not endure. From Romans 9 we learn that essentially this prophecy was spiritual referring to elec-

tion and reprobation. Jacob, weaker according to the flesh, had his ascendancy in election. His nation consisted in the old dispensation of the elect gathered after him from his natural seed, but in a broader sense of the elect of all ages who with him are chosen of God and precious. On the other hand, Esau, although stronger in the flesh, was not chosen of God but rejected and reprobate. The nation ascribed to him was, in the first place, the wicked nation brought forth from his flesh; but, in the broader sense, it too includes all that are reprobate with him according to the counsel of God. It is the eternal wisdom of God revealed in this text that the reprobate, numerous and mighty though they may be, always serve to the good of the small but elect remnant who are precious to the God who chose them.

There are those who claim to be Reformed and nonetheless object to an interpretation such as this because, they say, it makes reprobation equally ultimate with election. If they mean by this that reprobation is not to be made as definite, as absolute, as eternally certain as election, they deny the clear teaching of this text, especially in the light of Paul's use of this text in Romans 9. The reprobation of Esau and his nation took place before he was born and was just as certain as Jacob's election. However, if we ask about the logical order of God's purpose in election and reprobation, they are definitely not equally ultimate. According to certainty reprobation is equal to election, but according to God's purpose reprobation always serves election. This is the teaching of the prophecy which was made known to Rebekah, the elder shall serve the younger, the reprobate shall serve the elect.

The fulfillment of this prophecy came to pass in the individual lives of Esau and Jacob. In a typical sense it also took place in the two nations that came forth from their loins. And in the broadest sense it is always being fulfilled in the relationship between elect and reprobate in all history. The reprobate from an earthly point of view are always the great, the many, the strong and the mighty. They hold the positions of earthly power and prestige. But before God all of this prowess is as nothing for there is one thing they lack—His infinite and eternal favor. He according to His eternal good-pleasure brings forth His people as meek and lowly, small and insignificant in earthly power and numbers. But His love is with them, and His power is great enough to make the greatness of the mighty reprobates serve to the eternal good of the lowly elect.

That this might be made known God caused two different children to grow together in the womb of Rebekah, one elect and the other reprobate. Antithetically related according to election, He caused them to struggle together. When they came forth from the womb the weaker grasped the heel of the stronger. He was Jacob, the supplanter, weak according to the flesh but favored of God and eternally ordained to supplant the strong of the earth, thus receiving a greater weight in glory.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

XI.

(Matthew 25:1-13)

Once again we turn our attention to the instruction of our Lord in his eschatological address in Matthew 24 and 25. In the past two issues of *The Standard Bearer* we digressed just a bit to other passages of Scripture. We did this for two reasons. The first was because we were doing much traveling and speaking and visiting and therefore wrote on what was most convenient at the time. The other reason was that in that way we could write on something in line with the holiday season, Christmas and New Year.

But now we return once more to our exposition of Matthew 24 and 25.

Up till this point we have discussed through the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. The line of thought was briefly as follows: Jesus is answering the questions of his disciples concerning the time when the sign of the Parousia of the Son of Man shall be and concerning the end of the world. These two matters are not two chronologically different points in time. They fall together. When the sign of the Parousia is come then shall also be the end of the world.

It is especially of this end (consummation) of the world, the return of the Son of Man to judge the living and the dead that Christ speaks throughout the twenty-fourth chapter and of all that leads up to it. And repeatedly the Lord impresses upon the minds of his disciples and upon the minds of all who read and hear the words of this prophecy that we be *watchful* and in *readiness*.

Thus we read in Matthew 24:13: "But he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." In verse 42 of this same Chapter we read, "Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." And again in the next two verses of this same Chapter we read, "But know this that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

In the present passage, which is now under consideration, Jesus again repeats the warning that we live in constant readiness and watchfulness. In Matthew 25:13 we read, "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

With the foregoing in mind let us take more particular notice of Matthew 25:1-13 where we read: "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five*

of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him into the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour nor the day."

Jesus is here speaking of the *kingdom of heaven*. He says in verse 1, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." This should immediately warn us not to limit the notion in the text to the *church*. For the kingdom of heaven and the church are not identical concepts in Scripture. The church is the body of Jesus Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all things in all. Not so the kingdom of heaven. The latter refers to the reign of the Son of man over all things, and of His spiritual reign in our hearts by His Word and Spirit. Although the reign of Christ in His Church differs from his reign over the wicked, being a reign in the church, this reign of Christ in His kingdom is wider than the Church. His kingdom is over all things. He is set at the right hand of God, King in Zion, and to him is given a rod of iron that the nations may be punished.

Such is the viewpoint in our text.

We must here keep in mind the prophetic perspective of Daniel's night-visions as recorded to us in Daniel 7. Here the kingdom is presented as belonging to the Son of Man, heir of all things, and as it is given to the saints. The thrones of the nations are overthrown in rapid succession. Such is the drama of history. Such are the sorrows of the history of the world. They are the "birthpangs" which end in the final return of the Son of Man. Then shall be the *Parousia*, the glorious return of Christ to forever be with His people in glory. It will be as the arrival of the bridegroom, who will come to claim his bride, and to forever be with her. Just as the bridegroom does not come to take his bride for a season, so shall be the Parousia. When once Christ comes as the Son of Man to claim all things He shall never again leave the Church. The Kingdom shall then be His forever. And it shall be to the saints, for all those who love His appearance.

In this light the "then" in verse 1 takes on a very significant meaning. It does not so much refer to a point on the calendar as a temporal significance, (although it is a date on the calendar) but rather to the definite time of the Son of Man at the time. It will not be just anytime according to the determinate counsel of God. It will be the Consummation of the ages. It will be the time of harvest — God's harvest time. Then shall the wicked be judged according to their works and according to their attitude toward the Son of Man. And then shall also the righteous receive their reward of grace as the foreknown children of God, children of election!

Only the children of election will dwell in readiness to

meet their Lord. They only love His appearance and seek the things above where Christ is at the right hand of God. The wicked and the hypocrites and all who do not repent from their sins will in that day hear, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

To demonstrate this point very clearly Jesus employs the figure and custom of his time of friends going out to meet the Bridegroom.

It should be admitted at once that in Scripture Christ is often called the Bridegroom. However, that does not mean that in this passage the term "Bridegroom" should be exploited to the fullest extent. That the Bridegroom in this parable is the "Son of Man" is only incidental to the story. Thus also with the terms "virgin" in the text. Certainly the *foolish* virgins are not virgins in the sense that they will one day be the "bride" of the bridegroom in the parable. Nor do the prudent virgins become the bride of the groom. They are in the parable only the friends of the bride and the groom. They rejoice with the Bridegroom and the bride in the parable. To spiritualize the parable in every detail leads to dogmatical absurdities. We should not attempt to distill doctrine from a parable but rather demonstrate the doctrine by the parable! Hence, the attempt to ascertain what in a soteriological sense is exactly indicated by the "oil" in the lamps also leads to absurdity. Did the *foolish* virgins in the parable not have "oil" too? They did not take oil in their vessels. They ran out! Suppose one would attempt to interpret this "oil" as referring to Holy Spirit in a saving sense (for that it would then be in the prudent virgins!) would this not lead to the conclusion of the falling away of the saints?! But how could that be true? Does not the bridegroom say to these foolish virgins, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not"?

I must honestly say that after much thought I believe that sober exegesis of this passage leads us to look in another direction. We must ask: what is the *tertium comparationis* in the parable. What is the central point which our Lord would teach us here and bind upon our conscience. What is the comparison which our Lord makes in this passage. That is the question we must face and answer.

It is certainly beyond contradiction that our Lord throughout this entire eschatological discourse impresses upon the disciples the need of being watchful. We have called attention to the meaning of "watchfulness" in an earlier essay in this series. We only wish here to reaffirm that watchfulness and readiness consist in a Christian walk of thankfulness, that we have been redeemed from so great a death, and thus live in the hope of Christ's final return, expecting the same with patience.

He who would seriously seek the honor of the bridegroom in the parable would surely take the precaution of having extra oil in the lamps. Especially whereas they did not know just at what hour the bridegroom would come. He came at

midnight. Almost they had forgotten. But the extra oil made it possible to join the festal group to the house of the bridegroom. Not so the foolish virgins in the parable.

For the foolish "the door is shut."

They are not simply too late. They are at heart enemies of the bridegroom. They are not really his friends. He does not even know them. Thus it is with all who do not live in readiness and watchfulness, but begin to smite their fellow-servants. When Christ shall come they shall receive according to their works which were evil. And just as the foolish virgins will not be able to enter so shall all that hateth God and loveth and maketh the lie be cast out into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Since God works grace through admonitions, let us heed, by his grace, this admonition and live in readiness as those who know the Lord being known of Him!

G.L.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in South Holland, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 18, 1959, at 9 A. M.

The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than 30 days before the date of Classis.

REV. H. VELDMAN, *Stated Clerk*

Teacher Needed

Hope Protestant Reformed School, 1545 Wilson Ave., S. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan, is in need of an additional teacher in the elementary grades for the 1959-60 school year. If interested, please apply by contacting Mr. J. Kalsbeek, secretary of the school board, 4132 Hall, S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan, phone AR 6-7586.

IN MEMORIAM

Our Board wishes to express their sympathy with one of its members, Mr. Gerrit B. Lubbers in the loss of his Mother,

MRS. JACOB A. SCHUT-DEKRAKER

The Lord our God give comfort and consolation unto the bereaved family.

The Board of Hope Prot. Ref. School
Mr. Ted Engelsma, President
Mr. John Kalsbeek, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church herewith wish to express their sincere sympathy to one of their fellow members, Mr. W. Clason, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. G. CLASON

May our covenant God comfort and sustain him in his sorrow.

Rev. A. Mulder, President
Mr. Jack Van Dyke, Secretary

IN HIS FEAR

"... And Keep His Commandments ..."

(4)

"Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

Solomon said that; and we have no right to change it.

We may not eliminate that fear of God as belonging to our duty before God. But we may not eliminate either the keeping of His commandments from what constitutes our duty before His face. Salvation is not lawlessness and license to sin. We are saved exactly in order that we may keep God's law and are saved by having God's law written in our hearts by His Spirit. We are saved from lawlessness; and in salvation we are given the love of God, which finds delight only in keeping His commandments. Although, as we pointed out last time, the ability to do this is not included in the demand that we do it, yet God works in those whom He saves both to will and to do.

We do well at this point also to note that the one without the other is impossible. And we do well to consider that the one is as impossible as the other apart from God's grace. It is not so that we can fear God but need grace to keep His commandments. It is not so that before we are regenerated we can believe in God but cannot keep His commandments. It is not the truth of Scripture that we do have the power to accept Christ in order to receive from Him the power to keep God's commandments. The must of faith, as well as the must of keeping God's commandments, does not contain the ability nor even imply the ability to do so. All Arminianism is based on that unscriptural tenet; all conditional promises, all offers of salvation, all altar calls, all pleading to let Jesus Christ have His way and to open the heart door to Him so that He can begin the work of salvation in us are based on the presupposition that the man so addressed CAN believe, can desire salvation before Christ is in that heart and before God will bestow any part of the rich blessedness of salvation. But it simply is not true. As we pointed out last time, except a man be born again he cannot even see the kingdom. And that means that he sees nothing of that kingdom. He does not see the King of that kingdom or any of the blessings in that kingdom. Surely he cannot see that Christ Who is supposed (we say supposed because any honest exposition of Revelation 3:20 will reveal that Christ stands and knocks at the door of the church at Laodicea and not at the heart of the individual members in that church) to be knocking there. Granted, for the sake of argument that he could hear the knock—which he cannot do for the same reason that he cannot see the kingdom: he is spiritually dead—he still could not see the Christ standing there; and at best he would call it imagination. How can a man even desire that which he cannot see? Yea, the natural man calls all that which the

regenerated child of God sees, and considers to be precious, nothing more than foolishness and worthless. The King and the blessings of the kingdom he just cannot see. At best to him it is a fancy pipe-dream but there is no reality in it for him. And surely included in that lack of ability to see is the fact that he cannot believe anything of that kingdom. So that he cannot even believe that Christ is there knocking at the door of his heart—if you wish to keep that phrase. He cannot even believe that Christ desires his salvation. No, with the Apostle Paul we say that even this faith is a gift of God and that the duty of man to believe (or fear God) is fulfilled by man only as God gives him the power to do so. Here again Christ must come between the must and the can; and He does not come after our believing but with the believing; and that means both logically and chronologically before the believing.

But, as we began to say, these two, fearing God and keeping His commandments, are always found together. No man simply fears God but does not keep His commandments. And no man keeps God's commandments even though he does not believe in God. This latter truth is taught very literally in Scriptures. We read so clearly and emphatically in Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And again, Paul writes to the church at Rome these words, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. 14:23.

From these passages it ought to be plain that the unbeliever *never* keeps God's commandments and sins in everything that he does. Indeed, as was the case with Jehu, the unbeliever may, in love of his own flesh and in hatred towards God, keep the outward form of the letter of the law in a few isolated cases that bring advantage to his flesh. But the unbelievers do not perform therein acts of love to God. Consequently they do not keep His commandments but make use of His commandments to try to live apart from Him. It simply is an undeniable truth of Scripture that without faith we cannot keep God's commandments.

Nor is this a New Testament doctrine that was unknown to the Church in the Old Testament dispensation. Job, who was a contemporary of Abraham declared in Job 28:28, "And to man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." The psalmist says in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever." Notice what Solomon says, in the wisdom which God gave him, in Prov. 8:13, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, the froward mouth do I hate." Or again, note what he writes in Proverbs 16:6, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." God speaks through the mouth of Jeremiah in chapter 32 verse 40 very clearly in regard to the matter we are discussing. We read, "And I will make an

everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Can you want the relationship between these two expressed more clearly? God will give us the fear that He demands of us as our duty before Him; and he will do so in order that we may keep the commandments which He demands of us. The must of keeping His commandments becomes a can keep His commandments when He gives to us the can of believing in Him. We must believe, and we must obey. We cannot fear, and we cannot obey. But God gives us the fear in order that we may be able to obey. He gives us the ability to obey by giving us His fear. Truly only In His Fear do we keep His commandments.

In all the passages quoted above, keeping God's law and fearing Him or believing in Him are combined. If we simply look at faith in the sense of the activity of believing, the reason for this can be seen. How can one possibly serve one whom one does not know? How can one keep the commandments of one whom one denies as even existing? How can the atheist — so called, for there is no practical atheist — keep the commandments of a God whom he claims does not exist? If I am of the opinion that Jehovah does not exist except in the minds of men, why should I serve Him? That is the height of folly! There might be reason to serve a god whom I hated, whose religion and worship I detest. It might be wise for me to keep at least some of his commandments in the slavish fear of what he might be able to do to me. So did Cain bring a sacrifice to God. But the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the Spirit of Truth Who guided him, make a point of it that without faith it is impossible to please Him, and thus to keep His commandments. God hated that sacrifice of Cain even as Solomon writes, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is His delight," Proverbs 15:8. Cain did in an outward sense what God demanded; yet he did not keep God's commandments. The inner principle of God's demands, whether these are found in the Ten Commandments or in the ceremonial laws, is love to God. That is the idea of Proverbs 15:8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord because it is not an act of love. Indeed, God taught man to sacrifice. God taught man to approach Him only in the way of a sacrifice. He taught us to come to Him in the blood of Christ; and that is why Abel came with the bloody sacrifice of the lamb. That is why his prayer (sacrifice) was a delight to God. He showed love to God. He did it in the fear of God. In reverence and awe before Him as the Holy God that He is, in faith in His word that the blood of Christ is the only way to the Father, believing that only the sacrifice of the life of Christ gives us, corrupt and guilty sinners that we are, the right to approach God in prayer, Abel showed love to God. Cain showed nothing but hatred toward God even though he brought a sacrifice.

Do not forget that to fear God or believe in Him is an act of love as well as keeping His commandments. Can it be

an act of love to tell God that we do not believe Him? Is it ever an act of love to tell Him Who is truth and is light that He is a liar? Nay, had Eve continued in the love of God she would have told the devil that he is the liar and that she was going to continue to take God at His word, to believe in Him, to walk in His fear and have no doubt concerning Who He is and what He demands of us.

But when you look at faith from the viewpoint of its being the spiritual bond whereby we are united with Christ, it becomes exceedingly plain that unless we have faith, that is, unless we are so engrafted into Christ by faith we cannot keep God's commandments. Jesus expresses that so beautifully in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without (or better translated, apart from) me, ye can do nothing." And in the preceding verse which explains the one we just quoted Jesus says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me," John 15:4.

We have no life in us of ourselves. We have no desire or ability in us, as we are by nature, whereby we would keep God's commandments. We could never say with the psalmist, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97) except as we, standing in that living connection with Christ, which the engrafting into Him by a true faith realizes, draw all the desire and power out of Him. No more than the branch cut off from the vine can produce any fruit, can the man who does not stand in that living union with Christ which God accomplishes by the bond of faith keep one of God's commandments or even have the desire to keep one.

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. That is absolutely true. But we may also say, on the basis of all of the Scriptures, Fear God and keep His commandments are both the gift of God to us in Christ. We must. We cannot get away from the must in either that fear or the keeping of those commandments. And we can do both because God has come between that must and us in the person, Spirit and work of Christ to engraft us into Him by a true and living faith. You cannot, on the basis of Holy Writ, say to every man you meet on the street, "God promises every one of you that if ye believe you will be saved." But you can say, "God promises His elect people faith and through it the desire and power to keep His commandments." The former statement puts God in a position where His purposes may be put to naught and where the blood of Christ may have been shed in vain. And it puts unbelieving man before God in salvation. Therefore such a statement cannot be made and defended in love to God. The latter statement speaks of His faithfulness to His everlasting covenant and acknowledges Him as being first, last and all in our salvation. Therefore it expresses love to God. The former does not show faith in the testimony of God in the Scriptures and

(Continued on page 213)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

THE EUCHARIST (continued)

We now continue with the quotation on the views of the Eucharist by Radbertus by the New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia: "This is done by miracle (i. 2), a creative act performed by the word of the Creator; more particularly, through the medium of Christ's words on institution since he is himself the substantial and eternal Word. The body of Christ is not perceptible by the senses, because that would be superfluous (visibility of the presence of the body) and would not increase the reality, and to eat the flesh in its sensible appearance would clash with human custom (xi. 1); because such reception would seem repulsive and ridiculous to heathen and unbelievers (xiii. i sqq.); but mostly because the operation would no longer be a mystery but a pure miracle, whereas the former by concealing the content does not originate but excites faith so that this is preserved and its meritorious service is enhanced (xiii. 1 sqq., i. 5). Though upon consecration the bread and wine are only such in appearance, yet not all symbols are merely appearances, and these as symbols cover the real presence as content.

"The explanation of Radbert's position in holding at once such opposite views (his view on Transubstantiation and the view of Augustine—H.V.) is found in his attachment to the literal authority of the Scriptures. Christ's words, 'This is my body,' are to be taken in the crassest literalness. Christ has only one body and if another body be offered in the sacrament than the crucified one, another blood than what was shed, then its partaking could not effect the forgiveness of sins. The historical body is the indispensable basis of the sacramental body, howsoever spiritual the sacramental mystery. Moreover, Christ abides in the believer by the unity of his flesh and blood which must be sustained by the real presence in the sacrament. These two disparate views of the patristic (of the fathers, H.V.) tradition Radbertus approximated but never successfully fused. This remained for the strenuous efforts of the later centuries, as evidenced in the following elements of the resulting dogma: (1) The body of Christ is not created but becomes present in the consecration though without extension in space; (2) the relation of the presence to the sensible properties is posited under the categories of substance and accidents (the word 'accident' here refers to any non-essential circumstance or attribute—H.V.); and (3) the elements are symbols of the presence and the sacramental body is symbol of the mystical body, the sustenance of both in one constituting the blessing. Two of his contemporaries opposed the view of Radbert, namely, Rabanus Maurus and Ratramnus, both of whom were Augustinian. The former took offense at the transformation of

the elements into the historical body of Christ, denying that the mystery identified the sacramental with the historical body. A great many followed along the lines marked out by Radbert, among whom, of the ninth century, were Florus Magister, subdeacon of Reims, Hinemar of Reims, Remigius, and Pseudo-Alcuin." — end of quote.

Radbertus, therefore, taught that by the words of consecration the bread and the wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, although these remain concealed under the qualities of bread and wine as to the senses. He taught that in the consecration the sensible properties remain unchanged. Mind you, he speaks of the *sensible properties* as being unchanged. However, the substance of the bread and wine within are efficaciously changed into the real body and blood of Christ.

Early Medieval Developments.

Radbertus was opposed in his view of the Eucharist and of Transubstantiation by most of his contemporaries. He himself had been involved in a violent dispute with another monk, Ratramn. Radbertus had started from the omnipotence of God, to Whom all things are possible, and maintained the miraculous change of the elements of bread and wine. He had looked upon the elements as no more than a veil which deceives our senses and keeps the body of Christ concealed from us. He was opposed by Ratramn. Ratramn properly distinguished between the signs and the thing represented by them, the internal and external, and pointed out the true significance of the *mysteries*, which consists in this, that through their medium the mind of man rises from the visible to the invisible. If it were possible to eat the body of Christ, in the proper sense of the word, faith would no longer be required, and the mystery, as such, would lose all its significance. The gross reality would destroy the idea, and nothing but a mere materialism would remain. Ratramn also supposed a conversion of the bread and wine into the body of Christ, but only in the ideal sense of the word.

However, the doctrine of Transubstantiation gained the ascendancy during these medieval ages. In the eleventh century this doctrine and view as taught by Radbertus was denied by a certain Berengar, Canon of Tours, and afterwards Archdeacon at Angers. Berengar combated principally the doctrine of an entire change, in such a manner as to make the bread cease to be bread, and to have nothing left but the accidents. In accordance with the earlier fathers, he retained the doctrine of a change from an inferior to a superior form, and of a mystical participation in the body of Christ under the figure of bread.

Berengar was violently opposed by four opponents, who are recognized as practically the authors of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Two of these opponents were Lanfranc and Guitmund. Lanfranc was the first to teach that the body of Christ is received also by the unworthy, a view essentially implying the reality of the change of the bread. This lies in the nature of the case. If the elements of the bread and wine

are actually changed into the body and blood of Christ, then it surely makes no difference whether a believer or an unbeliever receives them. More important than the word of Lanfranc was the work of Guitmund. In this work the view was set forth that "in the sacrament, the substance, not the form, being changed, the bread and wine do not become new flesh and new blood, but the existing body of Christ that, nevertheless, each separate particle is the whole body of Christ." In this latter statement are contained four axioms of subsequent theologians: "(1) not a part of the body of Christ (as the flesh) but the whole body, the whole Christ, is present in the Eucharist in virtue of the change; (2) the whole body, the whole Christ, is not only in the entire host, but no less entirely in each part; (3) even though a thousand masses are celebrated simultaneously at different places, the whole body of Christ is present in each individually and entirely in all; (4) by the breaking of the host and its crushing by the teeth the indivisible body of Christ is not divided." Anselm denied that with the blood only the soul of Christ is received and with the body only the body, but maintained that the entire Christ, both God and man, is received in each. Henceforth it was a standing formula that "the entire Christ exists and is received under each species," and though the conception of the Eucharist as spiritual sustenance prevailed later, yet the argument was repeatedly recalled. Guitmund also made an advance in a closer determination of the process in the sacrament. We must remember that, according to this doctrine of Transubstantiation, one thing becomes another that already exists. When the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, the body and blood of Christ do not come into being. They are already in existence. Hence, the bread and wine are changed into something which already exists. It was stated that this change did not occur by flight from heaven through space, but that the human nature of Christ, now exalted, was capable by virtue of omnipotence to remain undivided and substantial where it is, and at the same time to be at every other place where it will. However, the doctrine of Transubstantiation had been so generally adopted as the orthodox doctrine, that Berengar, who ventured to express doubts concerning its correctness, was condemned, and obliged by several synods to retract. And he would have suffered still more if Pope Gregory VII had not at last succeeded in protecting him against the rage of his enemies. Berengar did not take offence at the use of the phrase, "to partake of the body and blood of Christ," but he explained it in a more or less ideal manner.

Later Scholastic Developments.

It was Hildebert of Tours who was the first to make use of the full-sounding term "transubstantiation," though similar expressions, such as *transitio*, had previously been employed.

Most of the earlier scholastics and the disciples of Lanfranc in particular, had defended the doctrine of the change of the bread into the body of Christ, and the doctrine of the *Accidentia sine subjecto*; these were now solemnly confirmed

or made an unchangeable article of faith by Pope Innocent III. Innocent fixed this doctrine as a dogma at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. This decree reads as follows: "There is verily one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved, in which the same priest is himself the sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body, and the wine into the blood, by divine power."

So, the doctrine was now officially established. And nothing was left to the later scholastics, but to answer still more subtle questions, such as: "In what respect can it be said that the body of Christ is actually broken together with the bread? Do animals partake of the body of Christ, when they happen to swallow a consecrated host? Is the bread used in the Lord's Supper changed only in the flesh of our Lord, or also into His body and soul, or into His divinity itself, or even into the Holy Trinity? Does the change take place gradually, or suddenly? Is there only one body in the multitude of hosts, so that the same Christ is sacrificed at the same time upon all altars, which constitutes the mystery of the mass?"

The Doctrine of Concomitance.

The word "concomitance" means literally: existing or occupying together. The Roman Catholic doctrine of Concomitance refers to the practice in that Church which withholds the cup in the sacrament of the Eucharist from the laity.

The Roman Catholic Church admits that this custom of withholding the cup from the laity is contrary to the original institution of the ordinance, and to the usage of the early Church. But, it is defended, first of all, on the ground that the cup is unnecessary to the completeness of the sacrament. The blood is in the body; he therefore who receives the latter receives the former. And, as the whole Christ, as to His body and soul and divinity is not only in each species, but in every particle of both, he who receives the consecrated bread receives the whole Christ and derives all the benefit which the sacrament is capable of affording. And, secondly, this practice is defended on the ground that there is great danger in passing the cup from one communicant to another, that a portion of its contents should be spilt; and as the cup after consecration contains the real blood of Christ, its falling to the ground and being trodden under foot is a profanation which should by all means be avoided." H.V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy with their fellow consistory members, Henry J. Holstege and Bernard J. Lubbers, in the loss of their Mother and Grandmother, respectively,

MRS. CORA SCHUT

May the God of all grace comfort the hearts of the bereaved.
The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church:
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President
Mr. Harry Zwak, Clerk

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 6. But God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from his own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption, and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does he permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.

The above translation is very inaccurate, and, as a comparison will show, does not correspond with the Dutch translation, which is far more correct. In the first place, the article does not begin with the contrasting “but” in the original, but with “for,” indicating that here we have a further step in the logical development of the truth of perseverance. This certainly changes the viewpoint of the article entirely. In the second place, even though this gives a somewhat clumsy English expression, we should nevertheless note that the original does not have “according to his unchangeable purpose of election,” but: “*out of his unchangeable purpose of election.*” This is a fine distinction, but nevertheless significant since it points to the idea of *source* rather than that of standard. The last part of the translation above is incorrect even to the extent that an entire phrase is omitted. It should be rendered as follows: “nor suffers them to slip to that point that they fall out of the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or that they commit the sin unto death, or against the Holy Spirit, and having been totally deserted by him (i.e., the Holy Spirit), plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.” In this connection we may also note that the original Latin has two different terms in this article that are translated “wholly” and “totally.” The Latin terms are *prorsus* and *penitus* respectively. I believe this distinction is of importance. The latter term defines more carefully the respect in which the Holy Ghost is not utterly taken away from God’s people. For the root meaning of the term is “internally, in the inmost part, deep within.” And in this sense it comes to mean “through and through, thoroughly, entirely, wholly.” We shall call attention to the significance of this a bit later; but even now we may point to the fact that this stands in close connection with the first statement of the following article: “For in the first place, in these falls he preserves in them the incorruptible seed of regeneration.”

The first matter demanding our attention, then, is that of the connection of this article with the preceding. That connection is expressed by the word “for,” which indicates that

here we have a reason and a further explanation of that which was taught earlier in the chapter. In the preceding the fathers laid down the truth that the saints, by reason of the remains of indwelling sin, could not persevere in grace if left to their own strength (Article 3). And in the two subsequent articles the fathers enlarged on this idea, calling attention to the reality and seriousness of the sins and falls of the saints, and at the same time emphasizing that the truth of preservation does not at all abrogate the necessity of watching and prayer. However, the main proposition was that God, Who is faithful, mercifully confirms and powerfully preserves the saints in grace even to the end, influencing and actuating them by His Spirit. And the very last part of the preceding article had returned to the thought that after all, even in their deepest falls, the saints cannot fall from grace, but that through serious repentance they return into the way of life and into the light of God’s fatherly countenance. And now the present article gives the reason and the explanation of the fact that even in and through their deepest falls and enormous sins God powerfully preserves His people unto the end, so that they do indeed through earnest repentance return into the path of life. And strikingly enough, — and, too, quite in harmony with the very keynote of the Reformed truth, — that reason is fundamentally *God*. Notice how the article begins: “For *God . . .*” God, Who is rich in mercy, — He Himself is the reason. And it is mercy alone, rich, abundant mercy, that delivers us from the misery of our deepest falls and powerfully preserves us even in and all the way through our most miserable failures.

In the second place, we must by all means not overlook the very quality that causes that mercy to be so rich and abundant. It is *sovereign* mercy. Most significantly the article calls our attention to the truth that the deepest reason for our preservation and perseverance is “God’s unchangeable purpose of election.” The first article of this chapter already made reference to this truth indirectly. But here the perseverance of the saints is directly referred to God’s election. And as we indicated in our comments on the translation, actually the fathers present God’s purpose of election as the source or fountain from which the blessing of preservation flows. It is *out of* God’s unchangeable purpose of election that He does not totally withdraw His Holy Spirit from His own. Hence, the perseverance of the saints is essentially the preservation of the elect, of “His own.” We are pointed, therefore, once more not only to the fundamental significance of the truth of sovereign election, but reminded again that after all the basic cleavage between us and the Arminians is in regard to that truth of election. This is not the first time our attention is called to this point. Already in the chapter on predestination the connection between election and all the blessings of salvation was clearly pointed out; and in this connection perseverance was also mentioned. Thus we read in I, 7: “This elect number . . . God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow

upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and *having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son*, finally, to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of his glorious grace." And again, in I, 8: "... since the Scripture declares the good pleasure, purpose and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which he hath chosen us from eternity, *both to grace and glory, to salvation and the way of salvation* . . ." And again, I, 9: "... therefore election is the fountain of every saving good; from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects." This same connection is traced again in regard to the quickening and saving efficacy of the death of Christ in chapter two (II, 8). And when the truth concerning the conversion of man is set forth, the fathers once more take pains to note the inseparable connection between it and God's purpose of election. Cf. III, IV, 7, 10, 11. And here again, the truth of the sure perseverance of the saints proceeds from God's unchangeable purpose of election. Election is the answer to the question as to why the saints persevere, God's unchangeable election. And that is just exactly why the Arminians were forced to deny the perseverance of the saints: they denied the truth of election. We must see this important fact clearly; it can never have too much emphasis, especially in our day of rampant Arminianism. Once we let go of the truth of sovereign, immutable election, we lose all of the truth of salvation. Indeed, the Arminians apparently maintained a doctrine of eternal election. But do not forget that it was an election that rested upon the will of man, rested upon foreseen faith and perseverance. And for that reason they could not maintain the truth of the perseverance of the saints. From the Arminian doctrine of election the truth of perseverance could not follow for the simple reason that, according to the Arminians, election itself followed from perseverance. In the Arminian system man's perseverance, not God's election, was the ultimate. In the Arminian system everything is wavering and vascillating. The Arminian does not know of any unchangeable purpose of election. And that is its fundamental failure. The whole strength of the Reformed view is in God's unchangeable purpose of election. That purpose is that the elect shall be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. That purpose of election is sovereign and unchangeable, unchangeable just because it is absolutely sovereign. And therefore it shall certainly be realized and the saints can never fall from grace. Their perseverance is sealed from eternity! Nor is this connection between perseverance and election one that is established merely by a process of logical deduction. It is directly taught in the Scriptures. More than once do the Scriptures connect the preservation of the saints with God's unchangeable purpose. Thus, for example, we read in John 6:39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And again the Lord Jesus alludes to that

same election in John 10:28, 29: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." And to mention one more, the vision of the sealing of the one hundred and forty and four thousand, recorded in Rev. 7:1-8, teaches us the same truth.

From this fundamental truth all the rest of the truths stated in this article follow. In the first place, God does not wholly withdraw His Holy Spirit from His own. In the second place, He does not suffer them to slip so far that they fall from the grace of adoption and the state of justification. In the third place, He does not suffer them to slip so far that they commit the sin unto death and thus plunge themselves into everlasting destruction, having been totally deserted by the Holy Spirit.

We must call attention to these points in detail in our next article.

However, there are two significant observations to be made before we go into detail. Our first observation is that it is indeed true according to the very language of the article that these truths are connected with God's unchangeable purpose of election. From whom does God not wholly withdraw His Holy Spirit? "From his own people." Whom does God not suffer to fall from the grace of adoption and the state of justification? "Them," that is, "His own people." Whom does God not suffer to commit the sin unto death, to be totally deserted by the Holy Spirit, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction? "Them," that is, "His own people." Our second observation is that the language of this article is again totally negative. God does *not* wholly withdraw His Spirit from His people. He does *not* suffer them to slip so far that they fall from the grace of adoption and the state of justification. This is rather striking. Also the language of Article 4 was negative: "yet converts are *not* always so influenced and actuated . . ." Perhaps this negative language is somewhat occasioned by the fact that the fathers are answering the Arminians. I rather believe, however, that it is due to the fact that while the truth of preservation as such is positive and can be positively stated, and while it is possible by means of such negative statements as these to define the boundaries within which the grace of preservation operates (and also, by the way, within which the enormous sins and falls of the saints are committed), nevertheless it is very difficult to say anything positive about the *manner* of the operation of this preserving grace. That manner is mysterious. And the truth stated in another connection in Article 13 of the previous chapter could well be applied here also: "The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life." And the last part of that article might well be paraphrased: "Notwithstanding which, they rest satisfied with knowing and experiencing that by this grace of God they are enabled to persevere unto the end."

H.C.H.

THE MEANING OF "SHILOH" IN GENESIS 49:10

Genesis 49:10 is that well-known and beautiful Messianic prophecy, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The Revised Version translates, more correctly, I believe: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the *ruler's* staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the *obedience* of the *peoples* be."

Chapter 49 of Genesis contains a series of predictions concerning the future of the sons of Jacob. Israel is now a very old man, who is ready to depart for his eternal home. Before he does, however, he calls his twelve sons to his bedside to leave with them his dying words. Prophecies they are, for he himself says, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." And blessings they are, for we read in verse 28, "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them."

The prophecies to his three oldest sons had already been uttered. They were not good. Reuben was his firstborn, his might, and the beginning of his strength. Nevertheless he would not excel, have the pre-eminence, because of the abominable sin of incest which he had committed. "Thou wentest up to the father's bed; then defilest thou it." The prophecies concerning the next two sons, Simeon and Levi, were no less unfavorable. The birthright privileges could not fall on them either, because of their bloodthirsty conduct and murderous vengeance against the men of Shechem. "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

Coming to his fourth son, however, we find a tremendous change in the tone and content of his prophecy. Judah is the first to receive a rich and unmixed blessing, that of indisputable pre-eminence and power. There is no verbal lashing here, no condemnation because of some grievous sin, no curse. At once Jacob tells him that he will be the object of his brothers' praise. This is greatly emphasized by the personal pronoun that follows immediately after the name. "Judah, THOU art he whom thy brethren shall praise." This stresses the contrast between him and his three older brothers and implies that the birthright is transferred to him and the covenant blessing will be on him first of all. Notice the interesting play here on the word "praise." Judah signifies: praise of God. He whose name denotes "praise" will be the object of the praise of his brothers. His enemies he will put to flight, grasp by the neck, and subdue. He is all-victorious. "Thy hand shall be in the neck of thy enemies." Therefore "thy father's children shall bow down before thee." Not merely his mother's children, those of Leah and her maid, his full brothers. All the children of his father, all the tribes of Is-

rael, will bring him their homage. How very really this was the case under Judah's mighty seed, the son of Jesse! "Judah is a lion's whelp"; like an old lion, which, after seizing and devouring its prey, ascends to the mountain forests and there lies in majestic strength and confidence, where no one will dare to disturb him. A beautiful figure. It speaks of battle strength, victory, royalty, dominion.

And then we come to this tenth verse, which is one of the most familiar passages in the Old Testament, but which also is not without its exegetical difficulties, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

The sceptre, both in Scripture and current thought, is generally the symbol of royalty, regal authority and command. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre," Ps. 45:6. Judah therefore, would have the rule, the dominion, the chieftainship over all the tribes of Israel, and presently over all the nations of the world. However, in Judges 5:14 the same word appears in a context, wherein it is quite impossible to refer it to royalty, but must be a symbol of a dignity of lower order. In general, therefore, "sceptre" here refers to the praise, pre-eminence, victory, superiority spoken of in the preceding verses and which Judah will have over his enemies as well as in the midst of his brethren. More especially, of course, the reference is to the kingship of the Davidic dynasty, that would proceed from the loins of Judah and would culminate in the glorious dominion of the Lord of lords and King of kings.

"Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet." The reference is to the very same thing. "Sceptre" and "ruler's staff" are identical. The King James Version translates this: "nor the *lawgiver* from between his feet." It is obvious, however, from the parallel with "sceptre" and the phrase "between his feet" that "ruler's staff" is by far the better translation. What we have here is simply another example of Hebrew parallelism, where the same thing is repeated in different language. In fact, the sceptre in its earlier form was a long staff, which the king held in his hand while speaking, and which, when he sat upon his throne, rested between his feet.

That sceptre, says the dying Israel, will not depart from Judah. And it didn't. Always Judah had the pre-eminence, the superiority, the chieftainship. It was not always equally evident; it had its ups and downs. But it was always there, throughout the Old Dispensation. In the desert it was Judah, who led the children of Israel in their march to the land of Canaan. In the wars against the heathen nations it was Judah, who generally took the lead. The first of the judges, Othniel, was from the tribe of Judah. Often, however, this pre-eminence was not predominant. The majority of the judges were from other tribes. In the kingship of David, however, this superiority really asserted itself. Jesse's son was from Judah. During the Babylonian captivity the sceptre seemed all but gone. Never after that did Israel have its own

king. Even so, the ruler's staff was still in Judah's hand, however weakly. The house of David still existed. Until Immanuel comes, in Whom the sceptre will never depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet.

That is the meaning of the phrase: "Until Shiloh come." We spoke above of exegetical difficulty. We were referring to this name.

That Shiloh here has reference to the Christ is generally accepted. There is no doubt that the church has been and is correct, when it sees in this dying word of Jacob a wonderful prophecy of the coming Messiah. True, there were those who supposed it to refer to the city by that name. Shiloh was also the name of a city, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, which stood in the midst of the land of Canaan and where the tabernacle was pitched from the time of the conquest of the land to the days of Eli and even later. These people read the text: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . till he come to Shiloh." We may dismiss this interpretation, however, as quite arbitrary and without foundation in Scripture. It is doubtful, to say the least, whether the town of Shiloh existed in Jacob's time. If it did it had no importance in relation to the lives of the patriarchs. Not once is it referred to in their history. Certainly, there is nothing in Scripture about any coming of Judah to Shiloh, which would in any way affect his dominion and superiority over the other tribes, to say nothing about pre-eminence over all the peoples of the world. Hence, we dismiss this interpretation as arbitrary and ungrounded, and repeat, that the reference here is without doubt to the Lord's Messiah. It is in Him alone, that the sceptre will never depart from Judah. That is the meaning, of course. It cannot be, that the coming of Shiloh will *terminate* the rule of Judah. The meaning is: when Shiloh comes Judah's superiority and dominion will really be permanent and universal. That is clear from the last part of the verse: "And unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be." Indisputably, therefore, "until Shiloh comes" announces the coming of the Messiah.

But that still leaves the question: Why is He called "Shiloh"?

There were in the past and are today those, who proceed from a somewhat different reading of the word, which would lead to the translation: "The sceptre will not depart from Judah until he comes *whose it is or to whom it belongs.*" Of course, even so the reference would be to the Messiah; however, "Shiloh" would become a common phrase rather than a proper name. Good commentators and Hebrew students see this, too, as an arbitrary interpretation. We dismiss it on that ground.

In common with the whole Christian Church of many ages and even the entire Jewish synagogue, therefore, we regard "Shiloh" as a proper name of the Messiah. It is commonly accepted that it is derived from a word meaning: to be at rest, without care. Thus it came to mean: restgiver. Originally it may not have been a proper name at all, but

through usage it became such, like "Preacher" (with reference to the author of Ecclesiastes) and "Branch" (Jer. 23:5) and other names. Thus Christ is the "Shiloh." He will give the rest and peace that passes all understanding, not from earthly cares and toils, but from sin and its consequences. To Him will the nations belong. In Him Judah will hold the sceptre forever and his rule over the tribes of Israel will be widened into the government of all the world. "Unto Him shall the obedience of the people be." The King James Version has "gathering." This, too, is true, of course. However, also here we give preference to the Revised Version, because of the concepts "sceptre" and "ruler's staff" which we find in this same verse. In Him we shall have dominion forever and ever. For Judah's sceptre is Israel's sceptre, and Israel is the church, and the church are we. A president may come from one certain state of the union; that does not mean that he is not the president of the entire nation. Thus Shiloh is the King of all the church; THE "rest giver" par excellence.

This personal meaning of Shiloh is placed beyond all doubt by subsequent Messianic prophecies and all of Scripture. "And the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, *The Prince of Peace,*" Isaiah 9:6. He says, as only He can: "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you *REST.*" The sceptre shall not depart. Unto Him shall be the gathering of the people. Thus we sing in the beautiful words from Psalm 72:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Christ shall have dominion</i> | <i>Ever and forever</i> |
| <i>Over land and sea,</i> | <i>Shall His name endure,</i> |
| <i>Earth's remotest regions</i> | <i>Long as suns continue</i> |
| <i>Shall His empire be;</i> | <i>It shall stand secure;</i> |
| <i>They that wilds inhabit</i> | <i>And in Him forever</i> |
| <i>Shall their worship bring,</i> | <i>All men shall be blest,</i> |
| <i>Kings shall render tribute,</i> | <i>And all nations hail Him</i> |
| <i>Nations serve our King.</i> | <i>King of Kings confessed.</i> |

R.V.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 207)

therefore will never have the fruit of a life of keeping His commandments. The latter explains how it is that we, undone, wicked and perverse that we are by nature do fear Him and keep His commandments. And it does it in such a way that He remains the God that He is. That, indeed, is the test of true love to Him. He who loves God desires Him to be exactly what He is. True love wants no god besides Him. Wants no other god. But wants Jehovah to be the God He is according to His own revelation in Holy Writ. That is the true fear of God! And only by it do we keep His commandments.

J.A.H.

ALL AROUND US

The Arminianism of Fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism, as we believe everyone will agree, professes to believe in all the basic truths of the Bible. The Fundamentalist assumes a strong position overagainst the Modernist who denies all the basic truths of Scripture. The latter, it is well known, denies that the Bible is infallibly inspired, that Jesus is the Son of God, that the atonement of Christ is vicarious, etc. The Fundamentalist, on the other hand, believes in infallible inspiration, in the divinity of Christ, in the vicarious atonement and all the other basic truths of God's Word.

Yet the Fundamentalist, generally speaking, is guilty of embracing Arminianism. We realize that in Reformed circles this is generally accepted fact. It is also generally well known that not all Fundamentalists are willing to acknowledge this fact. Some purport themselves to be in some respect quite Calvinistic. Like one Fundamentalist we heard once who was asked whether he was Calvinistic or Arminian, replied: "When I preach I'm Arminian, but when I am on my knees I'm Calvinistic." Such a statement can be quite deceptive to the uninitiated in doctrinal matters. And much of the speech or writing of the Fundamentalist will be deceptive to those who are not able to clearly discern. For instance, we refer to an article appearing in the January 19, 1959 issue of *Christianity Today* written by Dr. John F. Walvoord, president of Dallas Theological Seminary. He writes on the subject: *What is the Gospel?*

When you read his article, you will notice that he makes some very sound statements in answer to the question: What is the Gospel? Perhaps more particularly: What is Salvation? We give our readers a few snatches of his article to show what we mean. Writes he:

"The Christian faith holds to salvation by grace. It believes the Gospel to be the good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross, bearing substitutionally our sins and the sins of the whole world; that he was buried and that he also rose again as proof of his triumph over the grave, finished character of his work, and his true Sonship of God. The Gospel plainly stated then, is that a person can be saved for all eternity by simply putting his trust in Jesus Christ."

This answer to the question: What is the Gospel? is not above criticism as we will point out presently. However, notice how the writer asserts some fundamental truths concerning salvation concerning which the Gospel is good news.

He emphasizes, first of all, that salvation is unmerited. Writes he, "Scripture also describes unsaved people as 'dead,' spiritually dead. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, he reminded them that before they accepted Christ they were 'dead in trespasses and sins.' They were not just sick, they were 'dead' so far as spiritual life was concerned.

Another word Scripture ascribes to unsaved people is 'condemned' or the state of living under 'the wrath of God.' Man is condemned before a righteous God; and as far as merit is concerned, he stands without hope. Paul speaks of the unsaved as 'without God and without hope.'

"It is clear that if God has saved us, he did not save us because we deserved it. He did not save us because we were good. Everyone in heaven, Old Testament saints as well as New Testament saints, is there by grace, and through the merits of Jesus Christ.

"Let us therefore reiterate: *salvation cannot be deserved.* There can be no appeal to innate goodness, character, culture, or education. These offer no ground for divine salvation."

In close connection with the preceding, the writer has this to say about "Unearned Salvation."

"At the same time, and this is the second negative, *salvation cannot be earned.* If a man's character cannot deserve salvation, it is also true that there is nothing one can do to earn it. As I said before, the notion that salvation can be earned is a very common one. I think, with all fairness, this is the belief of the Roman Catholic church. Its whole appeal is to do something to be saved. If one does the sacrificial thing, gives his money, or even his life, he is promised salvation.

"But by contrast, our Christian Gospel tells us we cannot earn salvation. I was a member of the church for many years before it dawned on me one day, through the ministry of a faithful Bible teacher, that I could not be good enough to be saved. I had assumed, in spite of all statements to the contrary in catechism, that if I went to church and did the best I could, and was faithful in attendance, and gave my money, and prayed, and did the normal Christian things, I could thus be assured of salvation. There are many people who are similarly confused. They do not understand that, while good works have their place in the Christian faith, they cannot be the ground of salvation.

"We cannot earn salvation; we fall short of what God would have us be and do. There is indeed no righteousness in us that can possibly justify God's saving us. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' This is a tremendous passage; it makes abundantly clear that works, or anything that we do, can never earn divine approbation. There are many people in the world today trying to earn salvation. The Bible puts a blight on their whole system. We can neither deserve salvation nor earn it."

These are clear negative statements which positively imply that salvation is God's work alone. Dr. Walvoord further confirms this position by positing two positive statements concerning our salvation:

"In contrast to these negatives, I believe there are two positive affirmations that can be made which are very clearly taught in Scripture. The first of these is that salvation is a *finished work* of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, there

are many things God lets us do for him, but salvation is something that God does for us. It is a work of God, made possible by the grace of God and by the work of Christ.

"When Christ died on the cross he said, 'It is finished.' He was declaring the fact that when he died, the full price of our redemption was paid. His death was of infinite or forensic value; it was sufficient in its provision for the sins of the whole world. He had provisionally, as we read in II Corinthians 5:19, reconciled the world unto himself.

"The death of Christ, however, does not in itself save anyone. It is God's abundant provision, which must be applied. So we are told that we are 'not redeemed . . . with silver and gold (that which represents human attainment and value) . . . but with the precious blood of Christ' (I Pet. 1:18-19). How clear this should be in our own thinking, and in our preaching. If we are saved at all, we are saved by the blood of Christ. And it is Christ's sacrifice that is the basis of our salvation . . .

"Salvation is a finished work. When Christ died on the cross he did all that was necessary to save you and me. There is not a single good work we can offer in addition to God's. After we are saved, then is our chance to do good works; but those works are not our guarantee of salvation, they are the fruits of it. They do not substantiate salvation; they are the testimony. The ground of redemption is wholly the finished work of Christ.

"The second affirmation I should like to mention is, *salvation is a gift*. We see how these four facts, the negative and the positive, fit together:

- Salvation cannot be deserved;
- Salvation cannot be earned;
- Salvation is a finished work of Christ for us;
- Salvation is a gift.

"Many people cannot grasp that salvation is a gift, but there are few facts more obvious. Man could not possibly pay for an infinite salvation. He was morally bankrupt, dead in trespasses and sins, under the wrath of God; what resources had he? Could he lift himself by his own bootstraps? If God saves anybody at all, he does it out of his own mercy, and gives salvation as a gift. Scripture testifies specifically to this point: 'Being justified freely (literally, without cost) by his grace through the redemption (i.e., the price paid) that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 3:24).

"This redemption cost God his Son; it cost Jesus Christ the agony of dying on the cross; it was an act of infinite worth, infinite merit, a total gift of God. If we are not saved today, there is only one reason. It is not because we've done bad things, because all of us *are bad*. There is just one reason why a person is lost, and that is he has not received God's gift of salvation . . .

"Who could imagine anybody giving away anything of value without getting something in return. It is a hard thing to persuade a lost soul that God wants to do something for him, that God is a God of grace, who has paid for his salvation, and now offers it to him, needy as he is, as a gift.

"The greatest question in all the world is simply, have we received the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour? One can never sit on the fence. If one is not saved, he is lost. If one is saved, then he is not lost. There is no one in the middle . . .

"If there is one who is aware of any uncertainty, any failure to come to grips with this greatest of all decisions, the challenge is to accept the gospel invitation and *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Then rest on the authority of the Word of God. The Word says that if anyone believes on the Lord Jesus Christ he is saved, saved for all eternity. The divine program is to hear the Gospel, believe the Gospel, then preach the Gospel."

We call attention especially to two things concerning this article which we could quote only in part. In the first place, the reader will agree with me that the four things Dr. Walvoord emphasizes in respect to our salvation are certainly true. We do not deserve salvation, and we cannot merit salvation. Salvation is indeed a finished work of Christ for us, and salvation is a gift of grace. To all this we must most certainly subscribe. You would think that Dr. Walvoord would close his article by saying: "You see, salvation is God's work from beginning to end. There is nothing of man in it." That would be indeed the good news of the Gospel. But Dr. Walvoord does not say this.

And therefore in the second place we point out that here is exactly where his Arminianism comes in. Like all Arminians he tells us that God makes salvation possible for us, but he doesn't save us unless and until we accept the gift of salvation. He tells us that God in Christ made salvation possible for all men, "for the sins of the whole world"; and "a person can be saved for all eternity by simply putting his trust in Jesus Christ." Indeed, according to Dr. Walvoord, God makes salvation possible for all men, but he really doesn't save anybody. Rather, "the challenge is to accept the Gospel invitation and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour." This is the doctrine of Arminius, pure and simple. M.S.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mr. Dick Kooienga and Mr. John Lanning in the loss of their father and father-in-law,

WILLIAM KOOIENGA

May our God comfort them in their sorrow.

Rev. H. Hanko, President
Peter Petroelje, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

Our Men's Society would like to express their sympathy with two of its fellow members, Mr. Gerrit B. Lubbers, and Mr. Henry J. Holstege, in the loss of their mother

MRS. CORA SCHUT-DEKRAKER

And may this be their comfort: Her life was Christ and her death gain!

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville
Protestant Reformed Church.
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President
Mr. Henry C. Lubbers, Secretary

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

January 20, 1959

The Office Bearers' Conference held January 6 was the best attended one of the series. About one hundred Elders and Deacons came to hear a speech by Rev. H. Hoeksema. The Reverend spoke on "The Origin and History of Church Visitation" as it is prescribed in Article 44 of our Church Order. The speaker pointed out that, originally, Church Visitation was a vital force in the Classis; the visitors, through fraternal advice and admonition, helping to direct all things unto the peace, upbuilding, and greatest profit of the churches. Should this speech be published, it would serve for the instruction of all our office bearers, those in the West, as well as the Eastern brethren who were unable to attend — hence, to the edification of all our churches.

January 15 was the date of a spaghetti supper held in Hudsonville church sponsored by the Hope School Society. The thoughtfulness of the society was revealed in the fact that pea soup was served to satisfy the appetites of Hollanders who have not yet learned to eat foods with an Italian name. The diners were served from 5:30 to 8:00 so as to avoid long line-ups, enabling the waiters to present their wares piping hot.

Sunday, Jan. 11, Rev. R. Veldman and Rev. B. Woudenberg exchanged pulpits for the evening service.

Doon beat us all, we think. They distributed their new church directories Jan. 11. Doon lost a member through dismissal, and gained a member through transfer from Hull.

Here are some of the topics that have been under discussion in our societies, quite varied, you may notice: Doon's Men's Soc'y struggled with the question, "Is an evil thought as bad as an evil deed?" First's Sr. Y. P. Soc'y discussed the question, "Lucky Numbers, Right or Wrong?"; and a closely related one: "Should a Christian submit his name for a door prize?" was answered in Holland's Men's Society; The Men and Ladies' Soc'y of Grand Haven studied Art. 36 of the Belgic Conf. concerning the prayer for kings; Oak Lawn's Ladies' Aid were occupied with the so-called proof of the Third Point of 1924; the South Holland Men's Soc'y after recess program consisted of the explanation of Articles 85 and 86 of the Church Order; and, finally, at Hudsonville, in a joint meeting with the Men's Soc'y of Southwest, the after recess program consisted of a talk on the Tower of Babel by Rev. Schipper.

We note that Grand Haven and Hudsonville install office bearers on the first Sunday of the new year; and that, if you are a member of Hudsonville, and you do not know the parents of a baby that is baptized, and you do not understand the pronunciation of the baby's name — you may read it in next week's bulletin.

We would like to list the new clerks of consistories on this page so you can keep your Year Book up to date. We have received some new names (alas, without addresses) but hope to get them all in time for the next issue — right, reporters?

Jan. 11, Rev. Van Baren conducted an evening service for Hull while Rev. Heys filled a classical appointment in Pella. Little Pella (8 souls!) is of little strength, but that was also the description of the church at Philadelphia as recorded in the Book of Revelation, whereof it was said, "I know thy works and have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." May Pella also experience that the reward for keeping the word of His patience is that our King will keep us in the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world.

Hull, among others, has monthly collections for the Reformed Witness Hour, helping First Church in her effort to broadcast the truth of Sovereign Grace over the airwaves.

Kalamazoo has added two members, who have made confession of their faith, which is scheduled to be heard publicly January 25.

Loveland's congregation is growing. They welcomed a new baby the day before Christmas, and the prayer expressed on the bulletin was, "May also this child grow up to be a faithful child of, and in God's covenant with us."

Rev. Harbach conducts an adult Bible Class in Lynden where they study the Book of Genesis, right now the 9th chapter is under scrutiny, considering the Protestant Reformed view of the covenant. The Reverend's notes on Genesis are being sent to eight individuals in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and North Carolina. Far-off Lynden reaching out to the Eastern States, making her presence felt! And also from Lynden we learn that they have progressed from the use of a foot organ to that of a piano for leading the congregational singing. A little thing to us, perhaps, but not to their faithful accompanist, Miss Alice Vander Meulen.

From Randolph comes the happy note that Don and Jim De Vries will be discharged from the service in March. If the congregation is not always aware of the coming event, their pastor and the family are helping the boys count down the days.

Redlands has called Rev. C. Hanko from a trio which also included Revs. G. Lubbers and H. Veldman.

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society herewith expresses their sympathy to our fellow members, Mrs. Gerrit B. Lubbers and Mrs. Henry J. Holstege, in the loss of their Mother,

MRS. CORA SCHUT

May our Covenant God sustain them in this so great loss.

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville
Protestant Reformed Church:
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President
Mrs. John B. Lubbers, Secretary

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

January 7, 1959

Hope Church - Grand Rapids, Mich.

Rev. A. Mulder, chairman of the October Classis, led in the opening devotions. After the credentials of the various delegates were accepted, he declared the Classis constituted. Rev. M. Schipper then presided.

Classis then conducted some routine business, such as, the reading and approval of the minutes of the last meeting, the reading and acceptance of reports of the Stated Clerk, the Classical Committee, and of a committee that visited Rev. G. M. Ophoff in his illness. Elders J. B. Lubbers and J. Kalsbeek were appointed finance committee for this session of Classis.

Classis also recognized our missionary, Rev. G. C. Lubbers, who was asked to speak for a few moments on his recent work in California. The chairman responded, assuring him of our interest and prayers in his behalf.

Two instructions were placed on the table for consideration: one from Southeast Church concerning the proper time to baptize adopted children; and the other, from First Church re the use of hymns in our worship services. Re the first overture, Classis decided to give Southeast Church permission to present their overture to the April Classis, expressing a definite stand and giving grounds for their stand. Respecting the overture of First Church, Classis decided to refer this matter to the consistories for study and to report to the next Classis.

Classis also considered and passed upon various subsidy requests coming from the churches of Grand Haven, Kalamazoo, Creston, and Holland.

Voting for Delegates ad examina resulted in the election of Rev. H. Hanko primus delegate for 3 yrs; and Rev. G. Vos secundus delegate for 3 yrs. The terms of Rev. G. Vos and Rev. B. Woudenberg had expired.

The following were chosen for Synodical Delegates:

| Ministers | | Elders | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Primi: | Secundi: | Primi: | Secundi: |
| M. Schipper | H. Hanko | J. Docter | H. Zwak |
| H. Hoeksema | G. Lanting | H. Meulenberg | P. Schipper |
| R. Veldman | A. Mulder | R. Newhouse | P. Koole |
| G. Vos | C. Hanko | T. Engelsma | P. Cnossen |

The Stated Clerk was instructed to thank the ladies of Hope Church per letter for their excellent catering services.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

Classis decided to meet D. V. April 1, 1959 in Creston Church.

Rev. C. Hanko brought the closing prayer of thanksgiving to God.

M. SCHIPPER, Stated Clerk