

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### DWELLING WITH THE LORD

*"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."* ISAIAH 33:14-17; 24

This plaintive cry you do not find in the world. A worldling will never say: Who can dwell with a God who is everlasting burning? When they talk about hell they are mocking. Hell, this; and hell, that! They do not take hell seriously. The first word I heard, addressing a policeman, was: Hell! I don't know what you are talking about! I talked the King's English, having spent a year there, and this Brooklynite could not catch my brogue.

No, this speech is found in the church.

They are the "sinners" and the "hypocrites" in Zion who say: Who can dwell with the devouring fire and continual burnings of Jehovah? In plain words: who can dwell with a God who casts untold millions in an everlasting hell?

Sinners?

Aren't we all?

Yes, we are all sinners, but this is a peculiar kind of sinners.

They are the sinners that were never visited by the Day-spring from on High. They are those who are satisfied to be and remain sinners.

I remember a voice of the past, making a difference between the "GODLESS UNGODLY," and the "CONVERTED UNGODLY." A few of you will remember.

God's elect people, although they are still sinners, are called "saints," and that for two reasons: 1) they are saints

in Christ, and so God does not see their sin anymore. Indeed the Scripture tells us that He "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel . . ." Numbers 23:21a. Theologians call that unspeakable blessing "justification from everlasting." In harmony with another Scripture which is the ground for it, or, rather, the Fountain: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love . . ." Jer. 31:3a. And the ground is Jesus Christ's vicarious suffering, death and resurrection.

That's the first reason God's elect people are called "saints."

And the second reason is that they have a certain "saintliness" in the very depth of their hearts. Paul speaks of that when he says: "For I delight in the law of God after the 'inward' man, Rom. 7:22; and also: 'for to will is present with me . . .' (that is, to will the good) Rom. 7:18b.

And that event, producing such "will" and "delight," is called by theologians: "regeneration and conversion."

And the sinners of my text are neither justified nor regenerated.

And they prove that by also being "hypocrites." That's the name the text gives them.

Now it is true that every living child of God is somewhat of a hypocrite, but they are that in spite of their inmost heart. They are not hypocrites to the extent that they must be denominated by that awful name.

A hypocrite is a man with a mask on his natural face. He is not what he seems to be.

Note that these sinners live in Zion, and that is the Church of Jesus Christ, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

When these sinners and hypocrites come in contact with the God of Israel they begin at once to complain: they cannot live with Him, for they see the Devouring Fire, and the Continual Burnings. In other words, they hear of His righteous anger and indignation over all the unrighteousnesses of man.

And so they will not dwell with Him.

But this is the awful irony of God: He will not let them

dwell with Him. Neither indeed can they. As far as that goes: they are right!

\* \* \* \*

What then?

Who can dwell with Him who created a place for the devil, the false prophet and for those who bear his mark, and are characterized by his number?

The text gives the answer: negatively: 1) those that despise gain of oppression; 2) those that despise bribery at the expense of judgment; 3) those that despise bloodguiltiness; 4) those that despise evil. And positively: 1) those that walk in righteousness; and 2) those that have the speech of uprightnesses.

A walk in righteousnesses (the plural of intensity) is a walk that is good. When such a walk is laid alongside of the law of God it harmonizes with the law and with God (which is really the same thing).

For righteousness is the state and condition where a man or an angel is in harmony with the Highest Good and that is God.

Quite naturally then such a person can dwell with God.

And the speech of uprightnesses is a speech where your mouth and your heart agree. Contrary to a speech with a smile on your face and a heart that is lying, that is cursing while your face, words and smile are sweet.

People that answer to the above description shall see the King in His beauty, and that is Jesus. And His beauty is something to sing about. When the poet said: I will sing of my Redeemer! he was outlining an eternity of hallelujahs in heaven. His beauty is so great that John fell as dead at His feet when he saw Him on the isle of Patmos.

Paul is one of those most blessed people, for he said: "But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour!" Heb. 2:9. Therefore a little of that vision we have now already. And if that vision is so powerful that men and women and children have died for it, what shall be the vision when we see Him in Glory?

Moreover, those people, that is, the righteous and the upright shall see the land that is very far off. I think at this moment of a line in a song: "the land that is fairer than day!" Of course, that means the heaven of heaven, cleansed, purified, renewed, recreated at the end of the ages.

\* \* \* \*

All such beauties are the sum total of "dwelling with God."

What constitutes dwelling with God?

It is not mere being with God.

No, for the devil and his angels will forever *be* with God.

God is everywhere. If I would make my bed in hell: Thou art there! Do you remember that text? God *is* in the devil, even as He is *in* everything.

The dreadful truth is that the very presence of God near,

with and in the devil, his angels and the reprobate in hell constitutes their very hell. God's presence makes hell what it is.

The wicked at their demise fall into the hands of God. When they die they see at once the very face of God, and that Face tells them terrible things. They rather are crushed by the mountains than to look at that Face of God and the wrath of the Lamb. It will be their last prayer: "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Rev. 6:16.

And so, mere presence with God is not the same as "dwelling with God."

To dwell with God is the Covenant idea. You dwell where you feel at home, where you share the "gezelligheid," the sociability of family life.

A weak shadow you find everywhere on earth.

Your dwelling is where you live, where you feel at home.

There you let your hair down. You take your familiar seat, and you glance with a smile at the wife and kiddies. There everything breathes harmony and peace. When it gets toward evening time, you hurry to get HOME!

Jesus loved to talk about the House of My Father.

Even the text where He speaks of the glory which He had with the Father from everlasting.

The Triune inhabits such a Home, and its name is Eternity, or, The inapproachable Light.

And God has from eternity visualized that Home full of children who would look like the Only Son He had ere the world began. They are the children of God whom "He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son . . ." Rom. 8:29b.

And so there are certain blessed beings who are to dwell with God.

They are the justified and the regenerated of whom I spoke earlier.

I know, I know . . . you are going to say: But how can they dwell with Him, since they also have so much of the sinner and the hypocrite in them?

You will ask: Is it not true that they do not always refuse, despise the gain, the bribe, the bloodguiltiness, the evil? You will add, and that is heavier still: and how little they show of the righteousnesses and the uprightnesses in walk and speech?

The answer is the Gospel of God.

ONE, AND ONE ONLY MAN has been found who answers to the description of my text. And that One is the Man Jesus.

Do you remember that I said a little while ago that righteousness is really to be good and to do good? Well, of this Jesus it is said that He went about the country *doing good. And He called Himself: the Good Shepherd.*

Man, angels and devils proclaimed Him good.

Even the devil himself. For when this devil incarnated himself in Judas, this unhappy man said of Jesus: I have

shed the innocent blood! Those are the sorrows of Judas unto all eternity.

And God said of this Good Man: This is My beloved Son!

Oh yes, Jesus fits the specifications of the man who may dwell with God. In fact, it is one of the great, if not the greatest, of all theological problems: the incarnation. Is it not true that from His very conception God dwelled in His manhood? At one time He would say: I am so thirsty! And at another time: Your sins are forgiven thee!

Now then, if you have this Jesus in your heart through the unspeakable boon of regeneration, you now already dwell with God. And you will dwell with Him everlastingly in that "land that is very far off."

Brethren! your happiness here is fragmentary and fraught with much unhappiness, because of sin.

Sisters! here you suffer sickness of which the text speaks. It is the sickness of sin, and oppression in your heart because of sin.

But in heaven, when you dwell perfectly with God, you will never say again: I am sick! because you will have forgiveness from all your iniquity!

G.V.

### Eastern Men's League Meeting

*Speaker:*

REV. HERMAN HANKO

*Topic:*

"THE RELATION BETWEEN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY"

*Time:*

Thursday evening, November 13 at 8:00 o'clock

*Place:*

Southwest Protestant Reformed Church  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

THE BOARD

### IN MEMORIAM

The Protestant Reformed Men's Chorus of the Protestant Reformed Churches of Grand Rapids, hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Henry Meulenberg, in the loss of his brother,

RICHARD MEULENBERG.

May our covenant God comfort the bereaved in their sorrow.

C. Jonker, President  
Art Doctor, Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### Trouble About Nigeria

Thus far we quoted the decision of the last Christian Reformed Synod in regard to the TCNN (Theological College of Northern Nigeria), and we also criticized that decision in general from a principal viewpoint.

We still wish to discuss that decision and criticize it somewhat in detail.

In many respects this is a very strange decision and unworthy of a synodical gathering. I surmise that the reason for this must be found in the fact that, although the majority of the Synod was in favor of continuing Dr. Boer as professor in the TCNN, that majority certainly was not very large. There was a strong minority that insisted that Christian Reformed Church would initiate its own theological training in Nigeria. And not only this, but there were several protests from the churches voicing their opposition against allowing Dr. Boer to continue teaching in the TCNN. Of course, this should not have motivated Synod to make such a strange decision if it were convinced that it were principally correct. If that had been the case, Synod should simply have decided to continue Dr. Boer as professor in the TCNN on the ground that, on the mission field it is perfectly proper to support a mixed theological training of missionaries. That would have settled the matter regardless of a strong opposition minority and regardless of the consequences, regardless even of a possible split in the Christian Reformed Church. But Synod, evidently, did not have the courage of its conviction. And the result is the strange decision of which I spoke already.

Now, why is this decision so strange and one that is unworthy of a Synod?

The following are my reasons for this opinion:

1. The main decision of Synod is that it continues Dr. Boer as professor in the TCNN. But on what grounds is this decision reached? Was this very important matter decided on principal grounds. Were the grounds, for instance, that the TCNN is perfectly sound and that the training which the students receive in that school is expected to be Reformed? Not at all. The grounds for this very important decision were the following:

"a. Former Synods have committed the Church up to this point, and we are morally bound to honor this commitment.

"b. The present commitment satisfies the urgency of the situation."

What to say about these grounds?

The first, namely, that Synod is morally bound to honor the decisions of former Synods in regard to the TCNN, is

evidently erroneous. Suppose that a Synod passes a resolution to condemn all denominationalism, are the following Synods morally bound to honor such a resolution? Or suppose that a Synod denies the Reformed truth of predestination and adopts Arminianism? Must all the succeeding Synods consider themselves morally bound to abide by this decision? The very opposite is true as anyone will admit. Hence, the first ground for the decision of the last Christian Ref. Synod to let Dr. Boer continue to teach in the TCNN is, evidently, beside or rather contrary to the truth. Succeeding Synods are morally bound to disavow and repudiate wrong decisions of former Synods. The decision to let Dr. Boer teach in the TCNN was certainly wrong and, therefore, the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church was morally bound to repudiate that decision.

The second ground of Synod to continue to let Dr. Boer teach in the TCNN is equally untrue. It refers to the urgency of the situation in Nigeria. I suppose that by this the Synod refers to the fact that there is need for the training of native missionaries in Nigeria and, perhaps, also to the fact that some students of the Benue and Tiv churches are already being trained in the TCNN. But if this is meant by the urgency of the situation in Nigeria, the second ground of Synod of the resolution to let Dr. Boer continue to teach in the TCNN is just as fallacious as the first. How can a situation in the churches or on the mission field be ever so urgent as to make it necessary to support or condone false doctrine. And this the last Synod certainly did by continuing Dr. Boer as professor in the TCNN as we have shown in our previous editorial on this subject. Besides, there was before Synod the advice of the minority report of the committee of pre-advice on this matter which recommended not only that Synod should reject the request of the Board of Foreign Missions to participate in the program for united theological training in Northern Nigeria, but also to help the churches there to establish a theological school of their own. This certainly would have met the urgency of the situation in a much better way. But this advice was rejected by Synod by a vote of sixty to forty-five!

Another strange element in the decision of the last Synod in regard to the situation in Nigeria and the TCNN is that they first decided to continue Dr. Boer as professor in that seminary and afterward added a decision to appoint a committee to investigate the matter: "That a study committee be constituted of nine members (in which both the minority and the majority opinions are represented), in consultation with the Nigerian General Conference, to define and clarify certain matters which follow, and that clear cut recommendations be made to the Synod of 1959 on these matters:" (the matters referred to follow).

Now, I ask whether it is not very strange and unworthy of any ecclesiastical body that they first make a decision and after that investigate whether that decision is correct? This certainly is always wrong but it certainly is such in respect to

such an important matter as a professorship of one of their own missionaries in the TCNN. I cannot understand why the Synod did not postpone the whole matter until it had been thoroughly investigated. What the Synod may expect in 1959 from the committee of investigation that was appointed is not a clear-cut recommendation, but again a majority and minority opinion. This is my prediction which is based on the fact that at the last Synod the opinions were sharply and strongly divided as well as on the fact that, in the committee appointed, both the minority and majority opinions are represented.

Let us also consider for a moment some of the "certain matters" which the committee appointed by Synod must "define and clarify." One of them, in fact, the first one is: "The implications of our ordination vows with respect to missionaries who serve in a united theological enterprise."

I could not help but wonder why this matter was introduced at Synod as it evidently was. Naturally, I consulted the "Form of Ordination of Missionaries" that is used in our churches and I believe also in the Christian Reformed Church. And I discovered a rather striking difference between the vows a professor of theology is required to make at his ordination and those that a missionary (and also, by the way, a minister) makes. I will refer only to the difference between the questions asked of both, the professor and the missionary (or the minister) when they are to be ordained. The questions asked of a professor that is to be ordained are the following:

"First. I ask thee, dost thou feel in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church and therefore of God himself to this office? (This question is virtually the same as that asked of a missionary or minister at his ordination.)

"Secondly. Dost thou believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God? Dost thou reject all doctrines repugnant thereto, and dost thou accept the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church as the truest expression of the doctrine of salvation? (Here we find a rather important difference with regard to the questions asked of a missionary at his ordination.)

"Thirdly. Dost thou promise faithfully to discharge thy office according to the same doctrine as above described, and to adorn it with a godly life?

"Fourthly. Dost thou promise to submit thyself, in case thou shouldst become delinquent, either in life or doctrine, to the ordinance of the Church, and if necessary, to Church discipline?" (The last two questions are also the same in the Form of Ordination of Missionaries, except that they are combined into one question.)

The difference, therefore, is in the second question.

And to my mind, this difference is a rather important one. In the second question, quoted above, the professor that is to be ordained is asked, not only whether he believes

that the books of the Old and New Testament are the only Word of God and whether he will reject all doctrine repugnant thereto, but also whether he believes the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church to be the truest expression of the doctrine of salvation. The latter element is omitted at the ordination of a missionary. The missionary is asked only whether he believes that the books of the Old and New Testament are the only Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation, and whether he rejects all doctrines repugnant thereto. Nothing is said about the Standards of the Church.

Was this, perhaps, intentional? Did those that composed the Form of the Ordination of Missionaries proceed from the opinion that it was not as necessary for the missionaries to subscribe to the Standards of the Church as it is for the professors? I do not know. But I hardly can conceive of the possibility that the omission was not intentional. This seems especially true in the light of the fact that also the Formula of Subscription omits any mention of missionaries. There we read: "We, the undersigned, Professors of the Christian Reformed Church, Ministers of the Gospel, Elders and Deacons of the Christian Reformed Church of..... of the Classis of..... do hereby sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this, our subscription, that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine, contained in the Confession and Catechism, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine, made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19, do fully agree with the Word of God."

Also here no mention is made of missionaries.

Was this, perhaps, the reason why the investigation committee must report on the implication of "our ordination vows with respect to missionaries who serve in a united theological enterprise"?

I do not know, for I was not present at the sessions of the Christian Reformed Synod where this matter was discussed. But it seems to me this is highly probable. Why otherwise speak of the ordination vows of the missionaries in connection with their teaching in the TCNN?

Dr. Boer can always insist that he never promised to teach according to the Three Forms of Unity as missionary, but that he vowed only to maintain the doctrines contained in the Old and New Testament as the only Word of God. For this reason it is legal for him to teach in a general and united theological seminary.

But if this should be the case, as it probably is, the matter becomes more serious still.

But about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER V

#### *The Locusts Out of the Abyss*

#### Revelation 9:1-12

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.
2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.
3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.
4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.
5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.
6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.
7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.
8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.
9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.
10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.
11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.
12. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

In verse 13 of the preceding chapter we have a little intermittent scene. An eagle flies in mid-heaven and announces a three-fold woe upon them that dwell on the earth by reason of the voices of the trumpets that are still to sound.

Much has been made of this eagle, and people have speculated as to what this eagle might be. Some reach the conclusion that it is a member of the church triumphant that has already been taken to heaven, according to these interpreters, before these trumpets are sounded. We, on our part, cannot attach special significance to the identity of this eagle. We rather accept that it merely belongs to the symbolism of the entire scene that John, before the last three trumpets are sounded, beholds this eagle, the bird with its penetrating look, flying in mid-heaven and calling, "Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth." In the meantime, it indicates that we may expect that the three trumpets that are still to sound will bring events that are quite different from those that are revealed thus far. The element of vengeance and suffering in them will be more pronounced. They will be most plainly visible as the day draws near that the Lord shall return in His final appearance. They indicate that the world gradually becomes ripe for judgment. Accordingly we expect too that it will be more difficult to point out the exact historical realization of these last trumpets, seeing that they point to events that must for the most part still be fulfilled in the future.

Our text speaks of the locusts out of the abyss. First of all, we note that as the fifth angel sounds, John beholds a star fallen from heaven. It will be well to call your attention from the outset to two things: in the first place, to the fact that this star does not fall from heaven at the moment when John hears the sound of the fifth trumpet. He does not say that he saw a star falling from heaven, but simply that his eye beholds a star that had already fallen from heaven at the moment when the trumpet sounds. John merely beholds that star now, though the star had been cast out of heaven before. He beholds it at this particular moment because at the sound of the fifth trumpet that star begins to operate. This brings us to our second remark, namely, that this star is surely no star in the literal sense of the word, for the simple reason that the things that are told us of this star cannot be true of one of the heavenly luminaries that shine in the firmament of heaven. In the first place, it would already be an inconceivability that a star would fall from heaven and simply lie on the earth without any further effect. But above all, it would be impossible to maintain that this is a real star in the light of the fact that the star acts like a person with intellect and will. We read of this strange star that the key of the pit of the abyss was given him, and that as the key was received by him, he went and opened the pit of the abyss. Whoever may be represented by this star, therefore, so much is certain from the outset, that it is not a real heavenly luminary, but some being that is able to receive and understand commands and to act accordingly. In harmony with what follows in the text, the supposition is not without grounds, as we shall see, that this star represents no one else but Satan himself. He is called in the Word of God the prince of the powers of the air, Eph. 2:2, the prince of the demons, Mk. 3:22. Of him the Savior speaks in language



remarkably similar to this passage, namely, that He saw him fallen as lightning out of heaven, Lk. 10:18. And as we hope to see presently, it is in that very capacity that he occurs also in the words of this particular passage.

This star, this prince of the devils,—or as he appears here, this prince of the abyss,—opens the pit of the abyss. The picture here given is that the abyss is a place beneath the surface of the earth, evidently widening according as it extends deeper below the surface, and therefore narrowest at the top, until it narrows down to a simple shaft, or, as it is called in our passage, a pit. This pit is locked, indicating that for the inhabitants it forms a prison from which they cannot at will escape. Nor is it thus, that they can attain their freedom merely at the command of their prince, the star. For evidently, according to the words of the passage we are now discussing, he does not hold the key of this abyss. It is not in his power. But it is given to him. In ordinary circumstances he does not have this key; but it is now given to him. And therewith he receives the power, and also the liberty evidently, to open the abyss over which he is prince. He does so. And the result is terrible. Out of this abyss issues forth, in the first place, a terrible cloud of smoke, darkening the sun and the air. And out of the smoke gradually a tremendous host of locusts becomes visible. Of locusts we read several times in Holy Writ. They are, whether literally or symbolically, the harbingers of the judgments of the Lord. So we read of them as constituting one of the ten plagues that fell on the land of Egypt by reason of its stubborn resistance and oppression of the people of God. Thus we also read of a plague of locusts that threatened the people of Israel in the second chapter of the prophecy of Joel. And a plague they certainly were. In the eastern countries an army of these locusts would sweep over an entire country that was rich in vegetation and leave no green thing behind it. But these locusts that are mentioned here are of a very peculiar description. In general, indeed, their description is somewhat derived from the general appearance of the locust. But nevertheless, their appearance is entirely peculiar. They are in shape like horses that are prepared for war. Crowns of gold, or at least something that makes one think of crowns of gold, they wear on their heads. And they are protected with breastplates as it were of iron. Their faces are as the faces of men. And they have long hair, as the hair of women. But in contrast again with this human and even feminine appearance, they show teeth as the teeth of lions, and tails like the tails of scorpions. They come in orderly array, with a king by the name of Abaddon, or Apollyon, at their head. And as they pass, the sound of their wings makes one think of a tremendous army, with horses and chariots, rushing for war. Thus is their description. And still more strange is their monstrous power. One might think perhaps that their description is merely an overdrawn picture of the imagination though the general traits of the ordinary locust are maintained. But this cannot be said of their power. In the first place, it is strange that

these locusts have their power of destruction in their tails instead of in their mouth. And in the second place, it is also strange that they do not touch the grass or the crops or the trees or any green thing. Thirdly, it is peculiar that their power is limited to men, and that to those that have not the seal of God on their foreheads. And fourthly, it is also peculiar that they may not kill these men, but merely torture them, so that life becomes an awful burden to those that are struck by the locusts.

In answer to the question who these locusts are, we may limit the field of our investigation in two ways. In the first place, we may deem it an established fact that they are not real locusts. We have always emphasized that in the Book of Revelation the text always plainly indicates whether we must take a certain passage literally or in the symbolical sense of the word. And surely, in this case the text is sufficiently clear to make us feel safe in asserting that real locusts are out of the question. In the first place, of course, there is their description. True, as we have already said, real locusts might be described in terms of a strong imagination as horses running to battle, because indeed the locust resembles the horse, especially as to the shape of its head, and also because in the second chapter of Joel we find a somewhat similar description. But it is not true that the locust also has the face as of a man, that it possesses teeth like the teeth of a lion, that it has hair like the hair of women, and that it has a tail like that of a scorpion, in which its terrible power lies. But there are clearer indications that Scripture does not intend to have us think here of real locusts. First of all, we must call your attention to their origin. They arise from the abyss, over which Satan is king. And they have as a king another angel, whose name is Abaddon, or Apollyon, the first of which is Hebrew, and the second Greek. Both of these names mean "Destroyer." Ordinary locusts surely do not have their dwelling-place in the abyss, whatever that abyss may be. Besides, their work is entirely different from that of ordinary locusts. They do not touch the grass and the trees or any green thing. But that is exactly what the locust devours. In an inconceivably short time the locust knows how to make a barren desert out of the most fruitful country, abounding in vegetation. These locusts, on the other hand, touch only men, and touch them not with their mouth but with their tails. And they cause these men to suffer the most fearful agony, pain comparable only to the pain caused by the sting of a scorpion, which, as travellers assure us, is well-nigh unbearable. All these things, therefore, establish it beyond a shadow of doubt that we would violate the purpose of the text if still we would maintain that they were real locusts. No, they are not real locusts, but they must be taken as symbols of something else. That they are described as monstrous locusts, infernal in their appearance and in their power, is merely because the locust actually constitutes one of the scourges wherewith the Lord visits the earth in His judgments.

Besides, and in the second place, we may also from the

outset discard the interpretation that finds in these locusts the symbol of an army of men. This explanation constitutes indeed one of the favorite interpretations, especially of those interpreters that explain the Book of Revelation as being historically and successively fulfilled in the course of time. These locusts, so they say, are the symbols of the hordes of the Mohammedans that flooded parts of Asia, North Africa, and Southern Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries of our era. In detail these interpreters find in the description given of these locusts the picture of these Saracens as they rose from the East and swept the entire northern part of Africa, as well as the southern part of Europe, constituting an awful scourge upon the countries they conquered. But there are elements in the words of our text which simply make such an interpretation an impossibility, — elements which I find that these interpreters simply ignore and overlook. First of all, what does it mean that these locusts have their power in their tails? That seems to constitute an essential element in the passage we are now discussing. Yet this cannot be sufficiently explained on the supposition that they are the symbols of the Moslem army, or, in fact, of any army of human beings. Still more, the text makes the important statement that the people who have the seal of God on their foreheads must be left untouched. But was it not especially against the Christians that the fury of the Mohammedans raged? Or can it be said of any army in the world that they ever make a distinction between the people of God and the people of the world, and refuse to do the former any hurt? Still more: these locusts receive the command that they may not kill, but simply hurt men for five months. Granted now, for a moment, that it is permissible to take these five months in the symbolical sense, every day of them constituting one year, so that the entire period might be calculated as being one hundred fifty years, was it ever beheld of an army, — that of the Moslems surely not excluded, — that they did not kill, but merely hurt the enemy? Surely, all these objections, — facts so plainly and so emphatically mentioned in the passage, — are simply insurmountable. These locusts are not the symbol of an army of men.

Both these possibilities being ruled out, there is practically but one possibility left. And that one is indeed in harmony with the entire passage, as well as with the Scriptures in general, namely, that these locusts form an infernal army of demons let loose by Satan for a certain definite purpose. We know from the Word of God that Satan was not the only person that fell in the spiritual world, but that with him a veritable host of angels fell away from God into rebellion. We know not how many of the angels fell with their prince; nor is this important. But we certainly receive the impression that there were indeed thousands upon thousands that fell with Satan. Now what became of these evil angels? Plain it is that they have not yet received their final judgment and punishment. Also the angel world is still to be judged, and shall not be judged until the great day of our

Lord Jesus Christ, when we shall judge them with Him. Satan still goeth about like a roaring lion. And also the evil spirits, direct subjects of his kingdom, are not confined to the place of their eternal torture. It may safely be said, therefore, of all these evil angels that although they have been cast out of heaven and no more enjoy the light of life in the presence of the Holy One, — which, of course, would be impossible, — yet they have not received their final sentence, and still must be made subject to their eternal punishment. In other words, in the literal sense of the word the devil and his angels are not yet in hell. Where then are they? It seems to us that Scripture makes a distinction. Also the lot of these fallen angels is not the same for all, and according to their different state they accomplish a different purpose in the economy of the present dispensation. In the first place, we read of evil spirits roaming about in desert places or being bound by the river Euphrates. In the second place, we learn from Scripture that there are a number of these evil spirits in aerial places, — perhaps the main army of them, Satan included. Paul calls the devil the “prince of the power of the air,” Eph. 2:2. And he warns the Ephesians that they shall put on the whole armor of God: “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in aerial places.” Eph. 6:12. They seem to be at the disposal of Satan continually and constantly fight the battle with him against the realization of the kingdom of Christ. But in distinction from these devils, or demons, in the air there is another division of the army of Satan. They are in the abyss. They are shut up. They do not have the liberty to roam about, except on special occasions. At the time of Jesus’ public ministry, for instance, we find mention of one legion of them. And when they are cast out, they beseech the Lord that He may not send them back into the abyss. Peter also speaks of angels that have sinned and that have been committed unto pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. II Peter 2:4. And Jude, verse 6, makes mention of “angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation,” which “he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” And of these latter evil spirits our text also makes mention. It tells us of them that they are in the pit. And the smoke that issues out of the abyss as it is opened evidently speaks to us of the fact that their proper habitation, the sphere in which they exist, is darkness. It tells us that the pit of this abyss is locked, so that they cannot issue forth from it at will. And since even the prince of this abyss must receive the key, it also tells us that these evil spirits are ultimately at the disposal of Christ. They cannot leave their prison except at His bidding. They cannot perform their infernal purposes except when He deems it the proper time. Then He blows the trumpet and hands the key of the abyss to the prince, that he may let his armies go forth to battle.

H.H.



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Commanded To Offer Up Isaac

*"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.*

Many are the moments in the life of every child of God when he stands at the point of decision. Before him lies the way of the world; and his whole natural self urges him to follow that way to the satisfaction of his natural desires; while within him there is a small principle of new life that tells him not to do so, for it is not the way of the Lord. Before him lies the way of the Lord; and his inmost heart tells him to follow that way as the way of true joy and peace; but the old man of sin insists that it is useless and will come to no avail. Then the decision must be made. He can follow the dictates of his flesh and gain carnal satisfaction for the moment. Or, he can deprive his flesh of its natural desire and live in peace with God.

In Hebrews 11:17 we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried . . .," and it means that God brought Abraham to just such a position. It is a very factual teaching of Scripture that God often places His people before trials; He actually sets them before temptations. God gives to His people commands which, if they are to follow, they have to deny themselves; and there is nothing more difficult for man to do than to deny himself. It may mean that he has to deprive himself of his nature's fondest desires. It may mean that he has to give himself over to suffering, and pain of the severest sort. It may mean that he has to perform some deed repulsive to his whole natural being. And yet the command stands and the alternative can not be escaped. One may listen to his flesh; but in so doing he disobeys and sins against his God. He may give his flesh over to hardship; but so he walks in obedience.

These trials God brings to His people for a very explicit purpose. It must not be thought that God brings trials to His people for the purpose of discovering whether they have faith or how great their faith may be. In His omniscience, this He surely knows. Rather God recognizes His people, which are of this earth, as being in need of spiritual instruction and growth. The trials which He sends to covenant children are always specifically designed so that, although they may involve hardship and suffering, they will serve to their further instruction in righteousness.

Among the many trials which God throughout the ages has sent to His people, it is difficult to imagine any of those sent to mere man more difficult than that to which Abraham was subjected. This trial began when God appeared to tempt

Abraham and commanded, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering," Gen. 22:2. The words seem almost cruel in their formulation. Each phrase seems designed to penetrate deep into the soul of Abraham, each word to cut at his heart like a knife. The command is built up phrase upon phrase and word upon word to accentuate the dearness of the price that will have to be paid if Abraham is to live in obedience. They are words made to pierce, sting, and gnaw at the heart of a father that loves his child. God would have Abraham realize from the very beginning the immensity of the trial that he is to undergo.

"Take now thy son . . . and offer him." These words in themselves were sufficient to touch the inmost feelings of Abraham's heart. It was his own son to whom they referred. Difficult enough would the command have been had it referred to just any child, the son of one of his servants, or even the son of a stranger. But the command referred to his own son, flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood. The son toward whom all of his natural affection went out with fatherly love. That son he must take and with his own hands slay before the altar.

"Take now . . . thy only son." These words reached even deeper into the feelings of Abraham, for Isaac was his only son. Indeed, Abraham did have another son, but Ishmael was only a son according to the flesh. He had come forth only because of the weakness and doubt of Abraham and Sarah. Moreover, although Abraham had spent many years treating and instructing Ishmael as a covenant seed, he had always refused to live before the face of God. Between Abraham and Ishmael there had never existed that beautiful relationship of covenant father and son sharing and rejoicing together in the many graces of God. In the vocabulary of God he was not a son at all. Rather, according to the command of God he had been cast out as unworthy of being a spiritual heir of Abraham. With Isaac it had been different. He was the son of Sarah whose very birth had been a miracle wrought by the power of faith. Many had been the hours, weeks, and even years that Abraham had spent in joy raising that son in the fear of the Lord. How rich had been his joy as he saw that simple, childlike faith laying hold on the truth of the promise and exulting in it with his father. He was the only covenant seed which Abraham had ever had so as to share with him the riches of covenant communion and life, a true spiritual son. That son he must now slay upon the altar.

"Take . . . Isaac." Isaac was the name given the child by God; it meant laughter. It recalled to Abraham's mind the years and decades spent by him and Sarah waiting for that son. Long had been their waiting, anxiously spent; and time had crept by; and still the son had not come. And they had become even more anxious because God had told them that all of the promised blessings rested directly upon their seed. The promised land, the life to come, the favor of God,

their righteousness, the realization of the covenant, all depended on the promised seed, and the seed did not come. They had grown weary in their waiting and had laughed, both he and Sarah, when God repeated the promise. Therefore the son was to be called Isaac to remind them of their doubt. But that laughter of doubt had dissipated into the strength of renewed faith called forth by the word of God; and the faith had blossomed forth in a new laughter of joy when at last the child was born. He was a son born in their old age to fill all of their parental desires, and even more a covenant son through whom all of the promises could be made real. He could remember the words of Sarah: "God hath made me laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me . . . Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age," Gen. 21:6, 7. That son Isaac, he, Abraham, must lay on the altar and slay.

"Take now thy son . . . whom thou lovest." How true it was that he loved that son, and Sarah too. They loved him as the son of their own flesh. They loved him as their only son. They loved him as the son of their old age. They loved him the more as the covenant son upon whom all of their spiritual hopes depended. All of the love of Abraham and Sarah were focused on that child; and that child Abraham must take and slay.

One feels that he can hardly appreciate the struggle which must have swelled within the bosom of Abraham as this almost impossible command fell upon his ears. It is a hard thing for a father to witness the death of his son. Normally it is to be expected that the son will far outlive his father, and to have this order reversed seems painfully unnatural. Even more pathetic is the experience of a father who even accidentally has had a part in the cause of that death. But what can be compared to the heartache of one who is commanded to stretch forth his hand and slay his own son? What we must be careful of, however, is that we do not begin to think that the sole purpose of God in this command was to give Abraham something extremely difficult to do. God is not a despot who finds joy in giving His children trials that are painfully hard to perform. Neither is the ultimate beauty of this event to be found merely in the fact that Abraham was willing to subject his own feelings for the sake of obedience to his God. The ways of the Lord are far richer than that.

The command of God to Abraham was, "Take now thy son . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering." A burnt offering was a particular type of offering with a very specific significance. In that offering after the blood of the victim was shed the body was placed upon the altar and burned until completely consumed. Such a sacrifice was made, not by one who had transgressed some particular precept of God's law, but rather, by one who, having sought faithfully to walk in righteousness before the face of God, nonetheless felt that he had come far short of the good and perfect life.

It was offered by the child of God who was deeply moved by the conviction of sin and the consciousness of his own unworthiness until he cried out like the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Such a person would shed the blood of the sacrificial victim as a covering for his sin, and he would burn the body of the victim upon the altar to symbolize his own willingness and desire to be completely consecrated and devoted to his God.

That Abraham was such a person, who felt his own unworthiness and need for consecration, we may be sure. He is called by Scripture the father of all believers and spiritual consciousness and the conviction of sin were very real to him at all times. As through the years he grew in knowledge and in faith, he grew also in the awareness of his own iniquity, so that he pleaded upon the name of the Lord that his sins might be forgiven him and his guilt be washed away. It was the heart-cry of his life.

Thus it was that God issued to Abraham this painful and hard command. He would teach Abraham a rich truth about salvation. There is only one way of salvation, and that is that the promised seed must die. The blood of bulls and goats could never satisfy the justice of God. Neither was it sufficient merely that the promised seed was born. The promised seed was born exactly for that purpose that it again might die, the complete and perfect offering for sin. So only is salvation possible.

Abraham had within him a small feeling of the dearness of the promised seed. Through all the years God had prepared him so that he might have a very strong love for his covenant son. Then God told him that the price for sin is so great that only the life of that dear son, the promised seed, could suffice. That was the purpose and lesson of God's command.

In a figure God was actually telling Abraham about Christ. As he was commanded to offer his own dear son, he gained a small idea of the great price which must needs be paid for sin. It reflected the day when the final realization of the promised seed, the very Son of God, would be offered as the most precious price to cover the sins of many.

The most amazing fact is that we may finally read, "By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac," Heb. 11:17. He staggered not at the promise even when it meant the life of his only son. He believed God, and that faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Coming to him in a figure, it was the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

B.W.

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For Thy Name's sake hear Thou me,  
For Thy mercy, Lord, I wait;  
Pardon my iniquity,  
For my sin is very great.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### VIII.

(Matthew 24:32-36)

The text here reads as follows: *"Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know that he is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."*

In this portion of Matthew 24 the Lord Jesus tells us to "learn" the parable of the fig tree. There is something in the nature of this fig tree which has in it a *parable*! There is here an expressed comparison and not simply an implied comparison. It is here expressed by Jesus just what the comparison is. In general we can say, that all things *happen* in parables. Thus Jesus says in Mark 4:11, "And he said unto them, unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, *all things are done* (come to pass) *in parables*!" These parables happen day by day. The sower always again goes forth to sow the seed, and always and again the seed falls on soil that is by the way, stony, full of thistles, and on good ground. Matthew 13:3-9. The reason for this type of revelation is that the children of the Kingdom may know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, the secrets of the Lord with His friends, and that those who are without, whose hearing is not mingled with faith, may emphatically hear and not understand, may emphatically see and yet not perceive the mysteries of the kingdom.

Thus it is also with the parable of the fig tree.

God created the fig tree in such a way that it has in it the speech of the Creator. God made the fig tree in such a way that it is most emphatically a harbinger of the summer. Most trees first have leaves and then the blossoms and the fruit. However, we are told that the fig tree has this peculiarity, that first the fruit is seen on the tree. When the "branch is tender" one already sees the fruit, and afterwards the leaves. This is a sure harbinger of the summer. It has in it a created parable. A parable that every natural man can understand since he has "natural light"! Howbeit, the natural man cannot connect this phenomenon, in the fig tree, with the Parousia of Christ. The natural man does not know God through the medium of revelation, the created things, but has simply "some knowledge of God" which, even so, "he keeps

down in unrighteousness by which he becomes inexcusable before God." He does not "learn" the parable of the fig tree, since these matters are foolishness to him. But to us, who believe, they are the power and the wisdom of God.

Now, what the natural man cannot do, we are instructed to do by the Lord, the chief prophet, who makes known unto us the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption, even by the parable of the fig tree. And what do we then learn? We learn that even as the fig tree's tender shoots and leaves proclaim that summer is nigh, so also do "all these things" tell us that Christ is nigh, as the Lord of glory, coming in His Kingdom, yea, that He standeth before the door! And "learning" this from the fig tree does not simply mean: learn purely intellectually, but refers to the spiritual taking it to heart so that we lift up our heads in the hope of the eternal morning to enter into the eternal state, and thus ever be with the Lord!

It is noteworthy that, in the Greek text, it is emphatically pointed out that "ye" shall learn this lesson. A distinction is made here between "ye" and "this generation." Just as the former alone, the elect, will hear the trump of God and be gathered from the four corners of the earth, so also here this lesson is to be learned by the children of God. In learning this we learn a "mystery" of the kingdom through God's medium of revelation, the fig tree, and that, too, in the light of Jesus' prophetic word.

In the light of this word there is much in our day for the enlightened child of God whereof to take notice. We have but to notice the stepping up of global life, global wars and policies. We hear more than ever of wars and rumors of wars. And man boasts great things, performing signs from heaven. Does he not dream of traveling to the moon and the planets? Does he not have his satellites in the heavens?! And is there not a great increase in religion, while godlessness is on the increase? And will not presently the very "heavens be shaken"? Will not man attempt to imitate God's works, as did Jannes and Jambres of old in Egypt. Do not all things indicate that we are fast approaching the time when all things are ripe for the consummation of the age?

To the enlightened Christian this can mean only one thing. He hears the footsteps of Christ in history. He is approaching. Behold, he cometh quickly. His reward is with Him! Maranatha, Jesus comes!

Such is the lesson in the parable of the fig tree.

In verse 34 Jesus adds a solemn word of assurance that all these things shall be fulfilled. The counsel of God shall stand. The church, the elect, shall surely be gathered. And "this generation shall not pass away" till this all has come to pass.

There are some interpreters who insist that "this generation" refers to the then living generation in the days of Jesus, and that Jesus refers to the "Jews" and to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Others interpret the "this

generation" in an expanded sense. This generation (genea) then has the meaning of "race" or family of people. It refers then to a certain kind (genos) of people. This generation are then the unbelievers who "shall pass away." However, their final passing away from the scene of history will not take place till the time when the Son of Man returns in the consummation of the ages. Mockers or scoffers would refer "this generation" to the generation of Jesus' day and then insist that, since all these things did not come to pass during that time, Jesus' word does not stand.

And we may and must trust this word of the Lord Jesus. We must not pervert this "dark saying" to our own destruction as do the wicked with all of the Scriptures. Rather we are placed here in the either-or (entweder-oder) by Jesus. Either His word passes away, does not come to pass, and then He is in the class of the false prophets, or the heavens and the earth pass away, and then Jesus' word stands and He is a true prophet. For that will be the last sign. When heaven and earth pass away all will need to say: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs which thou doest except God be with him," John 3:2. Here Jesus by implication applies to Himself the acid test of the credentials of a true prophet. Only that prophet's credential is good whose predictions come to pass. The others must be stoned and put out of the land, Deut. 13:1-5. Let the mockers, therefore, scoff and mock, walking after their own lusts. Let them say: where is the promise of His coming! Let them wilfully forget about the destruction of the earth in the days of Noah! This earth shall be destroyed by fire, being reserved against the day of judgment, II Peter 3:1-7. We know that God is longsuffering toward us, toward his own elect people, not willing that any should perish, but that they all should come to the knowledge of the truth, II Peter 3:9.

Hence, we trust this word of the Lord.

We are glad about this either-or. Either heaven and earth pass away, and we get a new heaven and new earth in the Parousia, or Jesus is a false prophet. We will, however, abide by the "Amen" of His word. For He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness of God, the beginning of the creation of God, and, therefore, through the "birth-pangs" of the world's judgments also the "end" of the creation of God.

Do you ask "when" shall these things be? You mean: what will be the date, the day and the hour on *our* calendar and clock? That God has not made known to us. It is a "secret" which shall be revealed only when it comes to pass. Noah did not know the exact hour and day of the beginning of the flood either until it was told him. So it is also in this case of the final return of Christ upon the clouds. We are to live in a lively hope and are to have the loins of our mind girt up in sober expectancy, I Peter 1:13. And, therefore, we are to be certain that the Son of man shall return, but we are not to know that day or the hour, that we may be watchful unto prayer, Matthew 24:42.

On this point Jesus is very explicit and makes a most solemn utterance. We notice the three classes who do not know the day and the hour. In the first place Jesus says that "no one" knoweth the day or the hour. This implies that anyone who thinks or presumes to have further information on this point of "time when" does not speak according to the prophetic word unto which we shall give heed as unto a light shining in a dark place. He lives by arithmetic computation and soothsaying and not by the faith in the more sure word of prophecy, II Peter 1:19. In the second place, Jesus most solemnly assures us that the angels in heaven do not know either. They only know the mystery of godliness through the church. Only in the church do they behold with rapt attention the things of the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. And, thirdly, let it not be overlooked that both the evangelists Matthew and Mark tell us that "neither the Son" knoweth this hour, or the day! This should not perplex us! It should rather be a greater deterrent for us not to pry into that which God does not will — because of the very pedagogical purpose with the saints — to disclose even to the Son. It is an element in the mystery that is not made known.

That the "Son" does not know certainly means that the Son in human nature does not know. Here we have a case of Communication of attributes (Communicatio idiomatum). The *person* of the Son, in his human consciousness does not "know" this point on the agendum of God. If he does not know, he who is the chief prophet, revealing to us the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption, what presumption is it on the part of men to say that they know. It is a strong commentary on human sinful inquisitiveness when men still pretend to be able to search out this path of the Almighty!

Hence, we are called not unto a searching out of the secret ways of the Lord, but rather to obey His word in holy and obedient expectancy!

The Lord Jesus himself will give further instruction of this "watchfulness" which shall be ours, in the sequence of this chapter!

His word shall stand also in respect to the *limitation* of the revelation of God and its pedagogical purpose with the believers. This word shall ever be the rock of offence upon which unbelievers stumble and fall into destruction.

G.L.

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## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

JOHN WYCLIF.

Whatever has thus far been written on the rise and decline of the papacy clearly reveals the importance of the position of the pope of Rome and his decline in power. Before we proceed with the doctrine of the sacraments and of transubstantiation in particular during this period, we wish to make a few remarks about the reformers before the Reformation.

The decline of the papacy and of the power of the pope in England was inaugurated by John Wyclif, a forerunner of the Reformation, and also called the Morning Star of the Reformation. He was also known, at the time of his death, in England and in Bohemia, as the Evangelical doctor. He was born about the year 1324 and died of paralysis at the close of the year 1384. The reason why he was not more successful in limiting the power of the pope in England was because he practically stood alone. John Wyclif's remains found no quiet in the grave. The Council of Constance, on May 4, 1415 declared him a stiff-necked heretic and placed him under the ban of the Church. His books were burned and also his bones which were exhumed from his grave.

There were social and economic conditions in England which served as a background for the rise of John Wyclif. The age of feudalism (in our country the slaves were the property of their masters; in the Middle Ages the serfs belonged to the land and were transferred from one property to another even as the property was transferred from one owner to another) was coming to an end. Men began to ask whether the lords were greater folk than they. And they began to claim that all men came from the same father and mother, Adam and Eve.

These social and economic uprisings and disturbances exerted a tremendous influence upon the Church. It is said that one-third of the property of the realm was owned by the Church. A movement to limit the power of the bishops and to demand spirituality and efficiency in the clergy began to grow in strength. Besides, the mass of the clergy had little learning. And the prelates lived in abundance in luxury. The clergy were a constant drain upon the incomes of the common people. And to this we may add that indulgences were being granted to procure aid for the building of churches, the erection of buildings, the filling up of muddy roads and for other public improvements. What respect could the people

have for these indulgences when the money to procure them was used for such purposes?

It was under such circumstances that Wyclif came significantly to the fore. He was found among those to whom the thought of the secularization of the ecclesiastical properties in England was welcome. He advocated that the Church should renounce its temporal dominion. He deplored the wealth of the Church and advocated a return of the Church to the poverty which characterized the Church at the time of Christ and the apostles. This forerunner of the Reformation was unrelenting in his attacks upon the papacy and the entire hierarchy of his time. Year in and year out these attacks became sharper, and finally the reformer identified the pope with the anti-christ.

John Wyclif also contended that the Bible ought to be the common possession of all Christians. However, the Bible was written only in Latin and could not be read by the common people. Wyclif, therefore, set himself to the task of translating the Bible out of the Latin into the English language of his people. While it is not possible to determine exactly the part which he had in the translation, there can be no doubt that the inception was due to his initiative, and that the successful carrying out of the project was due to his leadership.

Another task to which Wyclif gave himself was preaching and the care of souls, or the sheep of the Lord, himself toiling as a preacher to the people and as their teacher. Whereas it was his desire to do away with the existing hierarchy, he put in its place "poor priests" who lived in poverty and preached the gospel to the people. These priests, as itinerant preachers, spread abroad among the people the teachings of Wyclif. Two by two they went barefoot, clad in long dark-red robes and carrying a staff in their hand, this latter having symbolic reference to their pastoral calling, and passed from place to place preaching the sovereignty of God. It is also worthy of note that Wyclif formulated in twelve short sentences his conception of the Lord's Supper. His followers were known as Lollards.

John Wyclif, of course, was condemned by the Church as a heretic. After his death his books were burned and his bones exhumed, burned, and scattered abroad. A law was passed which condemned heretics to be burned. Many of the Lollards perished in the flames. However, his teachings could not be destroyed, and their seed was implanted in other parts of Europe. The movement of John Huss in Bohemia was certainly a result of John Wyclif and his teachings, and it led to the further decline of the papacy at Rome.

JOHN HUSS.

John Huss, the famous reformer of Bohemia, was born approximately in 1369, about one hundred and fifty years before Martin Luther nailed the ninety-five theses to the church door of Wittenberg. He was an ardent disciple and

follower of John Wyclif, possessed and studied the writings and views of the English Reformer, and championed the cause of the Reformation long before the German reformer appeared upon the scene. The teachings of John Wyclif were more firmly rooted and imbedded in the native land of John Huss than in the land of England. The parents of John Huss were Caechs and in narrow circumstances. Like Martin Luther, he had to earn his living by singing and performing humble services in the Church. He felt inclined toward the priesthood and studied at Prague. He became a priest in 1400 and in 1402 he was appointed rector of the philosophical faculty. In 1402 he was also appointed preacher of the Bethlehem Church in Prague. His inclination toward ecclesiastical reforms was awakened by his acquaintance with the writings of John Wyclif.

Huss was popular in his native land of Bohemia. His preaching met with a hearty response among both the common people and the nobility. Throngs were attracted by his preaching. Huss himself wrote in 1410 that wherever he made his appearance in city or town, village or castle, the people flocked together in crowds, and this in spite of the clergy. He was an outstanding advocate of Wyclif and his views. However, one may well wonder whether all this support, especially among the nobility, was prompted by the Spirit of God. We know, for example, that the Lord used this mass support of Luther by the masses of the German people to preserve the life of the German reformer and the cause of the Reformation in Germany. We must bear in mind that the Roman Catholic Church exercised a stranglehold upon the lives of the people from practically every point of view. The taxation of the masses by the Church was particularly offensive and the masses resented this interference of the Roman Catholic Church. This may also have been true in the land of Bohemia.

It is evident from the teachings of John Huss that he was a true forerunner of the Reformation. His learning was not of a universal range; it was limited mainly to what he learned through the writings of Wyclif. His book on the Church and on the power of the pope contains the essence of the doctrine of Huss. According to it, the Church is not that hierarchy which is generally designated as Church; the Church is the entire body of those who have been predestinated from eternity unto salvation. Huss, therefore, maintained and emphasized the doctrine of election. Christ is the Head of this Church and not the pope. It is no article of faith that one must obey the pope to be saved. Neither external membership in the Church nor churchly offices and dignities are a surety that the persons in question are members of the Church in the true sense of the word. He distinguished between a being *in* the Church and a being *of* the Church. What he says in his sermons on the corruption of the Church, the clergy and monks, and on the duties of external, temporal powers, etc., he has taken almost literally from Wyclif. Wyclif deplored the power and influence which the Church exercised in temporal and secular affairs. He claims not to have shared

Wyclif's views on the sacraments, but this is not at all sure. It is certain that the soil had been well prepared for this doctrine in Bohemia, the doctrine of the sacraments as advocated by John Wyclif.

That which led to the final trial and condemnation of Huss at Constance was the matter of indulgences. We must remember that it was the time of the Great or Papal Schism, which lasted from 1378 to 1417. For many years the popes had had their residence in Avignon, France. The Italians, of course, were greatly dissatisfied with this state of affairs. They wanted the pope to live in Rome. This led to an open break between the Italian and French peoples of the Roman Catholic Church. Each elected its own pope. Now there were two popes: John XXIII in Avignon and Gregory XII in Rome. Later a council deposed both popes and elected a third man to be the pope: Alexander V. However, neither of the two deposed popes would give up his office. The result was that now there were three popes. At last, in 1417, another man became pope and the three who claimed to be the pope relinquished their claim to the office.

John XXIII was experiencing great difficulty in warding off the challenge and claims of Gregory XII. In the meantime the teachings of Wyclif had been declared heretical and his writings destroyed in the land of Bohemia. Huss, however, continued to preach and became increasingly bolder in his denunciation and condemnation of the Church. And now John XXIII, because of his difficulties, sought support in his struggle with Gregory XII. Unto that end he offered indulgences to all who would rally around him. An indulgence was a document which the Church issued to the penitent, assuring the penitent that he had received forgiveness through the payment of money. And now John XXIII offered such indulgences to all who would rally to his support. Huss objected to these indulgences strenuously, although in the past he had had no objection to them. He objected and protested against the practice by means of the spoken and written word. He declared that no pope or bishop has a right to take up the sword in the Name of the Church, and that man obtains forgiveness of his sins only by real repentance and not for money. Papal bulls were issued against him and his followers. Some who called these indulgences a fraud were beheaded. But John Huss continued to preach and to condemn the Church.

H.V.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to its president, Mr. Henry Meulenberg, in the loss of his brother,

RICHARD MEULENBERG

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved and sustain them in their sorrow.

A. Blyenberg, Vice President  
S. Beiboer, Secretary



## 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 3 (continued)

The fathers mention in this article three causes for the inability of the converted Christian to persevere in that grace of conversion, namely: the remains of indwelling sin, the attacks of the world, and the attacks of Satan.

As to the first, we can be brief. The preceding articles of this chapter have already dealt with this subject of the old nature of the Christian. We need not repeat what is stated in those articles.

But the fathers here mention two other factors. And concerning these we must offer a few words of explanation.

There is, in the first place, the world. To this world belongs, first of all, the world of sensible and visible things, the things of this present time. These things are in themselves not evil. But the things that are seen are temporal, are of the earth, are no end in themselves. To seek them is wrong. To set our hearts on them, rather than on the things that are above, is a great evil. Now to our flesh belongs the element that we are still of the earth, earthy. We are bound with a thousand ties to this present earth and this present world with all its relationships. And while there is nothing sinful as such in that earthiness and in those earthly relationships and that earthly life, yet when those earthly things, with their great attraction, become an end in themselves, and when they become a barrier, preventing us from seeking the things that are above, they become our enemy. And many a child of God can only with great difficulty let go finally of this present life in order to enter his heavenly and eternal home. So wrapped up in the things of this present time does he become that he would surely succumb to the attractions of this present world if left to his own strength. He has only a small beginning of the new life. And that small beginning is the beginning of the life of heaven; it is from above. But all the rest in that child of God is not from above; it is of the earth, earthy. And if he were left to himself, the earthy in him would surely overwhelm and snuff out that small beginning of the heavenly. Secondly, that world includes the world in its evil sense, the world of created things as they have been subjected to the principle of sin. This is the world of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," of which the apostle John speaks. The whole world of created things is subjected to and put to the use of the principle of enmity against God, so that an entire

world of lust is created by wicked men. That world of lust appeals to our sinful flesh, to the "remains of indwelling sin" that are in us. And it stands in direct opposition to the good and acceptable and holy will of God. The small beginning of the new obedience finds nothing in this whole world to appeal to it and to support it. But the large remains of indwelling sin in us find everything to strengthen it and to nourish its voracious and lustful appetite. And thirdly, there is the world of "wicked men." The world of the ungodly, with all its power and influence, its wisdom and wealth, not only has the power to deceive and to allure the Christian by offering him its riches and its pleasures, its name and its vainglory. But it has the power to threaten him, to cause him suffering, to persecute him to the death. And while, according to the principle of the new life, the Christian is not attracted by the siren-call of that world nor frightened by its threats of suffering and death, yet, according to the flesh, he still hankers after all that the world has to offer and he fears its enmity. In the midst of this world the Christian must live. In fact, it is God's will not that the Christian should withdraw, but that he should be "in the world, though not of the world." Again, in view of the fact that he has only a small beginning, while all the rest of him is flesh, the Christian, if left to himself, could never survive. His own strength is far too small to overcome such mighty enemies.

In the second place, the article speaks of the attacks of Satan. These attacks of Satan are real. Make no mistake about that. Perhaps we often form some hazy conception about Satan and his host, and far too theoretically concede the reality of this enemy and his operations. But Satan is the prince of this world, who in the spiritual, ethical sense of the word has this world in his control, ready to do his bidding. He can work either directly upon the mind and heart of the child of God, or he can employ the whole world to do his bidding. Behind every temptation, every struggle, every persecution, every threat, every alluring offer of the world is the devil. He is both a powerful and a deceitful enemy. And do not forget, all his operations are aimed not at the world, which he has already in his camp, but at the child of God. He is acquainted with the weaknesses of the people of God. He knows how to attack them at their weakest point. The one he will attack through his lust for wealth; the other he will strike through his peculiar weakness for the pleasures of the world; still another he will deceive through his strong desire for vainglory. He never misses an opportunity to attack the Christian in his weakest moments and when he least expects it.

Thus, there is a triple alliance against the Christian. There is the devil. There is the world. And these two have a mighty enemy within the gate, the flesh of the Christian himself. How foolish for anyone to imagine that the Christian, once supplied with the grace of conversion, could ever persevere in that grace, could ever continue in the fellowship of Christ, could ever maintain the bond of faith between himself and Christ, if left to himself. The moment the current

of divine grace would cease to flow sovereignly, unilaterally, from God through Christ to the Christian, at that moment the Christian could no more stand in the grace of conversion, but would surely fall back into the hopeless darkness of sin and condemnation.

But God is faithful.

God's faithfulness means fundamentally that He is unchangeably true to Himself. He cannot deny Himself. And therefore He is true to His own purpose and to His own work. And the converted Christian is God's workmanship; he is the work of God's grace. Therefore God cannot forsake His people. He cannot for His own name's sake forsake the work of His grace as it is represented in and principally accomplished in His people. And hence it is true: He that has begun a good work in you shall surely perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

That work of God whereby He preserves His saints and perfects them unto the day of Jesus Christ is *powerful*. He is the Almighty. This means that the same irresistible power which first wrought in them the grace of conversion continues to work in them, to work through and to advance until the final victory. It means that the power of the three-fold enemy, — the devil, the world, and our own flesh, — is absolutely subject to and must stand in the service of the work of His grace.

The preserving work of God is *to the end*. The honor and glory of God's own name are at stake in that work. As surely as God is faithful to Himself, so surely is He faithful to His people. God's grace is not such that at times it is given and at other times taken away. Where the Lord once makes His abode, there He continues to dwell with the dominion of His Spirit and grace. Whatever may be said about the falls of the Christian, God never totally removes His grace from the saint.

And finally, that work of God is *merciful*. This surely emphasizes that God's people are not worthy of being preserved in themselves. They are unfaithful a thousand times over. But God's faithfulness does not at all depend on their unfaithfulness. He is merciful. The work of His grace is such that He exactly purposes to deliver them out of their present misery, in which is included their unfaithfulness and inability to stand if left to themselves, and to make them perfectly blessed with Himself. And therefore He confirms them, establishes them, in the grace once conferred. No, He does not simply by an immediate operation cause them successfully to resist all their enemies from within and from without. But He preserves and confirms the work of His grace in them, and confirms them in that grace. And He does that always in such a way that the little principle of the new life can never perish, can never be taken away from them.

Such is the perseverance of the saints. The explanation, the key, is the preserving grace of our merciful God. We are kept in the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

\* \* \* \*

Article 4. Although the weakness of the flesh cannot prevail against the power of God, who confirms and preserves true believers in a state of grace, yet converts are not always so influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God, as not in some particular instances sinfully to deviate from the guidance of divine grace, so as to be seduced by, and comply with the lusts of the flesh; they must, therefore, be constant in watching and prayer, that they be not led into temptation. When these are neglected, they are not only liable to be drawn into great and heinous sins, by Satan, the world and the flesh, but sometimes by the righteous permission of God actually fall into these evils. This, the lamentable fall of David, Peter and other saints described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates.

The above translation is not accurate in all respects. We offer our own translation below, and the reader can compare it with the accepted English version of our *Psalter*.

Although, however, that power of God which confirms and preserves the true believers in grace is greater than that it can be overcome by the flesh, nevertheless the converted are not always thus actuated and influenced by God so that they are not able in certain particular actions to draw back, by their own fault, from the guidance of grace, and to be seduced by the lusts of the flesh, and to comply with these. Therefore they themselves must constantly watch and pray, lest they be led into temptation. When they do not do this, not only are they able to be drawn away by the flesh, the world, and Satan, into even grave and atrocious sins, but even by the just permission of God are sometimes drawn away. This the melancholy falls of David, of Peter, and of other saints, described in Holy Scripture, demonstrate.

The following points are worthy of note in this translation:

- 1) It correctly makes the subject of the first part of this article the power of God.
- 2) It correctly emphasizes that when the believers deviate from the guidance of divine grace, they do so through their own fault. The article means to emphasize this, and not merely to say that believers sinfully deviate.
- 3) It correctly pictures the danger of neglecting to watch and pray. The accepted translation does not bring this out properly. The original uses the same term in both parts of this sentence, "to be drawn away." And the article states: "Not only are they *able* to be drawn away . . . , but sometimes they *are* drawn away by the just permission of God."

Our discussion of this important article must wait until next time, D.V.

H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Protestant Reformed Church, of Redlands, California, extends its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Adrian A. Van Meeteren, in the loss of her brother; and to Mrs. John Feenstra and Mrs. Charles Van Meeteren, in the loss of their uncle,

JOHN E. HASPER

May our Heavenly Father comfort and sustain the bereaved in their sorrow.

Rev. H. H. Kuiper, President  
Mrs. H. Sawyer, Secretary

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Report

In our last article we made mention of the report of the committee of pre-advice, submitted to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1926, and dealing with the matter of Classical jurisdiction or authority (Art. 36). This report was the fruit of the committee's labor over a double report by a study committee that could not arrive at agreement in its conclusions. It was finally in consequence of the report of the committee of pre-advice that the Synod acted, upholding Classis Grand Rapids West in its action of deposing the Consistories of Kalamazoo and Hope.

All of these reports are rather lengthy. They appear in the Agendum and Acts of Synod, 1926, in the Holland language. Because of this the present English-speaking generation is unacquainted with their contents. We will, therefore, attempt to freely translate these reports for the benefit of our readers. Any corrections in translation will be gratefully acknowledged. Here follows the report of the study committee which consists of two parts:

#### Report IX

##### *Does a Classis have the right to depose a Consistory?*

"To this question a negative answer can be given, if a Classis is truly considered as a higher rule, with a higher power, seemingly *autocratic* and *imperative*, as the Classes of the collegialistic Netherlands Reformed Church. But in Reformed Church circles the Classes do not bear such a character. The answer to this question depends on the character of the local church and that of the broader gatherings in their *reciprocal relation*. We must proceed from our *Church Order* and this we must explain according to Reformed *principles* which form its basis.

#### I.

(1) The general and main principle is that *Christ is the King, Law-giver and Ruler of the church*. Article 28, D.K.O.

He has instituted her. She is his possession. He alone has sovereign power over her. He alone rules over the church *jure suo*. Therefore, in the church His will alone applies which He has revealed through His apostles in the New Testament. This is the law for the church. The Church Order is no law but an arrangement of rules concerning the manner in which the church, according to the demand of Christ, must act. All that is taken up in our Church Order must be explained from the main principle that Christ is the King of the Church. The whole content of this report is determined by this main principle.

In Christ alone lies the power over the church. Since Christ is exalted in heaven, He Himself rules as actually over His Church as when He was physically present in His church

on earth. Christ has given His power to no one, not to the church, nor to the office-bearers. His power stands above the church and above the office-bearers. In our Church Order, Articles 1 and 2, the office in the church is called a *service* (dienst), i.e., a dedicated work-sphere in the service of the King of the church, by whose power and through whom it is given. The authority of the office lies not in the church nor in the persons of the office-bearers but alone in the *conformity* of the acts of the office-bearers with the revealed will of Christ. The office is a service of Christ, the executing of His will. In case an official action is not in agreement with the will of Christ, it has then no real authority. (Church Order, Art. 31.)

#### (2) *The Relation of the Church and the Office-bearers (Consistory)*

The church is not a *society* which chooses a *government* (bestuur) which it charges to carry out that which the society decides. In Reformed Denominations, inherent (inlevende) authority does not reside in the church so that she can appoint office-bearers to whom she gives the mandate to execute her will. Neither does she have a working (bedienende) authority so that she herself can make ecclesiastical (kerkrechtelijk) decisions and execute them. Nowhere does Scripture or our Church Order teach that the church is an ecclesiastical (kerkrechtelijk) body and that Christ has commissioned her with working power to censure and excommunicate members or office-bearers. This right does not lie in the *membership* but in the *office* which Christ, through the apostles, has instituted in the church. Regarding the rights and duties of the church as a whole, the office-bearers are representatives of the church (Church Order, Article 11). Yet, not in the sense that they receive the office as a charge of the church. The office is an ordination of Christ *in* the church and has not arisen *out of* the church. The office-bearers are servants of Christ. They work for Christ in the behalf of the church and not for the church in the behalf of Christ.

The church has a twofold task with respect to the office-bearers. Firstly, they have the right to *elect* from a duo determined by the consistory. By this they do not put him in office but approve or choose the person for the office. Then follows the *calling* to the office through the office-bearers (consistory) and the *ordination* of office through the minister of the Word. And this occurs not for the church but for Christ. First, through the calling and approbation the person elected by the church receives the official qualification (bevoegdheid). Thus the church works along as a means toward the election of the person who, on the part of Christ, is placed in office through the office-bearers. There is thus, not in the Romish sense but in the Reformed sense, a *continuity* of office-bearers in the church.

Secondly, every member of the church has the right and the duty to judge, according to the Holy Scriptures and the accompanying Confessions and Church Order, the work and life of the office-bearers because the church in the New

Testament is a mature church since she, on the day of Pentecost, received the Holy Spirit by whom she can consciously judge. We can add yet to this that the church can withdraw from a departing (afwijkende) consistory when the latter persists. Yet this lies outside the question of this report.

In relation to that question, the principal matter of this second point is that the church is not an ecclesiastical (kerkrechtelijk) body and thus cannot depose office-bearers (consistory). From the main thought — Who puts into office can alone depose from office — it follows that Christ's office-bearers can be deposed from office only by Christ.

We refer here to Articles 4 and 22 of the Church Order where the election of ministers, elders and deacons is treated. Further, to the form of the call-letter for ministers, in our church as well as in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. The form in the Netherlands speaks loudly . . . 'The consistory . . . at present lawfully assembled . . . noting the result of the election . . . has seen fit to call, as it calls, by these . . . ' And, finally, according to the Forms used for Excommunication and Readmittance, we find this: 'Therefore we, ministers and rulers of the church of God, here gathered in the name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, declare . . . '

### (3) *The Power of the Consistory*

Whenever the question comes up in a consistory whether censure is to be applied to a member or office-bearer, no Reformed Consistory gives consideration to calling a congregational meeting or seeking the advice of the congregation about this. Each consistory knows that this is a purely official matter that belongs to the consistory (Articles 76-79, D.K.O.).

The authority of the office-bearers, i.e., of the consistory, is the only ruling power in the local church as well as in the churches in unity of denomination. There is, according to our Reformed conception, no other ruling authority in the church, neither lower nor higher. With this in view the consistory of the local church is sometimes called *autonomous*. Against this many objections are raised because the word *autonomy* literally denotes that one is absolutely independent and a law-giver unto himself. In this literal sense the term cannot be used with reference to the local church or consistory. If men use this term to express that each local church is an *independent* (zelfstandig) manifestation of the body of Christ, there is not objection, but if men want to thereby say that every local church and consistory is wholly independent and stands separate from the other churches and consistories, this would be in conflict with the conception of our Church Order in Article 36.

In Article 84 it is said against Rome that all churches and all office-bearers are equal (gelijk) so that one may not lord it over the other. Yet the Church Order does not deny in this article that the church in an ecclesiastical manner (in kerkrechtelijke zin) can and must work together with other

churches with respect to all that belongs to their common labors.

Every consistory is officially independent with respect to all the labor of the local church which she alone can perform. However, sometimes there arise matters in the local church which the consistory cannot finish alone and there are also those things which belong to the churches in common and that the consistory alone may not handle.

With a view to the question which we in this report must answer, we let the latter rest and speak only of the former, namely, cases in the local church which the consistory alone cannot finish. In the Church Order, Article 79, such cases are mentioned. According to this article a consistory alone may not depose an elder or deacon except with the assistance (medewerking) of a neighboring consistory. In this case the latter has the right to mutually decide.

Article 79 states further that a double consistory has the right to suspend a minister but whether he will be deposed altogether from office shall depend on the judgment of the Classis with the advice of the Synodical deputies (Art. 11, D.K.O.).

The Church Order in Articles 30 and 31 teaches the limitation of the authority of the local church in:

- (1) cases in the church or in the consistory which cannot be finished by the consistory alone;
- (2) cases which belong to the churches of the broader gathering in common;
- (3) cases which come to the Classis through the appeal of members of the church or of members of the consistory.

From all this it follows: First, that the authority of the consistory is not adequate (voldoende) and independent in various cases in the local church; secondly, that these cases, namely, those that belong to the churches in common, are related to differences concerning doctrine and life, and are connected with the discipline and, therefore, are ecclesiastical (kerkrechtelijk) in character; thirdly, that to the Classis is given the ecclesiastical (kerkrechtelijk) authority to pass judgment over the differences of doctrine and life."

(to be continued) G.V.D.B.

*Note by the editor.* The above article was sent to me for the Oct. 1 issue, but was overlooked by me. I am very sorry for the mistake and apologize. The reader should read the above article, therefore, before the one printed in the Oct. 15 issue.

H.H.

## ATTENTION CONSISTORIES!

Several copies of the Acts of Synod have been given out on consignment. Will the Consistories make a serious effort to dispose of them and send the money or unsold copies to REV. C. HANKO in Classis East and undersigned in Classis West.

Stated Clerk

REV. G. VANDEN BERG

## ALL AROUND US

### *Theologians and the Moon.*

*Christianity Today*, a rather young but popular religious periodical, has sent a questionnaire to 25 distinguished leaders, most of them theologians, the purpose of which was to determine their reaction to the latest attempt of science to hit the moon. In the October 13th issue of this paper the report of their findings is given. Our readers may find it interesting to know what these men have to say about this subject. We give you herewith their remarks:

Karl Barth, professor, University of Basel: "What about the prospect of a shot to the moon? See Psalms 139:7-10. ('Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me' AV). For the rest: take it easy!"

Andrew W. Blackwood, professor emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary: "The shot to the moon calls attention to Psalm 8, which sings about man's insignificance compared with the moon, and his majesty as 'little less than God' RSV. Once I preached about the hydrogen bomb. Now I think a minister should preach from the Bible, as an expert, and not preach science, as an amateur."

F. F. Bruce, professor, The University, Sheffield: "'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein' (Ps. 111:2, AV). The more that men discover about the universe of God, the more cause they have for admiring his wisdom and power. National prestige and the like, however, are unworthy motives for exploring creation, as compared with doing it to the glory of the Creator."

Emil Brunner, professor, University of Zurich: "A shot to the moon has significance only as the latest achievement of science. The impropportionate interest in it shows mankind confusing means and ends and overrating the importance of technological achievement. While science manifests men's God-given dominance over nature, the course of its development shows its incapability of integrating it into the oneness of human life according to its divine destiny."

Gordon H. Clark, professor, Butler University: "The attempt to shoot the moon has no more religious significance than any other great scientific advance. To suppose so is on a level with interpreting the Apocalypse by the morning newspaper. God's first command to Adam contained the injunction to subdue nature. Shooting the moon, therefore, is a divinely appointed task. Unfortunately, however, the ungodly are generally reputed to have obeyed this commandment more successfully than devout Christians have."

Oscar Cullmann, professor at the Sorbonne: "The scientific attempt, as such, a legitimate means of exploration, will neither remove us from nor will it draw us nearer to God. But it will remind the Christian of the cosmic reach of his faith: the work of Christ mediator of all creation, concerns the entire universe. That faith will inspire the solution of the ethical problems."

Frank E. Gaebelein, headmaster, The Stony Brook School: "Exploration of space should lead men closer to the only true God, who created not only this planet but also the whole universe. But it cannot do this unless man remains humble before the living God. If man, who brought ruin to the earth through the rebellion of sin, makes such achievements as lunar exploration and space travel an occasion for self-exaltation, he will inevitably be subject to God's greater judgment upon his pride. The redeeming work of Christ has infinite and universal implications. Because it reveals the very heart of God, it stands above the material universe. God's love for man through Christ, who upholds all things by the word of His power, is eternal and therefore beyond revision through any kind of scientific advance."

John H. Gerstner, professor, Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary: "I cannot become excited theologically about a landing on the moon, but I am quite interested in it as a possible relief for the earth's population, weather observatory, missile base, and so forth. It seems to me that its exploration draws us neither closer nor further from God and has no implication for the state of man's depravity, except that it illustrates once again that fallen men can be very able scientists. I see nothing more sinister in the discovery of the moon than in the discovery of America."

Carl F. H. Henry, professor (on leave), Fuller Theological Seminary, and editor of this magazine: "Fallen man vaunts his genius and power to disguise his moral nakedness and spiritual bankruptcy. He shoots to the moon much in the spirit of proud Lucifer exalting himself against God. In fact, in the Bible, Satan is prince of the power of the air. To bend the universe to God's purpose is man's divinely-given task. As sinner he exploits the universe instead; he reaches for infinity to vaunt his own glory."

W. Boyd Hunt, professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: "Man is not to fear science (Matt. 10:28). Rather, science under God, is man's (Gen. 1:26-28), to use or to abuse. Something would be wrong with Christians if professing atheists were to permanently out-think and out-invent them. If man can get to the moon, reverent faith says that the time is wasting. And it also says, let the glory be God's, who made man, and who made him hungry to know truth, and who made truth so vast and all-challenging."

Dirk Jellema, professor, Case Institute of Technology: "The success or failure of current moon shots has no religious implication. Man's coming conquest of space (and note that

God made him to 'have dominion' — Ps. 8:6, AV) will have no effect on his basic problems, his religious problems, which are unaffected by his space-time location. Man may someday rule the galaxy; if so, he will still need a Saviour."

W. Harry Jellema, professor, Calvin College: "Always the problem for the Christian moralist has been to lead men in the path of wisdom; and wisdom for man is to know and to use himself and his world so as to grow in knowledge and love of God in Christ. For Christian ethics and theology, therefore, I see no more of a problem in current researches in outer space than was occasioned by invention and use of the telescope. No more of a problem; essentially no new problem; very much the same problem as always."

Clyde S. Kilby, professor, Wheaton College: "Christians can rest in the perfect assurance that planetary or even interstellar exploration will make no essential difference in the rationale of their position. Since the Creator is of necessity larger than His creation, and since He sovereignly occupies all space and all time, Christians should joyfully encourage every honest investigation of the universe. They should be of all people the least provincial."

Harold B. Kuhn, professor, Asbury Theological Seminary: "The results of space explorations may be largely in one of two directions. They may lead men again to ponder the words of the Psalmist, 'When I consider . . . the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?' (Ps. 8:3-4, AV). In other words, today's explorations could point the way to a new recognition of both the majesty and the condescension of God. Or, such achievements could serve to bolster man's pride in his own wisdom and ability, and to revive Swinburne's superficial, 'Glory to man in the highest!'"

C. S. Lewis, professor, Cambridge University: "I . . . fear the practical, not the theoretical, problems which will arise if ever we meet rational creatures which are not human. Against them we shall, if we can, commit all the crimes we have already committed against creatures certainly human but differing from us in features and pigmentation; and the starry heavens will become an object to which good men can look up only with feelings of intolerable guilt, agonized pity and burning shame."

J. Theodore Mueller, professor, Concordia Seminary: "So far as our modern helpful and terrifying inventions are concerned, the Christian believer views them all as made by God's gracious permission and according to his direction, 'replenish the earth, and subdue it' (Gen. 1:28, AV), in order ultimately to serve his glory, the spread of his gospel to bring in the elect, and the proclamation of his second coming as our Lord foretold this (Matt. 24). To the unrighteous, who glory in their pride, they are tokens of divine wrath, but to the believers in Christ they are both a comfort and an admonition to trust in the divine Word and to submit themselves absolutely to their loving father in heaven,

who makes all things work together for good to those who in Christ Jesus love and serve him."

Reinhold Niebuhr, professor, Union Theological Seminary: "I am baffled by the concern about the theological significance of a shot to the moon, particularly when we are living in the nuclear age and the conscience of the whole world is troubled about another aspect of modern technical achievements, namely, the destructive possibility of nuclear weapons."

Harold John Ockenga, president of the board of directors, Fuller Theological Seminary: "Nothing in Scripture precludes the possibility of interplanetary space travel. Let us evangelicals not be provincial. But should fallen man succeed in projecting himself to the moon or any other planet, he will inject his sin, his hate, his violence, into the new sphere. This only intensifies the Gospel task and Christian responsibility. Space travel may well be a fulfillment of Acts 2:19 and Luke 21:25, which prophesy recognizable signs in the sun, moon and stars before the second coming of the Lord. For the first time in history, these may be fulfilled."

William Childs Robinson, professor, Columbia Theological Seminary: "'Seventy-seven Seconds — Multi-million Dollar Failure.' That is the record of the first U.S. effort to fire a rocket to the moon. This multi-million dollar experiment is, of course, paid for by increasing the debt limit and cheapening the dollar. That is, everyone in the country paid for the expensive failure. At about the same time two submarines cross from the Pacific to the Atlantic under the polar ice-cap. God gave the earth to man, but He did not give man dominion over the moon. Why not use the marvelous skills of science for this world and leave the sun and the moon and the stars to the fingers of the Almighty."

Space does not allow us to quote the reactions of six others who answered the questionnaire. This symposium was conducted evidently by mail. The thought came to us, how interesting it might be if we could hear all 25 learned men conduct a panel discussion on the subject. There would be, no doubt, considerable debate.

As to our own thoughts on the subject, we are inclined to go along with Andrew Blackwood, who said: "Now I think a minister should preach from the Bible, as an expert, and not preach science, as an amateur." Whatever we would say about the scientific attempts to hit the moon would be too amateurish. On the other hand, one need not be an expert with the Bible to know that all attempts on the part of depraved humanity to discover the wonders of God's universe cannot be motivated by the urge to glorify the Creator, but only the desire to glorify man. We are reminded of the world of Jabal and Jubal which fast made itself ripe for judgment, and of Noah, who looked for the *rest* of the new world "and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

M.S.



## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

In the latest "Acts of the Eureka Classis" of 1958, 48th Annual Session, we read the following paragraph, "The Hope Church of Isabel, having received substantial financial aid from Classis in the past, which could no more be granted, informed Classis that it resolved to withdraw from membership in Classis."

It is not clear whether the phrase "having received substantial financial aid from Classis in the past" was intended by the Rev. D. E. Bosma to be the ground why Isabel left Classis Eureka in July 27, 1957. (See below.) Possibly he means to tell the readers (members of Classis, you must know!) that Isabel left because the financial aid *could no more be granted!* There had come to an end the *possibility* of giving further aid to Isabel!

Now the reader must know the following facts:

1. On Feb. 1, 1957, the Rev. D. E. Bosma acknowledged a letter from the Isabel consistory of their request for \$2,000.00 support. (This was at a time when the matter of Rev. Mensch's deposition from office at Leola was still pending with the Classis to be held in May, 1957, at Hosmer, S.D. And the Rev. Mensch was preaching at this time for some 25-30 souls in Leola in his house at Leola and was a duly installed minister at Isabel. [In June 1956.] Hence, the request of Isabel for support.) In this letter Bosma informed the consistory as follows: "At its meeting on Feb. 1, 1957, your Executive Committee (this "your" is technically erroneous, G.L.) considered the above request, and it was moved, seconded, and carried that your request be tabled until the next annual meeting of Eureka Classis."

2. Isabel's Consistory was evidently not satisfied with this decision and must have so informed the Executive Committee for on March 29, 1957, the Rev. D. E. Bosma (there are no signatures of Rev. Stockmeier, elders Henry G. Hieb and H. D. Opp on this letter) informed the Consistory of Isabel that it abode by its decision to "table" this matter and refer it to the annual session of Classis at Hosmer, S.D.

3. That at the Classis held in Hosmer (*Session* of Classis!) this matter was once more "tabled." For how long? We read in the Acts of Eureka Classis, "The request of the Isabel Charge, (should be congregation, G.L.) for \$2,000.00 support was tabled." And Classis did not remove it from the table!

The reader has, of course, noticed that technically the Executive Committee did not "table" the matter. They took a *decision!* They decided to refer this weighty matter of the mint, anise and cummin to the highest council, the Annual Session of Classis, while in the case of the Rev. Mensch (a far weightier matter!) they did not "table" but, forgetting about the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and

faith, they simply rushed on, trampling their Church Order under foot!

4. Eureka Classis had a dilemma with the Rev. Mensch. Rev. Mensch was a duly installed minister in two churches, both members of (we say: resorting in) Eureka Classis. And, according to their own strange practice, if Rev. Mensch had no longer been a minister in either church he would still be a member of Classis in the sense that Rev. E. Buehrer is a member of Classis. The latter is even a member of the Judiciary Committee! Leola wished to get rid of Rev. Mensch, that is, all except the faithful who are now the Ebenezer Reformed Church at Forbes. But Isabel maintained its minister, Rev. H. Mensch. However, she was too small to maintain a minister without support.

Now here was the dilemma of Eureka Classis. (A dilemma is a perplexing predicament.)

1. They did not wish to in any way give financial aid to a church which would keep Rev. Mensch. Individual ministers told Rev. Mensch to get out, both in rude and sanctimonious tones. I have copies of those letters. Mensch must go!

2. They did not wish to decide that they refused to give support to Isabel, for for such a decision, should this not appear too capricious, they would need to give grounds. They could not very well urge the grounds which the Executive Committee alleged in the Leola case against Mensch, for had they not told Isabel that it was none of their concern what happened to Rev. Mensch in Leola. Not to measure with two measures they had to keep hands off Isabel and her minister.

What to do in this dilemma where one is concerned about the cummin but not about the weightier matters?

They decided to simply hold the ball till the clock ran out! They "tabled" the matter!

They boldly faced the difficulty and passed on to the next point on the agenda!

Meanwhile Isabel could not pay their pastor.\* They would have to tell Rev. Mensch to go. Had not K. J. Stuebbe told Rev. Mensch virtually to go, both on the floor of Classis and in a private letter. The thumb-screws were turned down.

However, Isabel refused to bow to this form of tyranny and told Eureka Classis "... it was decided by majority vote to sever all ties and affiliation with the Eureka Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States."

We shall, D.V., publish this entire missive from the Isabel Consistory to the Eureka Classis in the next issue of *The Standard Bearer* under "Missionary Notes."

Once more it appears that the Rev. Bosma did not write the entire truth and that what he did write was not entirely true when he wrote, "The Hope Church of Isabel, having received substantial aid from Classis in the past, *which could no more be granted*, informed Classis that it resolved to withdraw from membership in Classis!"

There is a book of remembrance before the face of God!

G.L.

\*More will be said about this at the proper time.

## QUESTION HOUR

### Held after Address at Hull Mass Meeting

July, 1953

*Questioner:* Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

*Answers by:* Rev. H. Hoeksema

(Continued)

*Question:* The third question is this: If you are convinced that you and your consistory are the legal consistory of the First Church, why all this hasty propaganda action?

*Answer:* This is not a hasty propaganda action. Not at all. This is merely,—O, you know very well what it is; don't ask such questions. This hasty? This would have been hasty, that's true, if it had been a matter of the pure local consistory, and the pure local church, and nothing else. But you know, as well as I know, that that is not true. "Dit muisje gaat een staart hebben." You know that as well as I do. All our actions in recent years have pointed in that direction. Why is it that when any question of importance comes up in our synods, the vote is always 8 to 8, Classis West against Classis East? Why? I like to know. That's a terrible situation, but it's so nevertheless. Why is it, please? You know as well as I do that this is not a purely local question. I can tell you other things that happened already by us, but I won't mention them now. I don't want to mention names. But I could do so. But I assure you that this is not a hasty propaganda action. This action, this meeting, was merely organized in order to acquaint you with the truth. The rest,—O yes, I almost forgot that. If you want to read, read *The Standard Bearer*. I understand that many especially in the West have refused *The Standard Bearer* subscription. Shame on you! Don't you want to know the truth anymore? *The Standard Bearer* is always open for your criticism, if you want to. You can write as much as you want to. But by all means, read as much as you can. And then judge. I thank you.

*Question:* One more question from this questioner: Must we help to depose all ministers and members who do not agree with the illegal deposition of the Rev. De Wolf and his consistory?

*Answer:* That is the same question that I've answered a little while ago. If you do not agree, by all means protest in a legal way. I would like to see that. I like to see that. Don't come here with general statements that you don't agree, and then let me answer questions. What you must do is this: send a protest to your consistory. Or if you are a consistory member, send a protest, and let it appear at Classis in September. Then it will go to Synod. If you are convinced that the action against the Rev. De Wolf and my consistory is illegal, by all means that's your duty. And then we can answer the question. Not now.

*Question:* Upon the basis that you, Rev. Hoeksema, have

the true Protestant Reformed truth, and that you claim to be the president of the legal consistory of First Church, why then do you and your followers hold sabbath day meetings in the Chr. High Building and also call a mass denominational meeting in Grand Rapids to defend you and your cause? And why must your son of Doon give the leadership to causing the schismatic action amongst the Prot. Ref. Churches of the West, organizing a secret society, and calling this meeting here in Hull to defend you and your cause, thereby disrupting the churches of Jesus Christ?

*Speaker:* I'd like to have my son answer that question. (Laughter).

*Chairman:* I'm glad to do that, that is, the second part, the part that concerns me. The other part Rev. Hoeksema will answer, my father. Very strange that the question is directed to him concerning his son. I suppose my father means, "He is of age; ask him." And I'm willing to answer. In the first place, our committee, as is very plain for anyone who read the letters we sent out, is not causing any schismatic action in the churches. Our purpose was stated in the letter, and the purpose of our committee, which we hope to organize permanently, was also stated. Anyone can consult that. Our purpose is simply to maintain the Prot. Ref. truth. And we formed a free society,—first of all a free committee, and we hope to form a free society in the nature of the R.F.P.A., the Reformed Free Publishing Association, to further that work. In the second place, our society, or committee, is not secret, as is very plain from the fact that all our doings we published. We published them in the bulletins, and we published them in the letters. And all our doings are public here tonight as well. There's nothing secret about it. The only thing is: the arrangements for a meeting of this nature had to be made by some committee. And finally, I want to make this statement, that if anyone claims that I, as president of the committee pro tem, or any of the members of the committee, are causing schismatic action in the churches, and thereby disrupting the churches of Jesus Christ,—serious charge,—if anyone claims that, your calling is, once more, to protest to my consistory or to the consistory of any of the men involved. That's your calling. Thank you. The other part is for the speaker: Upon the basis that you, Rev. Hoeksema, have the true Protestant Reformed truth, and that you claim to be the president of the legal consistory of First Church, why then do you and your followers hold sabbath day meetings in the Chr. High Building and also call a mass denominational meeting in Grand Rapids to defend you and your cause?

*Speaker answering:* Again, I don't like that question. I don't like the wording of it. The question is: upon the basis that you, Rev. Hoeksema, have the true Prot. Ref. truth, and that you claim to be the president of the legal consistory of the First Church . . . Do you not have the Prot. Ref. truth? Is that what you mean? Do I have the Prot. Ref. truth? Is that it? Is that the insinuation? I have the Prot. Ref. truth?

I don't think so. You shouldn't . . . YOU should have the Prot. Ref. truth, not I. That in the first place. In the second place, I claim to be the president of the legal consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church? I am; one of them, Hanko is the other one. I am; not, I claim. I claim nothing. I claim nothing. I assure you that Classis East in its next meeting will accept me as president, together with the Rev. Hanko, as president of the legal consistory. Without any question. No question about it. There's no question about that at all. I don't claim anything. Why should I? I don't care about that anyway. I don't care to be president over anything at all. That's not my claim, nor my strife. Why do you and your followers . . . Why don't you say: why does your congregation? I have no followers. You and your followers? That's an insult to my congregation. You shouldn't word a question like that. You mean: why I and my congregation meet at the Christian High? I explained that to you, didn't I? Not because we don't have the building, but because we don't want to fight. Want to hear that? I have that here somewhere. I have that decision here. I don't know whether I can find it. Here it is. I have it here, written out: "When the enclosed letter was written (this is a letter to the congregation) your consistory planned to occupy their rightful place on the pulpit of First Church. Notice was given to the disciplined officebearers of our intention, in order to avoid confusion and discord in the divine worship next Sunday. We had hoped that some peaceful settlement might be made until proper disposition of the property is made. However, to our request we received the following reply: 'We cannot possibly recognize your schismatic action and your illogical (illegal?) suspension and deposition of officebearers. And therefore cannot concede you the right to hold meetings in our midst. We therefore notify you that we will occupy the buildings until the proper disposition of the building is made.' w.s. The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church. Since it is evident from the above reply that we are defiantly and illegally cast out of our own place of worship, it would be necessary for us to resort to the law to occupy the building next Sunday. But rather than do that, we would heed the word of the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 6:1, 7b, "Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Why do you not rather take wrong? why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" That is the answer to your question. That was sent to our people. And, the mass meeting? Yes, the mass meeting was the same mass meeting that was here. Had we no right as a legal consistory to explain to our own people what is going on in our own congregation? That's what we did last Monday night, a week ago Monday. And to our people in Grand Rapids, whoever would be interested, of course.

*Question:* This question is signed, but I'm not going to mention the name. I'm not requiring the names on any of the questions, and I won't mention this one, unless the

questioner himself wants it. Rev. H. Hoeksema, I want to ask you this. In 1924 I heard you say time and again: Never no hierarchy again. What did you mean for you as yourself. Or did you think of the church of Christ? If that is what you meant, I cannot see how you can do what you done with the Rev. De Wolf and his consistory. If this is not hierarchy, then I am at a loss to know what it is.

*Answer:* Well, I suppose you are. Because that is not hierarchy. Hierarchy is rule of the Consistory from the top down. When Synod rules over the classis, and the classis rules over the consistory, then you have hierarchy. This is not the case here. The consistory ruled throughout, with the advice of the classis, — advice, not rule. I thank you.

*Question:* The Rev. H. Hoeksema. Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged. And with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again. Matt. 7:1, 2. In the aforementioned text the command of God is expressed. With due respect to this command of God, the question arises in my mind how you, Rev. Hoeksema, can make such slanderous and ridiculous statements concerning a fellow officebearer and brother in Christ, namely, the Rev. De Wolf. If claiming that the Rev. De Wolf is not a Christian and calling him a heathen and a rotten and incurable character is not judging, I am of the opinion that the Bible is being interpreted to suit each man as he chose, regardless of original meaning. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Ps. 133, vs. 1.

*Answer:* I'm not guilty. I'm not guilty. Not guilty of any of those charges. I did not say that Rev. De Wolf was not a Christian. I did not say that he was a rotten member, etc., etc. I didn't say anything of the kind. I judge not the Rev. De Wolf. I judged not his heart. I judge his doctrine. And I judge not his doctrine. The consistory did, and the classis did. And only on the basis of the truth do brethren dwell in unity, and no other basis. I thank you.

*Question:* Why make a protest against statements which Rev. De Wolf denies? Is that not calling him a liar? Who is right?

*Answer:* No protest was made against any statement that Rev. De Wolf denied. That's not true. The statements which were protested against officially at the consistory and at the classis were admitted by the Rev. De Wolf.

(To be continued)

## THE PATHS OF THE LORD

Grace and truth shall mark the way  
Where the Lord His own will lead,  
If His word they still obey,  
And His testimonies heed.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

October 20, 1958

Loveland has extended a call to Rev. H. Kuiper of Redlands to be their pastor. May the Lord of His Church give Loveland the man of His choice in His time.

In most of our churches the nominations for office bearers have been announced. Let us realize our calling to function in the Office of Believers in the church by casting our ballots when called upon to give our approbation to these nominations.

It has been reported that Rev. Ophoff's doctor is amazed at the progress made by the Reverend. He predicts that his patient may again work for the denomination in the not too distant future.

The Second Annual Deacons' Conference was held in Creston Church this week. Twenty-four men were present, including five local ministers. All but one of the area churches were represented. Rev. C. Hanko presided, and Rev. B. Woudenberg was the speaker. His topic was, "Shall we support such institutions as the Bethany Home?" The consensus of opinion was that, although we can not subscribe to all of their policies, we can make use of their facilities, and therefore ought to support them. The meeting was so well received that it was decided to meet twice a year, and Hope will be the host in the Spring meeting.

The Hope P.T.A. held their annual meeting Oct. 10. Rev. Vos was the speaker, admonishing the parents to "teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up . . ." It is reported that the parents went home with a thought provoking message.

Good news from Grand Haven! The congregation is growing from within and has now reached the point where they could organize a Sunday School Society. Their first Sunday School session was held with seventeen children enrolled, divided into three classes. Congratulations, Grand Haven!

The men and women of Grand Haven combined their societies into an Adult Bible Society. They have chosen the Book of Acts as the text for study this year.

Doon is installing two gas furnaces in the church, one for each floor. Bottled gas will be utilized until the promised natural gas is available.

Some of our churches that have no Sunday School nevertheless provide "Our Guide" for the children of the congregation. Does your consistory provide the Sunday School paper for your children?

From the golden west (Redlands) we learn that Homer Teitsma, a serviceman from Southeast, Grand Rapids, at-

tended their divine services. Homer is stationed in San Diego. How wonderful to be so far from home, but still able to worship in one of our own churches!

DO YOU KNOW . . .

*that*, Rev. Herman Hanko teaches Church History in our Seminary?

*that*, Rev. C. Hanko regularly attends Rev. Hoeksema's Dogmatics class in seminary, helping with, and learning from the discussion?

*that*, a young couple from one of our Mr. and Mrs. Societies gradually realized that they were not prepared for the society Bible discussion? Reason: too many regular T.V. programs to be watched. Result: they sold their T.V. set at a financial loss and at a spiritual gain?

*that*, all of the church bulletins we receive give progress reports in the illness of our beloved G.M.O.?

*that*, each family is assessed for the printing of the Acts of Synod, and that for a dollar more you can own your own?

*that*, the men of Southwest church take turns doing the janitor work, which should squelch the saying that a janitor cannot please everyone — who would dare complain?

*why*, the secretaries of our Men's and Ladies' Societies must keep reminding church members to join them?

The Southwest Mr. and Mrs. Society has reached a decision to meet every week instead of alternate weeks. That's a good sign!

From Southeast we learn that the Young People's Society meets Sunday afternoons. Rev. Veldman has again started a catechism class for those who wish to prepare for confession of faith.

Our total church membership remains quite constant. There is the usual moving about, and Hope seems to have been greatest gainer. Doon lost a family to Hudsonville, Southeast transferred a family to First, a family and an individual to Hope. Besides, Hope received a mother and five children from Holland, an individual from a Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, and an individual from the Rock Valley Neth. Ref. Church in Iowa.

Hull is having a little trouble at present due to losing a meeting place for the catechism classes. They will hold classes temporarily in the basement of the parsonage until a suitable place can be found. Meetings had been conducted in the Town Hall, which is being torn down in the name of progress.

An excerpt from Oaklawn's bulletin: "Men, your duty is also your God-given privilege to meet with us Monday evenings. We not only have a responsibility to God, but we owe it to one another to busy ourselves in these things of God's kingdom for mutual edification." Apply that to your own societies, substituting the proper names in their places, and we can all heed this admonition of Rev. Vanden Berg.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.