

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE SON OF THE HIGHEST

*"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

*And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.*

*And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.*

*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:*

*And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."*

LUKE 1:28-33

A few more days hence, and the cheery times of Christmas will again be with us.

Cheery, and that is right. Even the world around about us has caught the cheeriness and the joy of Christmas, and they have for ages tried to imitate the Church of our God. There is color, and light, and a kind of joy and singing. Even the actors and the actresses of the stage will sing the Christmas carols! It is so pitiful! All through the year they wallow in the filth of sin and corruption, but during the "Yuletide" they will sing beautifully of the Christ-Child.

Christmas time is a time of great joy that shall be to all people, says the Word of God.

However, that "all people" is not to all men head for head and soul for soul. It is the "all people of God"!

And we will talk a little of one of those people. Not exclusively. Oh no. The main theme will be The Son of the Highest! And that is as it should be. He is set in the midst of the frame of the Gospel. Paul will know nothing but Jesus. And that is as it should be. Jesus shall occupy the midst of

the Throne of God, exactly in the midst of that throne: that is the very heart of God!

But Mary, the lowly handmaiden of the Lord has a moment in our present text. There are three moments: Jesus' mother; Jesus' Name; and Jesus' Kingdom.

\* \* \* \*

Jesus' mother! The lowly Mary!

The Holy Ghost gave her a beautiful name: "The mother of my Lord!" See it for yourselves: Luke 1:43.

No, we will not join in the Mariolatry of the Roman Catholic Church. The dictionary says of this term: "The worship of Mary, the mother of Christ: an opprobrious term used by some Protestants of the veneration of the Virgin by Roman Catholics."

But we may not fall into the other extreme and be silent about the great blessedness which was her portion.

She is the most blessed of women.

First, a special and a great angel of God was sent to her: Gabriel.

Second, in his very first word he tells her of a great gladness and joy which is to be her portion. For the fundamental meaning of "Hail!" is exactly the notion of joy and gladness.

Third, the angel expresses the ground for this joy: Mary, thou art highly graced; the Lord is with thee; and, blessed art thou among women!

Fourth, this same angel Gabriel will tell her the content of all this joy and gladness: the favour and grace of God that is thy portion is this: Thou shalt conceive in thy womb the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest shall be thy child. Thou shalt bear Him, bring Him forth, nurture Him and have Him with thee for a third of a century. Oh, indeed, Mary, thou art the most blessed of women: thou shalt be called the very mother of the Lord! The mystery of Godliness shall take place within thee: the Incarnation of God! That which shall take place within thee will be the subject for study of all future theologians. The whole Church of the living God shall ponder about the

thing that shall take place within thee. And all shall agree: Mary is the most favored, the most graced, the most blessed of all women not only, but of all mortals.

\* \* \* \*

And: thou shalt call His name Jesus.

There is heavenly melody in that blessed name.

What would this world be without the name of Jesus!

It has charmed the heart of all the weary pilgrims that seek their way to the Paradise of God.

It has filled the whole world with melodious joy. The name Jesus, all by itself, is as a heavenly anthem, a strange melody, which, when once heard, really heard, causes one to forget all the sorrows he ever had. The melody is heard in all known languages, among all peoples, within a myriad hearts and souls. It has pressed back into their dungeons more black thoughts, more doubts, more horrors than there are sands on the seashore. It has transformed the poor and disconsolate and sick at heart until they thought themselves the owners of a world that is fairer than day. The name Jesus is so beautiful that it has miraculously changed the black hearts of God's elect children into shining sanctuaries of the living God.

I remember three little girls singing a song about Jesus, many, many years ago. I did not go to school yet, so I must have been very young. The song was the well-known: "Daar ruischt langs de wolken een lieflijken Naam! Die hemel en aarde vereenigt te saam!" And when these three little girls (my three sisters) came to the last stanza, I heard them sing: "Jezus, Jezus, Uw Naam zij eer!" This little boy was thrilled with a strange thrill. That thrill has stayed with me. And it will stay with me till the moon shall shine no more. And then I shall sing that Name unto all eternity. For I shall see Him face to face, and tell the story: Saved by grace!

There is no charm like the charm of the name Jesus. It has consoled the sick and made them smile of heavenly consolation; it has sung courage in the hearts of the miserable; it made dying soldiers die easier when they whispered this Name; it visited the prisoner and broke his chains; it made the slave freer than his master; it led the army of God's sons and daughters through the swelling waves and billows of dark Jordan of death. The majestic name of Jesus brings us all near to the heart of God!

\* \* \* \*

And many years I did not realize that Jesus is really Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts. I saw Him, and loved Him, but as a child and young man I did not recognize Him as God! Oh, I knew the dogmas of the Church; when my "Dominee" asked me: "How many natures are there in Christ?" I would correctly answer: "Two, a human and a Divine nature," but Jesus was the Christ-child, the suffering

Man of sorrows; I saw His stripes and wounds, and heard the drops of blood falling from His wounds beneath the cross beam of the accursed tree. But the truth of the Divine Godhead on the tree had receded in my consciousness.

But Jesus is THE SON OF THE HIGHEST!

It is the Covenant God of Israel Who came to visit His people.

Jesus is God who came to do a wonder that transcends my comprehension. Lying there in the manger, He carries the load of the eternal wrath of God. And only God can exhaust the wrath that is everlasting. Jesus is God in human garb. Justice and righteousness demanded that God be also man, but God He is.

God purchases God there on that tree, and the price is God!

It is the real reason for the cheer of Christmas.

Jesus means now that I can die in peace, and also live in peace.

The greatest horror I know is the question we sang in another land and in another time: "How are you able to appear righteous before God?" (Hoe zult gij rechtvaardig verschijnen voor God?)

Not many days ago I said to a sister in the hospital: How are the wicked able to live? And how are they able to die? How *can* they die?

What must be the sensation to close your eyes in death, and at once stand in the presence of God? What must be the sensation to fall into the hands of the living God? For He is a consuming fire! If there is no Jesus for us, how bleak, how dreadfully poor is our estate? God's Word calls it to appear naked in His presence.

But Jesus is a cloak, a covering, a redemption, a salvation, a righteousness, a glittering heaven! "Oh, Jesus, in Thee I hide me!"

\* \* \* \*

And the third moment is the Kingdom.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David."

Jesus is King!

He is our King: He shall rule us, indeed, He rules us now by His blessed Word and Spirit.

David, His father, was but a type, a very weak type. But the text, and a thousand other texts, show that David was the strongest and the most beautiful type of all other types. David was the man after God's own heart.

For our King appears very humble. And so was David. Though he was king of Israel, his psalms picture him as the most humble man of all history. David was usually found in

the dust and on his knees. That is the fundamental reason why he was a man after God's heart. God loves the humble.

And no, there is not one like the humble Jesus. No, not one! No, not one!

Beloved, that is the reason why God has exalted your Jesus to be King of all the elect. You all know of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Well, listen: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass!"

Have Him ever before thee, beloved! The King in His meekness. You confess that Jesus once shall be crowned in the presence of His God, His holy angels, the bad men and the good men, and that you shall share in His glory, the glory of an everlasting Kingdom. It is well. But remember that He received the Kingdom because of His great humility.

And you and I?

We shall never sit on thrones with Him unless you and I have travelled the way of great humility and meekness. If you would arrive in your throne, you better remember that this King said to you and to me in His state of humiliation: "Come, take up thy cross and follow Me!" Mark 10:21b.

Oh yes, Christmas time is a time of cheer, of great joy for the Church of God.

But when you visit the stable and look upon the manger and the Babe, remember the fundamental law of the Kingdom of God: He that humbleth himself shall be exalted!

The cheer of your King, His Kingdom and your part follows the way of suffering, reproach, and great tribulation for His name's sake.

And then the end is glory, and a great salvation!

G.V.

### Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet the Lord willing on Wednesday, January 7, 1959, at 9 A.M. in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Consistories will please keep this in mind in the appointment of delegates.

M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
Boundless love in thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is thy name;  
I am all unrighteousness;  
Vile and full of sin I am;  
Thou art full of truth and grace.

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## EDITORIALS

### AN OPEN LETTER

This letter is addressed to those that left the Protestant Reformed Churches in the recent schism. Yet not to all of them, but only to those that are still Protestant Reformed, not only in name as are the schismatics, but in truth; and to those that, under the influence of their leaders, were deceived and now are sorry that they ever left us.

I happen to know that there are such. To them, and to them only, this letter is addressed.

The purpose of this letter is not to gain a few members. In the first place, remember that I always maintained and still do that the Church of Christ in the world is not dependent on large numbers but solely on the keeping of the truth of the Word of God. And, secondly, we have quite a flourishing and complete church-life and we are in no need of more members. But the purpose of this letter is solely your own spiritual and ecclesiastical well-being. It intended to be an encouragement and even a brotherly invitation to return to us.

I could mention incentives for you to take this step as soon as possible. Everybody knows that, not the schismatics, but we are the Protestant Reformed Churches. Everybody knows, too, that the schismatics that use our name sail under a false flag. Besides, what is the present trend and condition of the schismatic churches today? In one word, as is evident from all that they reveal of themselves: they are confused, they are at a loss, they know not what to do. Many of them, even their leaders, are anxious to join the Christian Reformed Church, if the latter is willing to take them. They are willing also to sign the "Three Points" of 1924 which is the only reason why the Protestant Reformed Churches were established for we rejected them and were cast out. Besides, they rejected that thoroughly Protestant Reformed document "The Declaration of Principles."

Are you willing to follow your leaders in all this?

Then consider that this letter is not addressed to you.

But if you are not and if you are still Protestant Reformed in the true sense of the word, I address once more this earnest and urgent invitation to you to return in the proper way to the churches of which you used to be members and which you left in a time of confusion and deception.

H.H.

### Evolution, Long Periods, or Days

To me there is very little difference and, principally, none at all, between the theory of evolution and the theory of long periods of billions of years during which the world was formed.

Both deny the verbal inspiration of Gen. 1-3. And the moment this is done one must repudiate the inspiration of the entire Bible. I propose to prove this presently.

Both deny the distinctiveness of the several species which God created on the successive days mentioned in Gen. 1.

Both maintain that the several species evolved from one-another during a long period of evolution, whether they suppose that the first beginning of this long process was a principle of the universe that then evolved under the providence of God, or whether they confess their ignorance in regard to this beginning.

That those who believe in long periods of billions of years cannot believe in the verbal inspiration of Gen. 1-3 ought to be evident to anyone that reads those chapters. Let us study the narrative of creation in Gen. 1 a little more in detail.

In Gen. 1:1, 2 we read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

What is it to create? The original word seems to mean to cut, to divide, to separate, and then also to bring into existence something that never was before. We may say, therefore, that to create is that act of the omnipotent God whereby He called into existence the things that are not as if they were or whereby He calls things out of nothing or out of wholly unfit material. He does this by His Word, which refers, first of all to the Son of God and then also the almighty creative Word of God. For thus we read in John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Moreover, He creates all things through His Spirit, for already in Gen. 1:2 we read: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." We may say, that to create is that act of the triune God whereby He called into existence the whole universe, giving it separate existence apart from His own Being and that, too, according to His eternal counsel. Thus we can understand that the term to create in the sense of to divide or to separate may be applied, not only to the separate acts of creation on each of the six days as, for instance, on the second day God divided the waters, but also to the original act of creation whereby God called the universe out of nothing. For then to create means that God, according to His eternal counsel, cut or separated the world from Himself.

The question has been asked: how must we understand the words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"? Must these words be applied to the entire chapter as a general heading or to the creation of the chaos that is mentioned in vs. 2. We will not go into this question here. Certain it is that the chaos is mentioned in vs. 2: "and the earth was without form and void; and darkness upon the face of the deep." Some have thought that there was a long period of time between the creation of this chaos and the rest of creation and that in this way they might be able to defend the theory of long periods on the basis of Scripture. But this is, evidently, erroneous. In the first place, the so-called chaos, mentioned in vs. 2, was called into existence immedi-

ately by the Word of God. And why would God leave the world in a chaotic state for millions of years without finishing it? In the second place, we read that the Spirit moved or brooded upon the face of the waters, evidently for the purpose of engendering life and movement in the chaotic waters. And, in close connection with this brooding of the Spirit God created the light. We prefer therefore to explain that also the creation of the chaos belongs to the first day. Besides, even if we should imagine a long period between the creation of the chaos and the first day, this could not possibly support the theory of long periods for the latter refer exactly to the six days of creation. They are invented, not on the basis of Scripture, but to cater to evolutionistic science.

There is, therefore, to say the least, certainly no Scriptural support for the theory of long periods of days in Gen. 1:1, 2. But the rest of the creation narrative emphatically contradicts this theory.

In Gen. 1:3-5 we read: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." We understand, of course, that on the first day God created the light in all its implications, and that, too, in connection with the brooding of the Spirit. Material light is the life of matter. Without light there is nothing but absolute darkness. There is no movement, no communication. By the brooding of the Spirit life is engendered into that dead and motionless matter, and by the Word of God a certain substance is separated from the rest and this very thin substance so moves, waves and vibrates that it is light. And this light implies many things such as heat which is again the condition of all other life and movement, fire, electricity, magnetism, etc. Light is also the means of communication. With the dazzling speed of 186,000 miles per second it moves against objects in the universe, moves back and is reflected, is caught by the eye of animal and man and reveals the objects in picture form. Movement, color, form, life,—it is all conditioned by the light.

All this God created on the first day.

Now, I ask: Was all this created in a moment of time, or was light in all its implications gradually and very slowly developed from the chaos during a long period of billions of years?

The latter is the case according to those that maintain the theory of long periods. The former is the plain language of the Bible. Hence, I maintain that those that uphold the theory of long periods cannot maintain the inspiration of Gen. 1.

Just consider. Vs. 3 states: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." I ask you: was the light there as soon as God had spoken or was it not? Can the text possibly mean that God created a principle of light and that it took billions of years for that principle to develop? Every one knows better. Besides, if the principle of light developed under the power of the providence of God, it was not created

for providence is no creation. But the text states very definitely that the moment God had spoken there was light. Or may we, perhaps, infer that God continued to speak His creative Word concerning the light for a billion of years? We understand that this is utterly absurd. Besides, what are we to do with the last part of vs. 5: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Can the evening and the morning limit a period of billions years? We know better. Hence, I insist that the first day of creation was a day as we know it. And those that maintain the long period theory ought, at least, be honest enough to confess that they do not believe the literal inspiration of Gen. 1. Let them cater to the science of evolution, but let them not attempt to twist the clear testimony of Scripture into harmony with their own theory.

More about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

### The Three Points

As has been said, the Rev. Klooster does not consider all the passages quoted by the Synod of 1924 in proof of the "First Point" equally valid. And he is of the opinion that "one of the strongest passages" is the text in Luke 6:35, 36 in the light of Matt. 5:44, 45.

Now, in the first place, these passages, suppose that they can serve as proof texts for the Kuiperian theory of "common grace," they certainly have nothing to do with the Arminian conception of general grace which is also implied in the "First Point." For although that first of the "Three Points" speaks of a grace or favor of God which He shows to His creatures in general, it certainly falls into the Arminian error of general grace when it speaks of the general offer of the gospel as a proof of the grace of God to all men without distinction. To be sure, the gospel deals with saving grace and to maintain that the preaching of the gospel is a manifestation of grace to all, without exception, certainly implies that God, on His part is willing to save all. Besides, that this is true is also evident from the passages that quoted from the Confessions as well as from the last three texts from Scripture that are supposed to prove the "First Point."

But about this we will write later.

Now we will, first of all consider the passages from Scripture which the Rev. Klooster considers the most valid proof texts for the "First Point," namely, Luke 6:35, 36 and Matthew 5:44, 45. It is to be regretted that the Rev. Klooster does not offer an explanation of these passages. If he had, it appears to me that he would have discovered that these texts do not prove the Synod's contention at all.

Synod also offered no explanation. But if it had, it is evident that its explanation would have been as follows:

1. We must love all our enemies, and also the enemies of God as they become manifest as such in this world.
2. If we do, we will be children of the Most High and

(Continued on page 131)

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER V

#### *The Sixth Trumpet*

Revelation 9:13-21

If we would find an answer to the question as to what sort of plague does this sixth trumpet bring upon the world, and as to how it is historically realized, we must undoubtedly direct our attention, first of all, to the horses that are pictured in the vision and to their riders. John receives a vision of an awful and terrible-looking host of cavalry, two hundred million in number and with fearful description. And it is clear that this infernal troop of cavalry is the symbol of the plague that is to come. They form the agents that must accomplish it. True, we read that the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates are let loose at the determined hour and day and month and year, in order to kill the third part of men. And from this statement we might receive the impression that they, and not the cavalry, were the direct agents for this destruction. But farther on in the text we read differently. There we find that the plague is realized by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone that proceeds out of the mouth of the infernal horses. And the picture is evidently this, that the angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates exert their influence as soon as they are allowed, as soon as they are set loose, to set free this tremendous army of horsemen, in order that they may realize the plague. It is therefore in the first place to these horsemen that we have to direct our attention, in order to find the character of the plague.

And then we may undoubtedly say that they are not real horses. That this is true needs no proof. Their description is such that real horses are out of the question. They are horses with heads as of lions and with serpents' tails. And these tails have heads. And with these tails these horses hurt. In a word, we have here a combination of the horse and lion and the serpent such as makes it impossible to think of real horses. Besides, we read of them that out of their mouths proceeds fire and smoke and brimstone, which also certainly is not true of real horses. And it is through this fire and smoke and brimstone that the plagues, through which one-third part of men are killed, are realized. Nor are they symbols of real cavalry as such. Again, this is contrary to the description that is given of them, especially the fact that they bring the plagues with the fire and smoke and brimstone that proceeds out of their mouths. Nor are there any indications in the text that we must understand these horses as symbols of evil spirits. Also this is rather impossible. Of the locusts we read that they came out of the abyss and that an evil angel was their king. Nothing of the kind is men-

tioned in this passage. Besides, we found that the effect of the locusts was spiritual, since they might not kill men, which is in harmony with the nature of demons. But the effect of this plague is physical, as is indicated by the text when it informs us that a third part of men must be killed. Hence, all that we can say from the outset is this, that these horses and their riders are the symbols of tremendous forces of destruction. With this general statement is in harmony their fierce appearance, as well as the fact that fire and smoke and brimstone proceeds out of their mouths. And with this also agrees the fact that they kill a third part of men.

But what destruction is meant here? In order to find an answer to this question we must study the appearance of these horses and their riders. Essential to this is, first of all, the fire and the smoke and the brimstone. They represent the three plagues. We read in vs. 18: "By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths." We find, therefore, that three plagues are coming over mankind,—plagues that find their symbols in fire and smoke and brimstone, and that are therefore as closely allied as these three symbols. Of what is the fire a symbol in the Bible? We find that it symbolizes anger (Ps. 39:3; 57:4; 78:21, etc.), jealousy (Ps. 79:5; Ezek. 36:5; Zeph. 1:18), vengeance (Deut. 32:22; Judges 12:1, etc.). And since the passions of anger, of jealousy, and of vengeance in the unholy sense of the word, as evidently they must be taken in the words of our passage, are the root cause of war, we find that fire is also taken time and again in Scripture as the symbol of war. Jeremiah, referring to war, prophesied that Jehovah shall kindle a fire against Jerusalem, Jer. 17:27; 21:14. And he prophesies that He shall kindle a fire against Babylon, again referring to war, Jer. 15:32. In Lamentations 4:11 we read: "The Lord kindled a fire in Zion which hath devoured the foundations thereof." And in Amos 1:4 we are told: "But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof with shouting in the days of battle." If you add to this that the first color of the breastplates of these monstrous horsemen is also that of fire, and add to this that the chief appearance of these monsters is that of the horse, which, as we have seen before, is the symbol of battle and irresistible onslaught, and add to this, thirdly, that the second or red horse, as we have seen in connection with the first four seals, is also the symbol of war, then I dare say the implication is plain that the plague of the sixth trumpet, by which one-third of men are killed, certainly refers to war.

The second symbol that is used in connection with the sixth trumpet is that of smoke. Again we must turn to Scripture in order to find the meaning of it. Of course, first of all, we must take it in connection with the first symbol. It is related to the first. The fire is first; but also the smoke proceeds from the same source, namely, out of the mouths of the lions. And then I would say that the smoke, in connection with the fire, is the symbol of the desolation and destruction, and for that reason of the scarcity and famine, that



follow in the wake of war. And this is but its natural result. This too is corroborated by other parts of Scripture. In Isaiah 34:10 we find a description of the desolation that shall come upon Egypt in the words: "The smoke thereof shall go up forever." If the red of the fire is symbolic of the heated passions of war, the blackness of the smoke is indicative of the desolation and hunger that follow war. Thus we find in Lamentations 4:8 that those who shall perish with hunger are described in the following words: "Their visage is blacker than coal." And again, in the same Lamentations of the prophet we read that he complains: "Our skin is black like an oven because of the burning heat of the famine." The blackness of the smoke, therefore, is the symbol of the desolation following war. It is indicative of scarcity and famine and of destruction in general. This is corroborated further by the second color in the breastplates of these monsters, corresponding to the smoke that proceeds out of the mouths of the lions. And it is corroborated also by the second main feature of these monster-animals, which is that of the lion, a picture of ravening hunger that can devour anything. Again it is corroborated by the third horse in the first four seals, which is the black horse, and which, as we have seen before, is the symbol of scarcity and want. Hence, also here we are safe in saying that the picture is rather strikingly referring to desolation and destruction, to want and famine, as they follow in the wake of war.

The third symbol, finally, that is representative of this particular plague is the brimstone, or sulphur, that proceeds out of the mouths of these monsters. Also here we may remark that this last plague must again have some connection with the former two, and, in fact, that there must be some kind of causal relationship between them and this particular plague. Hence, the suggestion is not far-fetched at all that we have here the picture of all kinds of pestilences as they naturally follow in the wake of war and desolation and hunger. This suggestion is confirmed, in the first place, by the nature of the sulphur, which suggests poisoning because of its gases. But also in the Word of God we find the same meaning. Rather generally we find sulphur as a symbol of desolation in Deuteronomy 29:23, where the desolation that shall come over the land of Israel is described as follows: "The whole land thereof is brimstone and salt and a burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein." But more clearly we find a description of this in Ezekiel 38:22: "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood. And I will rain upon him and upon his bands and upon the many people that were with him an overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." This is prophesied in connection with Gog and Magog, and therefore in a somewhat similar connection as in our passage of Revelation. Most naturally in this passage of Ezekiel the brimstone stands as a symbol of the pestilence. Again I find this corroborated by the third color in the breastplate of this cavalry, which is also that of brimstone. Confirmed it is, also, by the last feature in the appearance of these monsters,

namely, that of the sneaky and subtle serpent, which attacks unawares, so that no one notices him, like the pestilence. These serpents are found in the tails of the horses. And lastly, I find this corroborated by the last horse in the first four seals. That last horse presents the same color as the brimstone, namely, that of a pale green. And the name of that last horse is Death, mowing away one-fourth part of men by all kinds of means, also by the pestilence. And therefore I feel rather safe in maintaining that in this last plague we have the symbol of the noisome pestilence. All these taken together, as they are symbolized by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, as well as by the horse and the lion and the serpent, as they show their resemblance to the second, third, and fourth horses of the first four seals, lead us to the conclusion that the plagues here pictured are those of war and famine and pestilence. These three cannot be separated. The one follows from the other. And in their inner connection they are here pictured as being together one awful monster, with the shape of a horse, a lion's head, and the tail of a serpent, while from these monsters proceed the fire and the smoke and the brimstone. Upon this wicked world, steeped in sin, an awful war shall break forth, carrying hunger and desolation and pestilence in its wake.

But, so we ask further: what is the special nature of this war, and what is its special occasion? For that this is not a war like other wars, but different in its nature and scope, is plainly indicated in the fact that by these three one-third of men are killed. That is, as we have explained, more than in any other, ordinary war are killed. Ordinarily only one-fourth of men are killed by war and hunger and all kinds of diseases. But at the time of this war this will be increased to one-third. And therefore we have here a war of special proportions at least. In order to understand this, let me call your attention to the fact that in the history of the world, with its wars and progress, the main occurrences have been played on a very small part of the world's stage. From Israel this history proceeded to Assyria, from Assyria to Babylonia, from Babylonia to Persia, from Persia to Greece, from Greece to Rome, from the Roman Empire to the nations of Europe and America. Always following a westerly direction, the history of the world has limited itself to only some of the nations of the world. And still there is a large part of men that have never yet played a part in its history although in late years they already appear on its stage. There is the yellow race, which evidently is just beginning to wake up to an important extent. And there are the nations that are living at the four corners of the earth, outside of the pale of civilization, and which in Scripture are known as Gog and Magog. If this relation is clear, then you are prepared to understand our contention that here in the sixth trumpet we have the first indication of the waking up of these other nations. For our text pictures to us, according to our deepest conviction, a war which is caused by the inroads of these numberless nations into the so-called civilized and Christian nations.

H.H.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Abraham's Faith Made Perfect

*"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"*

*Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"*

*And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."*

JAMES 2:21-23

Thus far we have considered the command of God to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac from two different points of view.

We considered first the command as such, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of," Gen. 22:2. An understanding of this command with its implications is essential to an understanding of the whole of what took place in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac. In this command is implied a rich, spiritual truth which God would teach to Abraham. This truth we saw to be that for the fulfillment of the promises the covenant seed had to be offered as a burnt offering before the Lord. The covenant seed was in figure and type Isaac; but in the fulfillment it was to be the perfect covenant seed, Jesus Christ.

The second aspect which we considered was the reaction to this command which took place within the mind and heart of Abraham. Abraham did not follow the reasoning of earthly wisdom which might conclude, if Isaac had to be slain as a sacrifice, the promise that from Isaac would come a great nation would be impossible of fulfillment. Rather following the reasoning of faith he concluded because God had promised to raise a seed from Isaac, and because Isaac must be slain upon the altar, then it must also be true that God was going to raise Isaac from the dead so that the former promise might be fulfilled. In this we saw the great strength of Abraham's faith which stumbled not even at death, but reached forth grasping even the truth of the resurrection from the dead. In this he saw in type the death and resurrection which was finally and perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

It was in this strength of faith that Abraham with Isaac and two young men-servants made his way to mount Moriah. One is inclined at this point to lay stress upon the sorrow that burdened the heart of Abraham on this journey as he anticipated the sacrifice of his son. It is easy to imagine that Abraham dreaded to make the trip, and each step of the way was for him a torture that grew more painful the closer he came to Moriah, and each look at his son reminded him anew that soon the lad would die at the hand of his own father. Yet so to place the emphasis is to greatly misrepresent Abraham and to build upon implications that the Scriptures

do not warrant. Abraham's journey, rather than being characterized by anguish, ought to be recognized as a triumph, a triumph of faith. If the heart of Abraham had been overburdened with anguish, he would have never left his tent at Mamre. If Abraham had thought that the sacrifice of Isaac would conclude Isaac's life upon this earth, he could have never even prepared to travel to Moriah. But Abraham was confident that though Isaac must die yet he would live again, and in that strength he went.

This does not mean, however, that Abraham's three days of travel from Mamre to Moriah were in every respect easy. Abraham was not a perfect man; and, as long as he was not, there yet remained with him his carnal mind bent on making the way of faith difficult. Constantly his sinful flesh must have suggested to him that it was too much to expect that Isaac should rise again from the dead, that from the beginning of time it had not been heard that anyone who died lived again to bring forth seed upon this earth, that he should leave well enough alone and not put the covenant promises on such precarious ground by sacrificing his son. But always his faith was there to answer that it was not for him to call into question what the Lord his God had commanded, that what the Lord commands is bound to work for the good of His covenant, that God is able to do all things and not even death would prevent Him from keeping His promises. In the triumph of this faith, Abraham with Isaac his son made the journey to Moriah.

That this was actually the faith of Abraham was evidenced when he left his servants with the ass at the bottom of the mountain and told them, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," Gen. 22:5. This statement should not be interpreted as having been a deliberate lie or falsehood on the part of Abraham by which he meant to keep the young men in ignorance about what was going to happen. At the pinnacle of faith at which Abraham stood at that time we do not do him justice if we accuse him of using such deceptive words. Rather, we must believe that Abraham expressed that both he and the lad would return because he was firmly convinced that although he expected that Isaac would die, he nonetheless was firmly assured within his heart that Isaac would be raised from the dead to return with him to the waiting servants.

It was while Abraham and Isaac were climbing the mountain together that a very interesting but touching conversation took place between them. Isaac knew that his father had made very thorough preparations for the sacrifice which they were to offer, but still there was one very important element missing. They had with them wood, fire, and even a knife, but the most important element of all, a lamb, was missing. Observing this he addressed his father, "My father . . . Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Gen. 22:7. To this Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." That this answer of Abraham is beautiful and that it arose



from a living faith, one immediately feels. Yet when we try to enter into it, we find that it is very difficult to understand exactly what was meant by Abraham with these words.

One's first inclination is to interpret this answer of Abraham as somewhat of an evasion. He did not have the courage to tell Isaac of his intentions, and, therefore, he gave an answer that was not entirely incorrect but which, nonetheless, would not make known the hard facts of that which was to happen. In this way Abraham unconsciously prophesied concerning not only the ram which would be caught in the ticket, but also the greater substitute which God would eventually provide in Jesus Christ. However, here again one feels that he is compromising the pinnacle of faith and understanding which the Scriptures apply to Abraham at this point.

We would rather appeal for an interpretation of this statement to another possible translation. Accordingly this statement should not read, "God will provide . . ." but rather "God is providing to himself a lamb for a burnt offering." This translation gives exact expression to the faith that lived within the heart of Abraham. They could build the altar and provide the wood but the sacrifice itself, namely Isaac, was a gift of God. This is an important point if we are to understand the typical significance of this whole event. Isaac as the sacrificial victim foreshadowing the atoning Christ appears as God's gift to Abraham, not as Abraham's gift to God. As he brought his son to the altar, he was not thereby giving a gift by which his sin might be covered (the gift of a man could never be a covering for sin, not even in a typical sense); rather, he thereby confessed his faith in the atoning value of the promised seed which God had given to him.

As they proceeded together up the mountain Abraham explained this all to Isaac; and Isaac also believed. Together in faith father and son came to the summit of the mountain, built the altar, and prepared the wood and fire upon it. Then, while Isaac stood in faithful obedience, Abraham raised the knife prepared to sacrifice his son, a burnt offering of complete consecration to God.

So it is that we may read, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" James 2:21. This passage in James always seems to present somewhat of a problem to the serious student of the Bible. This is especially true if we place it over-against Romans 4:2, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."

The key to these passages is to be found in the word "works." Paul in Romans by the word "works" refers to the works of the law, works performed externally for the sake of appearance without regard to the internal disposition of the heart. Such works performed without faith can never be the sufficient means of salvation. This would deny the necessity of faith in the children of God which the Scripture had always stressed as indispensable. James, however, speaks of works in an entirely different sense. He has in mind works

that are built upon faith. True faith lays hold upon the Word of God, and the Word of God demands a life in conformity with the Will of God. If then faith is truly living, life will conform to that which faith believes. Such works do not exclude faith. Rather, according to James, faith goes with such works, and by such works faith is made perfect.

The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham was a work in the sense of which James speaks. By faith Abraham believed the Word of God that for the promise to be realized the covenant seed must die as a burnt offering upon the altar. To the mind of Abraham the covenant seed was Isaac, and being such Isaac was a type foreshadowing Christ. Therefore having faith Abraham worked; he went with Isaac to Moriah; he brought the lad up the mountain and built an altar; he raised the knife to slay him. This work was an expression of the faith that lived within him. In his works his faith was made perfect.

It was as Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay his son the voice of the Lord stopped him. "Abraham, Abraham, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him," Gen. 22:11, 12. In the mind and determination of Abraham the act was already completed; and, because it was a type, that was all that was necessary. As a type, a picture of greater things which were yet to come, it had served its purpose of instructing and establishing Abraham in his faith. Isaac could not be the perfect and complete atonement for sin because, as Abraham knew and as Isaac himself knew, Isaac was a sinful man; and a sinful man can never be the real atonement for sin. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son," Gen. 22:13. To the mind of Abraham was brought the truth that another sacrificial victim was to be substituted by the Lord for his son. Isaac could not be the one to die and to be raised again, but eventually God would provide another perfect sacrifice which would take the place of Isaac and realize all of the glorious truths which Abraham was brought to see in type.

As Abraham and Isaac descended that mountain and returned to their servants, many were the glorious, gospel truths that filled their minds and caused their hearts to overflow. Through the means of type and shadow they had seen the truth of the atonement wrought by the covenant seed; they had seen the truth of the resurrection as Isaac the sacrifice was in a figure received again from the dead; they had seen the truth that this all would be realized in years to come when God would provide the true sacrificial victim to stand in the place of Isaac; in a figure they saw the Christ. Well does James conclude, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God," James 2:23.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### X.

(Matthew 24:45-51)

It is well to bear in mind that Jesus is still uttering His great eschatological discourse concerning the time when He shall return, and concerning the Sign of this return or Parousia!

He had rather prophetically spoken of the *sign* of His return. This we have noticed in our former essays on this twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. Now our Lord will instruct us and warn us concerning the need of *readiness* which consists in *watchfulness*! And watchfulness in turn reveals itself in our fulfilling the office unto which God has called us, whether this be the special office of minister, elder and deacon, or whether this is the office which is ours by virtue of being a christian, having the anointing of the Holy Spirit as a *living member* of Christ and His church!

In the parables that follow, in this chapter and in chapter 25, the Lord Jesus gives some particulars concerning the Parousia of Himself, its unexpected nature, the twofold attitude of faith and unbelief. And the latter is given in order that we may rightly examine our hearts whether we walk in the faith or not! It is a profitable word which is here spoken by the Lord. It is profitable for instruction, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, *furnished completely* unto every good work!

The parable to which we wish to call attention in this essay, and concerning which we hope to make a few expository remarks reads as follows: "*Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*"

Jesus begins by asking a question in this parable. It is the question: who then is the faithful and wise (prudent) servant? And this question is asked in view of the preceding verse where he had given the exhortation to the church, to us, to be in a state of spiritual readiness. We must constantly live in a state of *watchfulness*!

Such watchfulness is only possible by attending to our

office and calling where God has placed us as a living member of his church in this world.

Hence, the question: who then is the faithful and prudent servant?!

And to this question Jesus himself gives us the answer. However, the answer which he gives is really a portraiture of *two different attitudes and actions* in *one* and the *same* servant! From the viewpoint of the parable they are two hypothetical cases. The one is the servant as he is portrayed as being faithful. The other as he falls into the temptation *occasioned* (not caused) by the tarrying of his lord.

Thus the parable really confronts us with the concrete calling which is ours and also shows us, as in a mirror, the deep workings and temptations of our flesh as it wars against the Spirit. Jesus is not simply telling us a story but relates a hypothetical case in order that we might be *excited unto* watchfulness!

We wish to state here and now that we cannot agree with those who would spiritualize the elements in this parable. They then would make the "household" the church, and the "servant" the office-bearers in the church, etc. Thus doing the one point of comparison is lost from view, that is, what is called by theologians the "Tertium Comparationis." This point of comparison in the "parable" is that even as the servant in the hypothetical case is either faithful and prudent and thus watchful, or on the other hand "wicked," not performing his duties, so we are to learn from this what our calling is. Here is exhortation, with confrontation of the word, calling us to watchfulness!

And this *confrontation* is such, that, when we do not heed it, whether we be clothed with one of the special offices in the church, or whether we are simply clothed with the office of believer, we know that we shall not reap the reward. Every man is called to duty in some respect and place in this world before God toward his fellow-men. For this "servant" stands here in relation to both tables of the law. He stands in relationship to his neighbor and is accountable to God!

Thus also this parable is such that, he who has, receives more and has abundance, and he, who has not, from him is taken away even that which *he thinketh* to have. Luke 8:18.

Let us attempt to analyze this parable just a bit more in detail.

Notice, first of all, how Jesus portrays the *faithful* and *prudent* servant. Jesus speaks of this servant as one who is simply a bond-servant. The "lord" has absolute right over him. He belongs to this earthly lord. Legally he is his property. His lord has elevated him to that post, trusting him to be faithful, assigning a specific duty to him. It is a duty of great responsibility. He must see to it that the members of the household of the lord have their food in their season. He can therefore be promoted and demoted at the discretion of his "lord."

Such a "servant" is *faithful* in the same measure that he punctually and from the heart, not as eye-service and men-pleasers, performs his assigned duty. Faithfulness is the one thing sought for in a servant. Now it is the part of wisdom for a servant not to *act the part* of being lord. That part he must ever "play"! He cannot become a "lord" in deed and in truth. His very legal station is that of a bond-servant. He must always simply stand in office. That is wisdom. However, the text employs the term "prudence." And prudence is not the same as wisdom. Wisdom sees reality. Prudence is wisdom applied in a certain situation, dictating a course of action which leads to a good and proper end. The fear of the Lord is, of course, the principle of wisdom.

Such prudence in the case of this hypothetical man in the parable is that he constantly performs his assigned duties. If he is faithful he shall needs be prudent. One cannot be the latter without the former. Such faithfulness in duties is at once watchfulness. It is not watchfulness of the man, who does not desire to be "caught" by his lord, but one who is dutiful when he comes.

The other case is that of this same man, in the same position of being a servant, with the same assigned duties. He is now presented hypothetically as being an evil servant. He is at heart bad, injurious. He is self-centered, and will use his office and station without regard of the return of his lord.

In *his heart* he is portrayed by Christ as being a bad man.

In *his heart* he says something. Out of this heart proceed the things which defile the man, Matt. 15:19. He is tempted. It is the sad development from lust to conception to the act, as depicted in James 1:14, 15. For every man when he is tempted to evil, is tempted of his own lust, being enticed and deceived, and lust having conceived brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death.

Thus the hypothetical case is presented.

His lord delays. This delay is not the cause and reason for this man saying in his heart what he does. It is simply the occasion. The deeper reason is the "lusts" in his heart. It is the lust of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. The philosophy of this man is: let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die! And he puts the day of reckoning, when his lord returns, far from his mind.

Two things he does.

He wholly neglects his calling toward the household. Instead of feeding them with his lord's goods as steward of the household, he beats them and ill-treats them! He begins to smite them. He does not practice the Golden Rule in his stewardship. That had been enjoined upon him.

Then too he begins to eat and drink with the drunken. He deliberately uses the lord's gifts, wasting his lord's substance.

This man, of course, is unconverted and a hypocrite!

He is not what he pretended to be.

Hence, he shall not be exalted over the entire substance of the lord. He shall be surprised when his lord comes, just as were the wicked in the days of Noah and the flood.

For even as the lord of this evil servant comes he will find such a one not "thus doing," so shall it be with all those who do not live in the hope of seeing Christ come in His Parousia.

Such shall be cast into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They shall suffer the torments of conscience forever where the worm does not die!

On the other hand those who are faithful and prudent shall not be found wanting.

The truth of this parable is underscored further in the parables which follow: the Ten Virgins, the Talents and the Final Judgment.

Let us therefore be watchful, fulfilling our calling and office faithfully as the angels in heaven fulfill their calling.

G.L.

### THE THREE POINTS

(Continued from page 125)

we will reflect His love, for He also loves all men even His enemies.

3. This love of God to the wicked and enemies of God as well as to the righteous is revealed in the rain and sunshine on all men without distinction.

This interpretation, however, is contrary to Scripture. For throughout the whole Bible we find the plain testimony that God does not love His enemies but hates them and purposes to destroy them. What we read, for instance, in Proverbs 3:31-35 is the plain teaching of all of Scripture. There we read: "Envy not thou the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. For the froward is an abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners; but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools." How then can the texts quoted from Matthew and Luke possibly teach that God loves and gives grace to all that hate him? Did Christ, perhaps, love the hypocritical Pharisees and Scribes as such, on whom in Matt. 23 he pronounces an eight-fold woe? To be sure, He loves His enemies, but not as such, but only those whom the Father gave Him and for whom He shed His life-blood on the accursed tree.

But this interpretation is also impossible.

It is contrary to fact and leads to absurdity.

But about this next time D.V.

H.H.

## IN HIS FEAR

### **"... And Keep His Commandments ..."**

That the title above is a partial quotation is evident at once.

That it is a partial quotation of Ecclesiastes 12:13 is not self evident. But to all who know this text, it will be known. The full text is, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Now partial quotations are to be frowned upon and not to be advocated. They lend themselves too easily and too quickly to a corruption of the truth in the text. They are often quoted for the express purpose of deceiving, of misleading and of defending false doctrines. For they are the results, so often, of the process of cutting off the rest of the text which would show the error of the teaching in whose defense they have been quoted.

And, strange as it may sound, that is exactly why we have chosen a partial quotation for our title at this writing. Only we must bear in mind that we make this partial quotation as a supplement to the usual partial quotation and to complete the picture that we may have the truth.

The words of our title are usually left off; and the text is so often read as though it simply said that the sole duty of man is to fear God. And then by fearing God is meant nothing more than believing, trusting Him, having faith in His promises.

No, this is not done in the literal sense of the word. You do not hear people literally denying that we must keep God's commandments. For you do not hear people declaring that to keep His commandments is sinful and forbidden by God. No man who calls himself a Christian openly advocates that you and I may worship idols, take God's name in vain, rebel against the authorities, steal, lie and kill. All know that even the civil state forbids these latter sins and that worshipping idols and taking God's name in vain is directly contrary to all principles of Christianity. No man, no matter how much emphasis he may place on believing will himself believe that the church member or the world may break the second table of the law at will or that he may behave as though God never spoke that first table of the law. He may deny that there is any need whatsoever for Sabbath observance and that the day is man's to do all he pleases; but he will never advocate the breaking of the first three commandments of that first table of the law.

Yet you do not need to look very far to find scores upon scores of people who in practice do ignore the phrase which forms our title and simply live from the principle that the sole duty of man is to believe. You will find this condition

in those churches where Christian discipline is lacking. Oh, they will insist that you believe certain teachings of the church. You must believe this and you must believe that to be a member in good standing in their midst. If you disagree with them in regard to their views on baptism, on the millennium, the love of God or even their own "prophetic" interpretation of events in present current events, they will be deeply grieved and do all in their power to bring you back from your "wayward" walk. Yet that you walk contrary to God's law does not seem to be their concern. You can fill the Sabbath with the lusts of the flesh. You can go to early morning Mass so that the rest of the day is yours for golf, fishing or any other recreation you simply would not take time off for during the week. You can fill God's Day with the things you would not do on the other days because of the almighty dollar. And nothing will be said or done about it. Your sole duty is to fear God (believe the things the church leaders say about Him) and, of course, give the church financial support. But that is the extent of it. Indeed, you must not murder, steal, lie and rebel against the authorities. It is better, too, that you do not openly commit adultery. But these are frowned upon not so much because it is part of the sole duty of man to flee these but because these are bad for society! And these must not be viewed in any other way than the literal word of the commandment. You must not ask any thing further in the matter. That joining a godless union which practices the unscriptural principle of might makes right in the strike is violating the fifth commandment and eighth must not be investigated. Believe what the church says about the cross, believe that God in His love desires to save every man head for head and soul for soul and that you, little creature of the dust that depends entirely upon God, can disappoint Him and make His cross worthless; but never mind asking whether the dance floor and the sexual movies are not also phases of the sin of adultery! Believe in the practices of the church and go to do your "evangelism" on the street corner and in prison, on skid row and in the slum districts. But then rush home to curl up with Sunday's enlarged section of the "funnies" or spend the rest of your time with Hollywood via TV or reading some worldly, gripping novel. These are very edifying spiritually! And these are showing due respect to that great work of God which He accomplished so fully in His Son that there is a rest that remaineth for the children of God! Just subscribe to the teachings of your church concerning doctrinal matters in the abstract and without their practical implications; and so drop out the words, "... and keep His commandments ..." from your declaration as to the whole duty of man.

There are other ways!

Hold to the truth that all these are wicked, classify these works on the Sabbath as Sabbath desecration. Forbid membership in the godless unions—and in all other worldly organization for whose godless practices you are responsible as a member—and declare that the dance floor, the movie and

TV entertainment of Hollywood with its immorality is not for the confessing child of God. But then do nothing about it when the members in the church walk in such wicked ways. Do as Eli did. Speak a few, mild reproving words and then look the other way! And again you rob Ecclesiastes 12:13 of the partial quotation that forms our title for this time. And that is easy to do. Who wants to stir up trouble in the church? Things are going smoothly. And if you touch this one who does not keep God's commandments, his father and mother, his brothers and sisters will rise up in his defense. And before you know it you have unrest in your church to say the least. Let divorce and union membership together with membership in the atheistic lodges be tolerated. Otherwise you are going to suffer loss of membership. Your congregation and denomination is going to be less attractive and smaller in number in the midst of the world. Let this one or that one continue in a sinful walk. Be patient and gentle. For to condemn sin harshly is to cause them to stiffen in resistance to your rebuke. And Lo! you find that others, seeing your laxity of discipline, begin to walk that way. The flood gates have opened; and now you cannot stop it! So . . .! Recite a partial quotation and leave out, ". . . and keep His commandments." That is the way of least resistance. That is the way of least trouble. Just preach the gospel. Tell all of the love of God, that He hates sin but not the sinner. But be sure you step on no toes. That is not the gospel. Well, you can tell people, as Eli did to his sons, "It is no good report that I hear." But be sure you go no further than a few "choice" words of gentle reprimand! If a member of your church can recite the so-called Apostles' Creed and say that he believes those cardinal truths of Scripture, what else can you in the name of God demand of him? And your version, your revised version of Ecclesiastes 12:13 reads, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Believe the twelve articles of the 'Apostolic Creed': for this is the whole duty of man."

There are still other ways!

Preach the misery of man. Spare no words to paint the most awful picture of man's total depravity. Show as clearly and as completely as you can his carnality. And you can never emphasize it too much. Place the proper emphasis upon man's inherent wickedness. Explain fully Jesus' words to the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father the devil" and John the Baptist's words to them: "O offspring of vipers (in your translation, generation of vipers)." And then go on to speak of the beauty and glory of the cross. With all the power at your command publish the joy of the gospel of a salvation full and free through the blood of Christ.

Well, no, not full and free, but surely free in the sovereign grace of our God. . . Not full, however, because you want to soft pedal or omit the sanctification that is also freely given on the basis of the blood of the cross. Indeed, there are such. They even insist that the Heidelberg Catechism with its three parts is the true doctrine of the Scriptures. Man must, they

agree, have that threefold knowledge of his misery, of his redemption and of how to express his gratitude to God. But they never get to this last part of this triple knowledge. From the glorious truth of the cross they fall back again into the woes and miseries of their sin. The joy of the cross they lose almost as soon as they mention it. This misery of man is their forte. And although they confess the wonders of the cross they begin and they end in man's misery. They never come to the treatment of the knowledge of how to express thankfulness to God. For therein is treated what God *requires* of us in the law. And instead of seeing the regenerated, sanctified child of God walking in that law in principle, they fall back again into the woe of the misery of not being able to keep that law AT ALL! Not even by God's grace! Though they confess to be their only comfort that which the Heidelberg Catechism presents in Lord's Day One, namely that they belong to Christ, a faithful Saviour Who "assures us that He will make us sincerely willing and ready, henceforth to live unto Him," that assurance is quickly brushed aside or else the "henceforth" becomes from the day of Christ's return onward. In this life there just is no sincere willingness and readiness to live unto Him. For the regenerated child of God in this life his sole duty is to believe. And they leave off, "and keep His commandments" because they believe that in no sense of the word can it be said that the regenerated child of God does do this.

And yet we have one last consideration for this time.

Your child came home with his report card. You are deeply interested in his progress in school. Let us see, What did he get in arithmetic, spelling, reading, science, geography? After all the standings in these will determine whether he makes the grade and passes on to a higher grade. Indeed, you will take note that his mark is poor in deportment. But does that bother you MORE than his poor marks in these subjects? Or have you eliminated from his sole duty before God the keeping of His commandments. You want your child to believe in God. And you desire greatly his salvation. But is it simply a salvation from hell's punishment, or is it also from wickedness and from a life of transgression of God's law?

So you see, there is room to say a few things about the partial quotation that forms our theme and show that it belongs with the other part: "Fear God." We plan, therefore, to look more carefully next time at this matter of keeping God's commandments in this life.

J.A.H.

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A bulletin quote: Our Lord measures out our sufferings in the same sovereign love whereby He measures out our spiritual blessings, so that our sufferings always serve His own kind purpose.

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

#### THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

"Thus, neither is our own justice *established as our own* as from ourselves; nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated: for that justice which is called ours, because that we are justified from its being inherent in us, that same is (the justice) of God, because that it is infused into us of God, through the merit of Christ. Neither is this to be omitted, — that although, in the sacred writings, so much is attributed to good works, that Christ promises, that even he *that shall give a drink of cold water to one of his least ones, shall not lose his reward*; and the Apostle testifies that, *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*; nevertheless God forbid that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose bounty towards all men is so great, that he will have the things which are his own gifts be their merits. And forasmuch as *in many things we all offend*, each one ought to have before his eyes, as well the severity and judgment, as the mercy and goodness (of God); neither ought any one *to judge himself, even though he be not conscious to himself of any thing*; because the whole life of man is to be examined and judged, not by the judgment of man, but of God, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsel of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God*, who, as it is written, *will render to every man according to his works*. After this Catholic doctrine on Justification, which whoso receiveth not faithfully and firmly can not be justified, it hath seemed good to the holy Synod to subjoin these canons, that all may know not only what they ought to hold and follow, but also what to avoid and shun." — end of quote. It cannot escape the attention of the reader of these lines how all stress and emphasis is laid upon the works of man. And this grace of God, we must remember, is bestowed upon man through the external operation of the sacraments, particularly the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. And it surely must be evident that this grace of God is almost entirely divorced and separated from the guilt of sin and its forgiveness.

Secondly, this doctrine of the seven sacraments is a deviation from the teachings of Holy Writ because it breaks or severs the bond between the sacraments and the Word of God. Rome does not stress the bond between the sacraments and the Word of God but between the sacraments and the Church, and the Church must be understood in the sense of the hierarchy, the priesthood. This, too, is evident. To be

sure, the Word of God has some significance, but this significance is merely preliminary and preparatory; the faith, which is worked through the Word, is nothing else than a historical faith which is insufficient unto salvation and which must be filled up and completed by the love and the grace of God which are infused into us. And this grace is imparted to the sinner only through the sacraments which therefore receive their own, independent significance next to the Word of God and certainly far exceed the same in importance. This is certainly contrary to the Reformed and Scriptural conception which views the sacrament as wholly subordinate to the Word of God. All seven sacraments are necessary unto salvation. The administration of these sacraments is solely the task of the clergy, except that of the sacrament of baptism which, in certain times of special need, may be administered by the laity. This means that Rome teaches and advocates the indispensableness of the Roman hierarchy. There is no salvation possible outside of the church, that is, outside of the clergy. The ministry of the Word of God is minimized and relegated to the background, and the importance of the sacraments elevated to a prominence which is wholly out of all proportion.

Thirdly, this doctrine of the seven sacraments is a deviation from the teachings of Holy Writ because, according to Rome, faith is no requirement whatever for the receiving of the sacrament. The grace of God lies as a sanctifying grace, as something material, in the sacrament itself, is imparted by an external operation of the sacrament, and merely presupposes, at the very most, that the adults, to receive the sacrament, must not positively oppose it by absolute infidelity or resistance of the will. The sacrament works physically and magically, and by a power of God which He has imparted to the priest as an instrument in his hand. The Council of Trent declared, in Canon VIII of its Seventh Session, and we quote: "If any one saith that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace: let him be anathema." The faith which is necessary on the part of adults is merely historical faith, an acceptance of what the Church has set forth (and, incidentally, there is so much of this also in our present day), but the efficacy of the sacrament lies in the sacrament itself and is imparted to the recipient through its outward administration. And this they declare in spite of the clear Word of God as recorded in Romans 3:25-31, and we quote: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is of



one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." This view of the sacraments, as we shall see later, was uniformly rejected by the Reformers. But, as of now, we are discussing the sacraments as they constituted the teaching of the Church in the years A. D. 750-1517.

### BAPTISM

Treating these seven sacraments somewhat in detail, we call attention, first of all, to the sacrament of baptism as it was taught during these Middle Ages, and therefore by the Roman Catholic Church. We have already, in past articles, called attention to the fact that Baptism was held in high esteem during the early centuries of the Church of God in the New Dispensation. It was not merely considered a rite, a ceremony, but as a sacrament it was considered efficacious. Baptism was to the first teachers of the Church of the New Dispensation not merely a significant symbol, representing to the senses the internal consecration and renewal of the soul, but an efficacious medium for conveying objectively to believers the blessing of the gospel, and especially the benefits of the sacrificial death of Christ.

Rome identifies regeneration with the sacrament of baptism. Writing on the efficacy of baptism and the Romish and Ritualistic doctrine as to the efficacy of baptism, Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology*, page 625, writes as follows: "The Romish doctrine, with which the 'Tractarian' doctrine essentially agrees, is, 1st, that baptism confers the merits of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore (1) it cleanses from inherent corruption; (2) it secures the remission of the penalty of sin; (3) it secures the infusion of sanctifying grace; (4) it unites to Christ; (5) it impresses upon the soul an indelible character; (6) it opens the portals of heaven. Pt. II, Chap. ii., Q. 32-44. 2nd. That the efficacy of the ordinance is inherent in itself in virtue of the divine institution. Its virtue does not depend either on the merit of the officiating minister, nor on that of the recipient, but in the sacramental action itself as an *opus operatum*. In the case of infants, the only condition of its efficiency is the right administration of the ordinance. In the case of adults its efficiency depends upon the additional condition that the recipient is not in mortal sin, and does not resist by an opposing will. — Dens 'De Baptismo,' N. 29." — end of quote.

Dr. Bavinck, in his *Dogmatics*, writes as follows, III, 442-444, and we translate: "The Romish doctrine comes therefore down to this: the children who are born in the church receive in baptism regeneration (justification, infused grace), but they, who in later years hear the gospel, receive the grace sufficient, which consists in an enlightening of the mind and a strengthening of the will by the Holy Spirit. Man can reject this grace but he can also acquiesce. If he acquiesces, then the *gratia excitans* becomes cooperating grace; man works or cooperates with it to prepare himself

for the justification (infused grace, *habitualis*). This preparation embraces seven moments, that man, helped by the grace of God, believes in the Word of God, begins to see that he is a sinner, receives hope in God's mercy, begins to love Him, begins to hate sin, decides to permit himself to be baptized and to lead a new life, Trid. VI c. 6. Faith does not occupy a central place here, but is coordinated with the six other preparations unto justifying grace; it is therefore nothing else than an agreement with the doctrine of Christendom, that is, of the doctrine of the church and it receives its justifying power first through the love, which is imparted when the grace of God is infused; in itself and taken by itself, it cannot justify, but it is called justifying faith inasmuch as it is the first of the above named preparations. If man has thus prepared himself and has done what he can . . . , then God cannot refuse him the infused grace. It is true that man has not earned this grace through that preparation, inasmuch as it far exceeds it in value and worth; but it is reasonable and fair that God reward him who does his best with the infused grace. This is given him in baptism and it consists in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the infusing of supernatural virtues, the communion with the Divine nature, and it is followed by the forgiveness of sins which constitutes with it the two parts of justification, Thomas, S. Theol. II 1 qu. 113. The forgiveness of sins, according to Rome, is therefore the negative side of the positive renewing of man; sin is forgiven because and insofar as it is blotted out. When man now becomes a partaker of this infused grace in baptism, then he is indeed able to lose the same through mortal sins, and he must do penance for other sins, not only with contrition but also with confession and works of satisfaction; but he does possess in the infused grace the supernatural power to perform good works and thereby is able to merit all future grace, yea even everlasting life. For the good works which he does flow forth out of a supernatural principle and are therefore worthy of a supernatural reward. And from this we can clearly understand just what the purpose is of Rome in connection with this doctrine of grace." But, the Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation of Dr. Bavinck in our following article.

H.V.

### GOD OUR HELP AND HOPE

O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home.

Before the hills in order stood,  
Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God,  
To endless years the same.

Psalm 90: 1, 3

## 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 5. By such enormous sins, however, they very highly offend God, incur a deadly guilt, grieve the Holy Spirit, interrupt the exercise of faith, very grievously wound their consciences, and sometimes lose the sense of God's favor, for a time, until on their returning into the right way of serious repentance, the light of God's fatherly countenance again shines upon them.

The above translation is not wholly accurate. By "deadly guilt" is meant literally "a guilt of death." "God's favor" is in the original simply "grace." The phrase "for a time" modifies only the expression "and sometimes lose the sense of grace." And the last clauses of the article should be translated as follows: "until, having through earnest repentance returned into the way of life, God's paternal countenance shines upon them again."

This article evidently follows in thought very closely upon the preceding article. It is still referring, as the expression "by such enormous sins" indicates, to the sins and falls of the saints mentioned in Article 4. There it was stated that sometimes converts sinfully deviate from the guidance of divine grace, so that they are seduced by and comply with the lusts of the flesh, and are even drawn into great and heinous sins. And in connection herewith the fathers cited the lamentable falls of David, of Peter, and of other saints, described in Holy Scripture. About these "enormous sins" the present article continues to speak. And it is plain that the purpose of the article is to emphasize the reality and the very real seriousness of these sins of the saints. Negatively stated, the article teaches us that the Reformed doctrine of sure perseverance does not in any way minimize sin. This in itself is important, for it furnishes us with an answer to the calumnies of the Arminians. It was necessary to insert this article, not because there was any real danger of the Reformed believer denying the seriousness of his sins and falls. That is, after all, psychologically and spiritually impossible. Nor was it necessary to insert this article because there was any element of truth in the accusation of the Arminians that the Reformed truth of perseverance implies a denial of the seriousness of the saints' sins and therefore leads to spiritual carelessness. But it was necessary because the Arminian charge was *false*, and the fathers here state the truth of the matter in order that the mouth of the accuser may be stopped and that everyone may know what is the Reformed view of the sins of those saints who are surely preserved by God unto everlasting life and glory. If anyone ever brings this charge today, one need only point such an

one to Dordrecht and say: "There is our Reformed view concerning the sins and falls of the saints."

But we may find a further, non-apologetic, significance in this article. First of all, it serves to emphasize the tremendous contrast presented in Article 3. For the whole article is certainly one clear illustration of the truth that "by reason of these remains of indwelling sin, and the temptations of sin and of the world, those who are converted could not persevere in a state of grace, if left to their own strength." And therefore, as Article 6 will emphasize positively, the present article certainly emphasizes negatively the tremendous import and unspeakable blessedness of the truth that "God is faithful, who having conferred grace, mercifully confirms, and powerfully preserves them therein, even to the end." What a grace it is that preserves such sinners as are described in this fifth article! And in the second place, the more clearly we see and acknowledge the truth expressed in this article, the more is the comfort of the grace of preservation enhanced for us and the more real and applicable it becomes. For surely, no child of God can escape the testimony that what is stated in this article is real. Article 5 describes life as we live it and experience it as long as we are in the flesh. It describes something which every child of God at one time or another and in one degree or another experiences. And how awful in such circumstances to have to live by a doctrine which teaches that the saint must lift himself out of such extreme straits! How reassuring for a saint who can fall so deeply to know that it is absolutely certain and irrevocable by the grace of God in Christ Jesus "that in my greatest temptations, I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell!" Heid. Cat., Qu. 44. How comforting to know also with respect to those deep and hopeless falls into sin that the Holy Ghost "is given me . . . that he may comfort me and abide with me *for ever!*" How blessed it is to know with respect to such enormous sins "that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member" of the holy catholic church! Heid. Cat., Qu. 53, 54. Hence, on the one hand, let us by all means not overlook and ignore the picture drawn in this article. Nor let us forget the truth taught in the last part of the article, namely, that the way out of the hopeless morass of despair pictured here is the way of earnest repentance. But on the other hand, let us not divorce this article from the truth taught in this chapter. It is an integral part thereof. And let us allow the full light of the wonder of perseverance to penetrate our hearts by beholding its contrast with the enormity and seriousness of our sins.

Now let us attend to the contents of the article.

In the first place, the fathers assert that by these enormous sins the saints "very highly offend God." This statement is important for two reasons. First of all, we see that the entire outlook of this paragraph is theocentric. The very

first concern of Reformed doctrine is to stand for the name and honor and glory of God. That is also the case with the doctrine of perseverance. And that is in particular the case in dealing with the truth of perseverance in its relation to the sins and falls of the saints. And secondly, just because we are taught here that the character of the love and grace of God in preserving His children unto the end is such that it cannot possibly ignore sin, but is highly offended by our sins, we can understand that all the rest of this article must needs follow. Hence, let us understand this truth. God is highly offended and displeased by the sins of His children. No, this does not and cannot mean that God alternates between love and wrath, between blessing and cursing, between favor and disfavor toward His people. But we must remember, in the first place, that God's love and grace toward His people is always first of all the love and grace which He has in Himself and toward Himself as the ever-blessed Triune One. God is in Himself the gracious God because He is the God of all infinite perfections. God is the God of love in Himself, so that He loves Himself and seeks Himself as the highest and only good. God's love and grace are holy. For that very reason the counterpart of God's love is His wrath against all that is opposed to Him. God's love always reacts in wrath whenever the object of His love is touched. Hence, as truly as the object of God's love is fundamentally always Himself, and as truly as sin — all sin, whether the sin of elect or reprobate — assails the object of God's love which is Himself, so surely is God highly displeased with sin, especially the sin of His people. In the second place, it is the purpose and goal of God's grace toward His people in Christ Jesus to make His people gracious and beautiful like Himself, that is, ethically perfect. Hence, when He reveals that grace through our Lord Jesus Christ and in His cross, He in the nature of the case reveals it as a grace that is opposed to all sin, that condemns and destroys sin. In the third place, God loves His people unchangeably, and blesses them with all the blessings of grace, but only as they are in Christ Jesus, and therefore, not as they are by nature, but as He beholds them from eternity in Christ and as He actually makes them in time through the operation of that grace. Everything in His people that is contrary to that power and operation and goal of His grace is displeasing to Him, is the object of His wrath, and must ultimately be destroyed. Certainly the cross reveals this truth most clearly. That cross is the highest revelation of His love, and at the same time the fiercest revelation of His wrath, — His wrath not only against the ungodly, reprobate world, but His wrath against the sins of His elect people. Rather than have those sins go unpunished, He has punished the same in His beloved Son. Now the grace that flows from Calvary through the operation of the Holy Spirit is exactly of such a kind: opposed to all sin, aiming at the uprooting and destruction of sin. And therefore, the sin that remains in the saints is not ignored by God. Nor will it do simply to say that all those sins are done away and are not real any more since they are covered by the blood of Christ.

Nor will it do to say that when His saints sin, God has the same attitude toward them as toward the reprobate, — the attitude of a severe Judge, Who demands satisfaction for sin. That cannot be: the satisfaction has been made by Christ. But exactly because God loves His people in Christ Jesus, He hates and is displeased with their sins. The offense of which this article speaks is the offense of a loving Father! And it is for this reason that the article also emphasizes that these enormous sins of the saints offend God "very highly." You ask the question: are the sins of God's people more offensive than the sins of the ungodly? And the answer is: by all means! The saints are those in whom God works the work of His grace. The saints are those who bear the name of God in the midst of the world. The saints are those who represent the cause of God in the midst of the world. And therefore the sins of the saints, and especially their gross sins and falls, are the occasion that the name of God is blasphemed. They are His children. And therefore when they sin, they cast reflections upon the name of their Father. When they sin, they sin against grace! We may therefore surely say that there is nothing more displeasing to God than the sins of His people.

In the second place, the article asserts that by such enormous sins the saints incur a deadly guilt. We immediately wonder, of course how this assertion can stand in the light of the fact that in the cross the saints are forever and perfectly justified from all sin, and that by the blood of Christ they are purged from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing. We probably wonder how this statement can stand in the light of the fact that the saints are justified from all eternity in the counsel of God. In reply, we state, in the first place, that whether we can explain this statement or not, we all know by experience that it is true. On account of our sins we are guilty and feel that we are guilty. Otherwise we would never pray, "Forgive us our debts." In the second place, we hasten to add that the statement does not refer to our objective position before the bar of God's justice: from this point of view we are forever justified. But, in the third place, we must remember: 1) That all these sins are in themselves worthy of death. 2) That the saints feel the guilt of their sins before God. 3) That as long as the soul does not get rid of its burden of sin through confession and the seeking of forgiveness through the blood of Calvary, that soul must carry the burden of guilt. 4) That therefore, in the case of gross sins for which the saints do not immediately come to repentance, sins in which they walk, sins which go unconfessed for a time, the result can only be that the saints feel themselves to be in a state of damnation. And when finally they come to the spiritual consciousness of these sins, the saints can give expression to this very hopeless feeling. In fact, we must remember that this is fundamentally true of any one of our sins. As long as it goes unconfessed, as long as we do not get rid of it in the prayer for forgiveness, we can only feel a deadly guilt.

H.C.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Report

The committee, appointed by the Synod of 1924 to study the question whether or not a Classis may depose a Consistory, was divided in its report. The first part of that report or the report of that part of the committee that answered this question in the affirmative appeared in the foregoing articles. The other side now follows:

#### REPORT X

"The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to convene June, 1926, in Chicago, Illinois.

Esteemed and worthy fathers and brethren:

With all regrets the Committee appointed by the Synod of 1924 to answer the question, 'Can the Classis depose a Consistory, (Cf. Acts 1924, pg. 15, 156) could not reach a much desired agreement. Although on various points there was complete harmony in the committee, yet it could not succeed in presenting *one* report. One half of the committee herewith courteously presents you with the following report.

Our report is divided as follows: A. First, a brief discussion of the Reformed principles touching upon our subject: B. Next, a discussion of points concerning which there are and there are not differences within the committee with reference to the history and the principle authorities of Church Polity; C. Then, a short explanation of Articles of the Church Order that are pertinent here; D. Finally, our decision.

A. Reformed principles of Church Polity presented in the form of propositions as follows:

(1) Each local church is in itself a real and complete church with full power. (D.K.O. Art. 84, Netherlands Conf. Art. 31). There is, therefore, no church or church assembly that can exercise itself over the power of the local church. The highest power in the church resides in the office bearers who in the Consistory are the representatives of that power which Christ has given to His church.

(2) Yet, this does not mean that a local church must stand independently. The necessity of fellowship with all those who belong to Christ's church demands affiliation with other churches. Also the divine right demands this for the Scriptures teach that such a federation of churches is proper. (II Cor. 8 and Acts 15). Relative to the manner of this federation, this is never imposed from the top but proceeds through mutual agreement from the local church. Historically this is evident from the fact that the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands are not instituted as *one* general Reformed Church with local parts but came into being in each place separately and in 1563 voluntarily joined together in ecclesiastical federation. The mutual agreement is then fundamental and the ecclesiastical federation rests upon the voluntary compliance of each local church.

(3) By virtue of the ecclesiastical federation, the Classis and Synod have a certain jurisdiction over the local church (Art. 36) by which each church that belongs to the federation is bound. Classis and Synod have not only the right to advise in the sense that the independents teach but to make decisions that are binding for all who belong to the federation. However, Classis and Synod are not higher ruling-colleges. The church of Christ knows of only *one* rule, namely, the consistory. Higher rule does not exist. Classis and Synod are assemblies of local churches.

(4) The power administered through Synod and Classis is, therefore, never a power directly given her through Christ but it is a derived (*afgeleide*) power. The original power is concealed in the local church. The source of the ecclesiastical power is with the local church, the derived stream is Classis and Synod. Therefore, the power of Classis and Synod is never higher power but accumulated power just as two kings have more power than *one*!

(5) Classis and Synod then can never exercise rule over the local church. Their power rests on this that the local church, which in itself is independent, by entering the federation of the church, spontaneously declared to submit itself to the decisions of Classis and Synod insofar as these are not in conflict with God's Word and the fundamental principles of the Church Order. It is thus authority of a confederation of churches that mutually agree that the minority submits itself to the decisions of the majority because otherwise a confederation is impossible.

(6) The power of Classis and Synod is not an unlimited power but it is naturally limited. The power of the Classis and Synod is more limited than that of the consistory. The local church possesses power to administer the Word and sacraments; Classis and Synod does not. The local church can use the Key-power to excommunicate sinners; Classis and Synod, properly speaking, cannot do this. This aforementioned power is inherent in the local church and cannot be transferred any more than a judge can transfer the authority of his office or a man can pass over to his wife his marital authority.

(7) What power then do Classis and Synod have? This follows from the ecclesiastical federation. Naturally, no local church can independently make decisions for the regulation of the ecclesiastical federation for thereby one church would make the law for the others. The ecclesiastical federation must decide on confessional matters, matters of protest (*gravamin*) against her, over rules for the offices of the church; for administering of the Word; for mutual assemblies, for the exercising of discipline and rules for worship. Also she is to judge in differences between churches or in matters pertaining to the churches in common. The broader gatherings can also be called upon to judge in matters relating to the local church. However, in these cases, it is only possible: (1) Where in the minor assemblies it could not be finished (Art. 30, D.K.O.). Right in this case does not exceed the right of the local church because she appealed to

the broader assembly herself. (2) Where there is misadministration. If office bearers misuse their office to let in heresy, to oppress the congregation, the other congregations then have the right to come to the help of such a congregation. The broader gathering can then send representatives to such a local church in order through admonishing them to restore peace (*rust*) as soon as possible. Should this be impossible, the representatives of the Classis must give orders to have the oppressors deposed from their office. And should the whole consistory be unfaithful, there is nothing more to be done than that the representatives of the Classis call the faithful members of the congregation to choose other office bearers.

(8) Does then the Classis or Synod not have the right to carry out the censure or deposition which they advised? Indeed, the Classis or Synod can admonish office-bearers — complained against before them — and in the event they will not listen, decide that they must be deposed. And where this is a minister, apply censure to him (Art. 11, D.K.O.) because the office of the minister of the Word extends further than the local congregation. Nothing stands in the way of such apostate ministers to separate themselves with their followers and on the ground of a new confession to form a new church. But should they desire to remain in the ecclesiastical federation, the broader gathering must declare that they shall not be recognized as office-bearers. Should the local churches recognize them as office-bearers, nevertheless, in defiance of the decision of the broader gathering, then this in effect is a breaking of the ecclesiastical bond of federation. But the deposition of office-bearers insofar as the local church is concerned, — the excommunication itself is an act that is carried out through the local church. The broader gathering can prescribe the form of deposition for the local church but whether this shall occur, — the act itself is and remains an act of the local church since censure, even as the administration of the Word and sacraments, is inherently the right of the local church and cannot and may not be transferred to another body. In case the consistory refuses to carry out the censure, there remains only this solution left: The consistory is declared to stand outside of the federation of churches.

B. The committee has no differences concerning much that is found in the above recorded position. There is, for example, no question whether the Classis, etc. shall have jurisdiction over the consistory and that this jurisdiction signifies more than mere advice which the consistory may or may not accept as it sees fit. Voetius speaks of *voorschrijven* (prescriptions), *opleggen* (impositions). And Art. 31 says plainly, *Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles of the Church Order*. Neither is there any difference among the members of the committee with regard to the fact that a consistory is obliged to submit to the decisions of the broader gathering also when the consistory is not agreed thereto.

Rutgers (*Kerkeijk Adviezen*, I, Pg. 261) regarding this has the following: "It also seems to me that the consistory treads dangerously toward a certain independentism, holding alone to its own judgments. Thus, for example, the consistory says: 'We can and dare not relieve A. from censure for the Provincial Synod has not convinced us'! As if this last was really necessary! And as if it is not rather truly necessary that a church submits itself to the judgment of many churches even though it may be that she maintains her earlier sentiments. It is a mistake to say that men, in an ecclesiastical manner, may and must not submit themselves to the judgment of the brethren, even though they may not be agreed and then may and must act accordingly . . . Men must subject their own judgment to that of the brethren (unless in cases for which there is an express word of God indicating that censure should not be applied to a certain person). And the responsibility is then also for the brethren through whose decision the individual conscience is freed." And on page 213 Rutgers says: "Already by itself, in virtue of the ecclesiastical bond, a consistory cannot simply lay aside a requested advice of the Classis and proceed in its own way." Also then when a consistory appeals a decision of the Classis to a broader gathering, she may not in the meanwhile, pending the appeal, act contrary to the decision of the Classis but must let the case rest in *status quo*.

On the other hand, there is also no difference in the committee concerning the question as to how, in normal times, the Classis must act with regard to the Consistories' own matters. All are agreed that then the Classis may not perform what belongs to the Consistory. The rights of the local church must then be maintained without injury even as those of the ecclesiastical federation.

There also is no difference in the committee concerning the question whether according to Reformed Church Right it is lawful that a Classis sets a rebellious (refractory) consistory outside the denomination. But the other part of the committee want it clearly understood that the final act of expulsion is regarded, not as an act of the rebellious consistory, but the act of the Classis to which it has right. Against this has this part of the committee no objection. If it is maintained that a consistory through her obstinate refusal to comply with the decision of the broader gathering, actually breaks the denominational tie, yet has it not the least objection to regard the action of the Classis that follows as the final action of expulsion. The Classis always has the right according to Voetius, "the peace, the brotherhood and special Synodical correspondence" to terminate with such a consistory.

The difference lies here. Whenever the consistory is guilty of misadministration of the congregation and refuses to subject itself to the decisions of the broader gathering, whether then the Classis has the right to depose the Consistory. To this we mean to answer with a firm 'NO.' The Consistory is in very fact obliged according to the demands of the ecclesiastical federation to obey the decisions of the

(Continued on page 143)

## ALL AROUND US

*"To be or not to be."*

On this subject the Rev. H. De Wolf writes in the November 10th issue of *The Reformed Guardian* which is published by the group that left us in 1953. The title of his editorial, so he informs us, refers to the question concerning the denominational existence of the churches that followed De Wolf in his schism. The question is: Shall that group of churches continue as a denomination, or not?

The writer introduces his editorial with the remark "that seems to be the question." A little later he tells us what he means with that remark. He tells us: "there are people who apparently do not face this question as a real question. To them the matter is simply a church-political question. They have already decided that we should 'not be' and are impatient for a solution with respect to problems that make our 'being' necessary. For these people the question has assumed undue proportions and has made it impossible for them to consider the real question. For them the real question is not 'to be or not to be' but how 'not to be' any longer."

De Wolf does not say who these people are, whether they are a minority group among his own people, or those outside his group who are suggesting a settlement of the question "to be or not to be." He is well aware, of course, that we have on more than one occasion declared that he and his churches have no right of separate existence. Since he and his churches have adopted their "conditional" theology, they should belong with that denomination that agrees with them. If this suggestion is followed they should have no problem, no question at all "to be or not to be." The only obstacle they face is whether or not they will be acceptable to that denomination to whom they would be joined. And the resolving of this problem should not be difficult if De Wolf and his followers are ready to forget about 1924, confess that they erred seriously when they opposed the doctrine of common grace. However, I do not believe that De Wolf refers to us in the above paragraph, but to a minority group among his own people. Evidently there are some of his own people who do not take what happened in 1924 seriously. These people see no difference between the De Wolf group and the Christian Ref. Church. They want to go back to the latter church pronto, and are becoming a bit impatient with all the slow movements of the church-political machinery that must be run out before they can get back into the Christian Reformed Church. And we get the impression from De Wolf's description of them that though they are a minority group they are nonetheless an impetuous entity to be reckoned with. They must be putting considerable pressure on the leaders in the De Wolf group to hurry the thing along since they are getting a bit tired of being a little off-shoot group with no reason for a separate denominational existence.

On the other hand, De Wolf tells us that there is a

majority group in his churches that make "to be or not to be" a real question. And he seems to align himself with this group, for he writes:

"But for many others, I think I may say for most of us, this is a real question. It is a question that can be solved only in the way of prayerful consideration, re-evaluation and honest discussion. We may not permit our likes and dislikes to rule in this matter. We must constantly keep before our minds the fact that it is not a mere human organization or association with which we are concerned but the Church of Jesus Christ. The question does not concern merely us and others but it concerns our responsibility to Christ. The question is therefore not what do we like but what does Christ require of us in this matter. Not only must our likes and dislikes be dismissed but also our pride must be overcome. This is not easy. Our pride is perhaps the greatest barrier that must be surmounted when it comes to an honest consideration of the problems that must be solved. As churches we have made history. We have stood alone for a number of years because we believed that this was necessary. To terminate our independent existence as a denomination could be hurtful to our pride. We might feel that we are 'losing face.' It is hard for a church that has taken a position to honestly reconsider that position and if need be alter it. It is much easier, as far as the factor of pride is concerned, to maintain the accepted position and to do everything in one's might to justify it. This, however, is not serving the end of the unity and peace of the church of Christ.

"The question of 'to be or not to be' must be determined only in the light of the will of God. We may not be motivated in the consideration of this problem by anything else than the love of Christ and the desire to be of utmost service to His glorious Church. What becomes of us as a denomination, whether we continue or cease to exist as an independent denomination, is not important in itself but has relevancy only in the light of the above mentioned consideration. If we are convinced that we can be of better service to the cause of Christ and His Church by continuing our independent existence as P. R. Churches, then we must by all means continue, even though perhaps for many practical reasons we would rather not do so. If, on the other hand, we are convinced that it is for the best of Christ's Church and that it is an act of obedience to His demand for unity that we join forces with the Christian Reformed Church, then we may not let our own pride or the derision and ridicule of others deter us from this course of action. We need never be afraid of doing what is right and pleasing to the Lord. Let us fear only that through our own sinful weakness we may fail to do what Christ demands of us. Let us, above all, strive to be honest and to be motivated only by unselfish and pure desires in our consideration of the question that confronts us as a denomination.

"Whatever the conclusion may be, may God give us the courage of our convictions and the spiritual fortitude to do what we believe is pleasing to Him."



When De Wolf says "it is a question of prayerful consideration, re-evaluation and honest discussion," he no doubt has in mind what he wrote in the fore part of his editorial which we did not quote. Among other things he said: "Ideally, since there is but one Church, there should be but one church. One true church and the rest false . . . Practically, it doesn't work out that way . . . Honesty compels us to face the fact there is no church that can claim to be true in every respect and that there are many churches in which there is something that is true and right, although, at the same time, there is also much in them that is false . . . It is this fact that serves to complicate the matter. If the issue could be decided along idealistic lines, it would be very simple. But this is a practical impossibility. We must face the reality of denominationalism as an inevitable reality with which we must reckon as long as the Church of Christ continues in this world. In this light the question of to be or not to be will always be present . . . It is possible that, while at one time it was necessary that churches exist separately, time with its change and wealth of experience has erased this necessity. This fact alone precludes the right of any church to assume an attitude of indifference to other churches and a refusal to honestly consider the right of its own separate existence."

As to the question "to be or not to be," I confess after reading De Wolf's editorial that I find no answer proffered by De Wolf, i.e., no real answer. There is an answer alright, but it is camouflaged. He tells his readers that it is a serious question, that there are some of his people who do not take the question seriously, etc., but he offers no solution himself. He leaves the question hanging in the air. And yet, if you read his editorial carefully you feel that he really suggests an answer after all. He really tells the majority that they had better get rid of their pride that makes them hesitate and to continue with separate existence. He tells them that time and change and experience very really make it impossible to remain a separate denomination. He suggests that they may be able to serve the Lord better by joining the Christian Reformed Church. I felt when I read the editorial that De Wolf and others of his group are really faced with a problem. On the one hand, there is a minority group that is continually putting pressure on their leaders to return to the Christian Reformed Church at once. On the other, there is a majority who sense something of the importance of having existed separately for over thirty years apparently for principle reasons, and they find it hard to call it quits. And De Wolf feels it is better not to run back to the Christian Reformed Church with haste, lest he have to leave a number of his people behind. He wants them all to go back. So it is the part of strategy not to pressure those who hesitate but give them time, as he says, to humble their pride. So for the time being at least De Wolf is caught in a dilemma, namely, he wants to do what the minority are ready to do, but he hates to think of leaving the majority of his people behind.

I thought also I could detect the shades of 1953 and a few years before in this editorial. Prior to 1953 De Wolf boldly told his people that they wore Protestant Reformed on the lapel of their coats. Now he tells them they are proud and they must humble their pride. Now this would not be so offensive if De Wolf had written this only of himself, but I could not blame his people if they would be greatly offended when he ascribes this pride to them. Mind you, he is telling those who apparently hesitate to go back to the Christian Reformed Church because they believe they are Protestant Reformed that they are proud, and they must first be humbled. I'm sure that if I were a member of the group he is addressing I would not take this.

And this leads me to say to those followers of De Wolf who still believe that the stand they took in 1924 was for principle reasons, who therefore believe the doctrine of common grace to be a serious error, and who, therefore, believe they are Protestant Reformed, that they should never go back to the Christian Reformed Church so long as the latter maintains that error. To take that position is not one of pride, but of faith.

I would also urge this same people to reconsider the position they have taken in 1953 when they since that time embraced a conditional theology. Let them consider first of all that it is wholly inconsistent on the one hand to deny common grace and on the other to embrace conditionalism. Essentially there is very little difference between these two, though, if we may speak of degrees of error, we may say that the error you now embrace is worse than the error of common grace.

Finally, we would urge you to repent of this error, confess that you erred when you supported De Wolf and others who taught you this error, leave your sin, and return to us. By the grace of God we never did believe in common grace, and by that same grace we never did believe in conditional salvation. As you must surely know we have always believed in particular, sovereign, saving grace; and that salvation is that work of God in the elect sinner whereby He saves him in Christ Jesus unconditionally. We believe that faith is God's gift bestowed upon us of pure grace, and the divinely appointed means to apply unto us the salvation merited by Christ Jesus. We believe that saving faith is that power of God in us whereby we also consciously appropriate all that is in Christ Jesus as the God of our salvation. We like to believe that there are many among you who have left us in the schism of 1953 that still belong with us and should return as we suggested above. We do not ask you to humble your pride because you believe you are Protestant Reformed, but we pray that God will humble you to confess your sin and return to His truth as you know He has given it unto us to preserve and to proclaim it. So you will also truly do the will of Christ.

M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

There is still the unanswered question as to the *doctrinal* reason, if any, for severing relationships with the Eureka Classis on the part of the churches of Isabel and Forbes.

If there be no such doctrinal reason surely, when Rev. Mensch left these churches, they might conveniently have returned to the preaching of the ministers of the Eureka Classis. And, let it be stated, that would also be the more natural thing to do. And, further, such would also be their calling!

Now, in truthfulness it must be stated, that, officially in the process of the case of Rev. Mensch, no such doctrinal issue became any matter of discussion. The matter was rather one in which the *person* of Rev. Mensch was attacked. And the real issues at stake were beclouded. It was a matter of the *teaching* of Mensch.

At bottom it was a question of doctrine.

It was the matter of the doctrine of *divine predestination* in the teachings of Mensch!

This was crystal clear to the brethren and sisters in Isabel and in Forbes.

This fact of what the issue really was in the minds of Isabel and Forbes is reflected in the official missive which Isabel sent to the Eureka Classis, dated August 8, 1957, from which we quote paragraph 2, c. and d.

"Classis Eureka has virtually thus deprived us of the pure preaching of the Word, the gospel of our salvation, as taught by the Rev. Herman Mensch, and has, therefore, become to us an obstacle in the way of keeping the sabbath as outlined in Question 103 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

"...by depriving us of the services of Rev. Mensch, in withholding financial support, our remaining with Eureka Classis will simply mean acceptance of ministers trained in Seminaries which are quasi-Reformed, since these Seminaries teach their students the Arminian-Pelagian conception of the Gospel. By such preachers we are not willing that our beloved Rev. Herman Mensch be replaced."

Thus the Consistory of Isabel expressed itself.

These quotations clearly show, that, even though the doctrinal issues did not come into clear and bold relief, in the mind of the Consistory, this was the issue at stake, as far as the effect was concerned.

And the same may be said for the brethren and sisters in Forbes. In a document entitled "Reaffirmation Of Loyalty" the brethren expressed "That it is our calling and privilege to support you, Rev. H. Mensch, with our gifts and prayers, to be faithful members under your preaching."

I am assured that this "your preaching" referred to the *doctrinal* aspect of the preaching of Mensch.

That there was and is a far-reaching difference between the preaching and teaching of H. Mensch and, by far the majority, of the ministers of Eureka Classis became more

and more evident to the brethren and sisters in Isabel and Forbes.

Eureka Classis is officially committed only to Heidelberg Catechism. These churches do not subscribe *formally* to the Canons of Dort. And in the actual preaching it is very common that even the Heidelberg Catechism is not interpreted according to its own genius and design. More often than not the Heidelberg Catechism is mutilated by a teaching which is either Antinomian or Arminian-Pelagian. Thus it was with ministers, who, I myself have heard, and could name. But I forbear! I have heard but one exception to this rule.

Although H. Mensch did not subscribe to the Canons of Dort officially, while a minister in Eureka Classis, nevertheless his teaching was motivated by an adherence to the Canons while preaching the truths of Scripture as set forth in the Heidelberg. Thus his preaching stood forth as being specifically Reformed, warring against Arminianism and Antinomism. This in no small way stirred the ire of especially the Antinomists in Eureka Classis, of both leaders and of the people. However, this teaching was the balm of Gilead for those whose hearts the Lord opened to receive it. The Heidelberg Catechism became for them, as never before, a pearl of great price, wherein the mysteries of faith and godliness are set forth.

This specifically Reformed preaching had meaning for these brethren and sisters.

They desired others to hear it. They organized a Ursinus Society. For they felt that Ursinus excelled over Kohlbrugge in his interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism. This was especially the case in the truths concerning the "old man" and the "new man" in Christ; it touched the matter of sanctification, and, therefore, also of justification in the final analysis! They learned to see that in Kohlbrugge the "third part" of the Heidelberg Catechism, the matter of "thankfulness" was explained rather in a negative than in a positive sense. According to Kohlbrugge (he gives six reasons) the "third part" was embodied in the catechism as an *antidote* against licentiousness! However, he did not explain it out of salvation itself! Thus *does* the Heidelberg Catechism, and thus *did* Ursinus! These brethren and sisters rediscovered the teachings of Ursinus and of the Heidelberg Catechism under the preaching of Mensch. It was along the "Straight Paths" of the teaching of the Protestant Reformed Seminary. This Seminary did not need to be requested to give a "course" on the Heidelberg Catechism as did the Westminster Seminary in 1956!

Small wonder that these brethren and sisters were enthusiastic about the Ursinus Society.

Had not Professor H. Hoeksema written ten volumes on the Heidelberg Catechism. These writings too were greeted with joy in these churches, both as they appeared in these books and as they came to manifestation in a strong and vigorous preaching and teaching of the Heidelberg.

These brethren and sisters saw the kingdom and took it by force!

They would hold what they have for themselves and for their children!

At bottom, therefore, it is a matter of doctrine in order that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Can it be accounted "sinister" to tell others to do as they have done?  
G.L.

## QUESTION HOUR

### Held after Address at Hull Mass Meeting

July, 1953

*Questioner:* Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

*Answers by:* Rev. H. Hoeksema

(Continued)

*Question:* It is a well known fact that many of our people who stood with you in 1924 are not at all with you today. Do you have an explanation for this, and would you say that all those people never were Protestant Reformed?

*Answer:* I don't know. I don't know. I don't know how true that is. I'm not interested in it. I assure you, I don't ask you to stand with me. I'm not interested in finding out how many are with me. If I stand all alone, I'll still maintain what I told you tonight. And you can be the judge. I know that there are many that stood with me in 1924 that ought not to have stood with me. I know that very well. I know very well that there are many in my own congregation that could much better go to the Chr. Ref. Church today, and could have gone to the Chr. Ref. Church years ago, than stayed with the Prot. Ref. Churches. I know that. There were some in 1924 that stood (note here: a small part is missing due to the fact that the recorder had to be changed). How can a Protestant Reformed man be opposed to Protestant Reformed schools? How is that possible? I don't know. I can't see it. But they do. And they insist. And they don't want to hear it from the pulpit. I say, brethren, if we are not Protestant Reformed, don't stand with me. I don't ask you to stand with me. I never did. I didn't ask that in 1924. And I didn't ask that of any of you that I ever organized as churches. Here in Sioux County. Never did. Don't do it tonight. By all means, don't do it tonight. I'm not asking for it.

*Question:* In your first letter to the members of First Church you speak about two wrong statements by De Wolf. In later letters much more is added. Isn't that an indication in itself that you people realize the extreme weakness of your case?

*Answer:* O, no. The two statements are the only statements that were elicited from the sermons by the Consistory and by the Classis. That does not mean that the rest of the sermons were all right. Of course not. I cannot even imagine, I can't even imagine for myself that I could ever preach a

Protestant Reformed sermon and say in my sermon, "God promises to everyone of you salvation, if you believe." I can't even imagine that I could say anything like that. I never did. I couldn't get it over my tongue. But that doesn't mean that that was only a statement, that the rest was all right. O, no. The rest is true too. But the Consistory elicited those two statements. And so did the Classis condemn them. That's all.

*Question:* Is it true that you walked out of the consistory meeting held on the evening of June 22? If so, may we know why? And is it also true that you urged your elders to walk out with you and have a separate meeting?

*Answer:* No, the latter is not true. The first is true. I walked out. We couldn't do anything anymore. I walked out of the Consistory meeting, and I told them, "I cannot meet with this consistory anymore. You oppose us and block our actions all the way through. I cannot work with such a consistory." I left for that reason. But I didn't ask my elders to go. That's up to them. That's all. I did not.

(To be continued)

## DECENCY AND ORDER

(Continued from page 139)

broader gathering (Art. 31). "Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order." But should they do not this, remain unwilling, then no one can force them to do this according to Reformed Church Order. The State can force but the church cannot! Also according to the hierarchical system this can happen but not according to Reformed Church right. A Classis can depose a minister because she also decides with respect to his ordination into the office (Art. 79, K.O.). But the union of churches, the joining of the local church to the federation of churches, is a voluntary, accepted union and to her remains the right to again leave it. Whenever lawfully appointed office-bearers of a church refuse to submit themselves to the decisions of the broader gatherings as they in the (act of) agreement of church, promised to do, they do ethically wrong, it may be sin before God, but the communion of churches may not force them to submit to the decisions of the broader gathering. No principle of Reformed Church Right nor any article of the Church Order (see below) gives this right. By continual refusal of the consistory to enact the decisions of the broader gathering, the proper way for the Classis is to declare that such a consistory has by this actually broken the ecclesiastical tie of federation and then on her part "the peace, the brotherhood, and special Synodical correspondence" can be taken up with such an obstinate consistory and the faithful part of the congregation called together to choose new office-bearers. Such an obstinate consistory then stands with its followers outside of the denomination.

(to be continued)

G.V.D.B.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

December 5, 1958

Our missionary, Rev. Lubbers will conduct services for three Sundays in Redlands, since he is working in the areas of Bellflower and San Diego at present. During their vacancy Redlands will be served by Rev. Harbach as their moderator.

From our Year Book we learn that our denomination is made up of 2645 men, women and children found in 327 families, served by 19 ministers. Cold statistics? No, but a record of a Gideon's Band, indeed! Less than three thousand souls in a world of teeming millions. A Gideon's Band to fight the battle against those who either undervalue, or deny the truth of God's Sovereignty! "Ye are the salt of the earth, and if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"

A contribution from the Radio Committee:

"It may interest our readers to know that at the present time the Reformed Witness Hour is aired over seven radio stations. Our program originates from our own radio committee with our equipment and is presented two or three weeks later via tape recording at WFUR, Grand Rapids; KELO, Sioux Falls; KBOE, Oskaloosa; KLIR, Denver; KPUG, Bellingham, Wash.; WBEV, Beaver Dam, Wis., and WIVI, Virgin Islands. The latest additions were WBEV, KPUG, and WIVI which are supported by the Mission Committee along with KBOE. We have our own recording equipment which is operated by the program committee, and it is estimated that this equipment saves First Church and the Mission Committee recording costs up to \$2,400.00. Our committee is made up of thirteen members with a delegation of three men from the consistory. The members are Kenneth Bylsma, Lubertha Bykerk, James Dykstra, Fred Geers, Edward Kooienga, Charles Kregel, Robert W. Pastoor, Thelma Pastoor, Clarence Prince, Peter Reitsma, Howard Van Eenenaam, Henry Vander Wal and J. M. Faber. We have no way of contacting you personally as to your reactions to our program. How about it, folks? Keep our mailman busy over here! Our address is Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich."

The young people of Doon held a Singspiration Nov. 30. Quite a contingent from Hull arrived to share the evening of fellowship around the Word of God as it is found in the Psalter numbers. Special musical numbers were well received, and the singing was spirited. "Spice" was added with the singing of a Dutch Psalm which went over quite well.

Consistory presidents, if your consistory appoints a clerk other than recorded in the Year Book, please send us his name for publicity on this page.

From Lynden we learn that Mrs. Harbach spent two weeks in Philadelphia to visit her mother who is seriously

ill; that good progress has been made in their new parsonage fund which has for its goal \$2,000.00; that their congregation must be added to the list of those who are enjoying a series of sermons on the life of Elijah; that our radio program is being heard in that area and responses are coming in from as far away as Vancouver, B.C.

The Western bulletins all call attention to the fact that they are readying for the 1959 Y. P. Convention.

Lynden is awarded first prize by this page for the most beautiful bulletin cover. Lithographed pictures of Mount Hood in Mount Hood National Park, and Mount Teewinot in Grand Teton National Park, no less!

Oak Lawn's Young People's Society was host to that of South Holland, and South Holland's Ladies' Society was host to that of Oak Lawn recently.

One sister and three brethren made public confession of faith in Southeast Church, Nov. 30, and they received an individual from Creston lately. Hudsonville received an individual from Eastmanville Chr. Ref. Church; and First Church received an individual from Millwood Chr. Ref. Church in Grand Rapids.

Serviceman Homer Teitsma from Southeast expects to be sent to Hawaii in January and come home on furlough next summer on his way to Alaska. Homer was pleasantly surprised with some forty birthday cards sent by members of his congregation. Southeast's other serviceman, Benson P. Hendricks, is in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

The R.F.P.A. met Dec. 4 at First Church with the Rev. Vos as the speaker for the evening. His topic was, "Our Calling to Witness to the Truth in the Office of Believer." The speaker reminded us of our privilege and calling to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"; and that by the means of *The Standard Bearer* we must always show the Face of Christ, be it as a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death.

The Rev. H. Kuiper was installed in our newest church Tuesday evening, Nov. 25. Our Missionary, Rev. Lubbers, presided at the installation ceremony, and preached the sermon. Rev. Kuiper delivered his inaugural sermon Dec. 1, preaching from Isaiah 14:32. After the installation service, the congregation welcomed their new pastor and family in an informal gathering. Loveland purchased a new parsonage recently, but as it was not ready for Rev. Kuiper and family to occupy, they temporarily put up at a motel.

Our latest bit of news is that Redlands has extended a call to the Rev. R. Veldman from Southeast Church of Grand Rapids.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff experiences that the grace of God sustains him from day to day, even as the Lord is also giving renewed strength physically.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.