

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXVII

SEPTEMBER 1, 1961 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 20

MEDITATION

THE COMING OF THE KING

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." — Luke 17:34-37.

Well, I like to tell you of the coming of the Christ in His day. He shall come as the King of the Kingdom of God, and I would like to say a few words on how He shall find the human race; and how He shall separate them; and what shall be the main characteristic in that race of men.

First then the question: How shall he find the human race?

There are some who say that He will find the whole world in a dreadful chaos. His day shall be a day of great upheavals and revolutions, they say. I do not believe it. Holy Scripture does not teach that. To the very contrary. You will remember that Jesus compared His coming to the days of Noah and of Lot. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Therefore, you see that those days were very normal. The usual things shall be done when that awful lightning shall strike and men shall see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. It will be a complete surprise.

That same picture you find in the specific words of our meditation at this time. You will recall the text.

So you see that life in its normalcy is presented here. The picture is rather complete. We see the usual three spheres of life: the social home life—two in the bed; the industrial life: two grinding together; and the agricultural life: two are in the field. Life went on as usual.

Yes, things shall be very orderly in that wonderful and also dreadful day. The world in all its usual activities shall show a rather orderly picture to the eye of Jesus when He comes. All according as your station in life shall be, you will eat, drink, marry or be given in marriage, you shall buy or sell, you shall build or plant, you will calmly live your usual life.

Note, further, that all those things shall be done together, that is, the child of God and the child of the devil shall live together. And they shall do things together. Two men are in one bed, two women in one mill, two men in one field. And that is correct. Humanity is one organism. You cannot sever yourselves from man. We are of one blood and of one flesh. And our ways intermingle. Paul would say: you cannot go out of this world. No, the Bible certainly does not teach the life of the monastery and the cloister. They are monstrosities. And have led to dreadful and abnormal horrors.

No, they shall be together. The children of God and the children of the devil shall work together in one shop, factory, home and field. All the activities of mankind are common to both peoples. *That* is not their difference.

* * * *

What then?

Oh, but when Jesus comes, that seeming unity shall be rudely dissipated. He will make a terrible and absolute separation. They shall fall apart into the most marked distinction. Christ Jesus shall see and penetrate all the dwellers of the earth. And He shall see two diametrically opposed principles of life and conduct in the hearts of man, of all men. And according to these life-principles the human race shall be infallibly split in sunder.

These principles are two, no more. By the one group He will find and recognize the love of God.

In passing we may state that this is always the case at any moment in the history of the world. It is not always manifest, but it is nevertheless the real truth. You are either a child of God, and then you love Him; or you are a child of the devil, and then you hate Him. There is no neutrality; there are no three ways; there is just the way to the right and the way to the left, and that is all. This separation is an absolute separation. The difference between these two peoples is as the difference between night and day, up or down, white or black, sin or righteousness, heaven or hell, God or the devil. There is no middle way.

That I speak the truth is evidenced by the text: The one shall be taken and the other left.

A very nice word is used in the original Greek for the word "taken." It means to take to one's self, to fold in one's bosom, therefore. It shows the eagerness with which Christ shall take His disciples to His bosom. It shall interpret the longsuffering of God. He shall have waited long for this wonderful moment when He shall come in Christ, His Son, to fold His people to His bosom and let them rest in His heart of love for evermore.

The other word is terrible. It sounds rather weak in our translation. It means literally to send away from one. It is elsewhere called to reject, or to cast away. Oh, yes, He shall also take the others, but it shall be to cast them from Him in outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And you will do well to remember that all this is highest wisdom and no capriciousness. The deepest ground for this taking and leaving is the good-pleasure of God. It pleased Him to elect His people and to make them vessels of His love, so that they might be to His eternal praises and glory forever and ever. And it also pleased Him to reprobate others unto everlasting shame and darkness. They are reserved unto darkness forever. And then in this way that they are not co-ordinate but subordinate. The latter serves the former. Rejection serves election. Such is Holy Scripture. It is no dry dogma which man found out and taught. It certainly is contrary to the mind of man to so teach and preach. No, but God has proclaimed on a thousand pages of the Bible that such is the case: the one shall be taken and the other left.

Yes, some will say: that is correct; but some are taken because they believed and the others are left because they would not believe! And I would say: Amen! But I would like to ask a very simple question: Where did they obtain faith in the blessed Lord? And then your own Bible will provide the answer: "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God!" There is the answer. You find it in Eph. 2:8. No, some people

receive faith and others do not. And if you ask why? then God answers: it so pleased Me! And who shall answer against God?

And those that are left, because of the black principle in their heart: it is the principle of sin and corruption. Oh, yes, the others also had that principle of corruption and sin in their heart by nature, but God redeemed them. Christ died for them and the Holy Ghost sanctified them and made them ready for their place in the highest heavens.

Oh, believe me, the Lord God has everything planned and He will execute it in all justice and righteousness and, yes, also in all goodness. There shall not be devil or man that will be able to accuse God for one moment when He takes the one and leaves the other. They will all admit: it is Divinely right!

And I assure you that if you are honest with yourself, you will see the justice of God's doings even now. It is clearly revealed.

You see, God has told us from time immemorial that man is wicked and perverse. And God has proved it. In the fulness of time, He sent His sweetest possession into the wicked world. And that is Jesus. And, remember, in this Jesus of Nazareth, the living God Himself is revealed. Jesus is God, revealed in the flesh and come into the likeness of the flesh. Well, for 33 years this revelation of the living God walked among the children of men. And His conduct is above reproach: He certainly acted the God-head. He healed the sick; He raised the dead; and He preached the way of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And what did man do?

This: They took Him, spit upon Him, scourged Him, and nailed Him to the accursed tree. No, no, do not say that those wicked Jews did this: you and I did this. It shows how and what we are through sin that dwells in our heart and mind and soul and all our affections. We are wicked from our youth and grow more wicked as the days of the years of our life pass on. And the proof is the Cross of Jesus. As He fared in Jerusalem, so He has fared everywhere. What will you do with Jesus? We will trample Him underfoot and we will despise Him and His God and His law and promises. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of natural man. That heart is filled with everything but Jesus.

And no wonder! Jesus is the Light of the world. He discovers all the darkness, all the evil of our hearts. So He did to the Pharisees, and so He does today to all men that read and hear His Word. Jesus is bothersome to the natural heart. So bothersome that He must be cast away, and crucified.

Yes, God has proved His judgment. Man is wicked from his youth and he is worthy of damnation that is eternal.

But some He saves and shall save. And that salvation

is of the Lord exclusively. Christ's name is Saviour. Strange, that most men never gave it a thought. They say: He is my Saviour, but they save themselves. No, no, but God in Christ is the Saviour, the complete Saviour! He it is that loved His sheep from all eternity, that sent His Son into the world so that He might take upon Himself all the guilt of His sheep and deliver them from the wrath to come; He it is that sent His Holy Ghost into the heart of all those that are chosen and through that Spirit they cry Abba Father! And He it is that shall quicken our mortal bodies in the day of His coming and place us with Him in everlasting bliss. He is the complete Saviour. The text says: The one shall be taken. Yes, and as it is in the last day so it was the first day: If you are loved of God: you are taken, you are taken in His arms and He leads you home. That is the Word of God.

But the others are left. And they carry within them the ground of their rejection.

G.V.

Announcement

The 1961-'62 term of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will begin, D.V., on Tuesday, September 12. Opening exercises will be held at 9:00 A. M.

REV. H. HOEKSEMA, *Rector*

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Doon, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 20, 1961. All matters for this classical agendum must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than thirty days before the meeting of Classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

The Martha Ladies' Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to our members, Mrs. Ted Hoekstra, Mrs. Bert Van Maanen, and Mrs. Harold Van Maanen in the loss of their father, and to Mrs. Ben Bleyenbergh in the loss of her brother,

EVERT VAN MAANEN

May the God of all grace comfort the hearts of the bereaved.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Matthew 5:4.

Rev. J. Kortering, President
Mrs. T. Jansma, Secretary

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to
Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E.,
Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr.
James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S. E.
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above
address and will be published at a fee of \$2.00 for each notice.

RENEWAL: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

Second Class postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

The Coming of the King 457
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

A Sad End 460
Rev. H. Hoeksema
That "Final Letter" 461
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation 464
Rev. H. Hoeksema

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

Manna 466
Rev. B. Woudenberg

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of I Timothy 468
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

God's Royal Priesthood (8) 470
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments 472
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Belgic Confession 474
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

The Administration of the Lord's Supper 476
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

Blue Laws 478
A Dictator Church? 478
A Roman Catholic's Description of the Reformation 479
Rev. H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES 480

Mr. J. M. Faber

EDITORIALS

A Sad End

With the above mentioned topic I refer to the end of the schismatics. To my mind, it is a most miserable ending.

For their "synod" decided, by a vote of eleven to five, to join the Christian Reformed Church.

At first, after their schism in 1953, they maintained that they were Protestant Reformed and intended to remain so. This was, of course, impossible in view of the fact that they supported the statements made by one of them from the pulpit of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. For it is very evident that both of these statements were not Protestant Reformed but supported the "First Point" adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. The first of these statements maintained that the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear, while the Protestant Reformed always maintained that there is no "common grace" but that the preaching of the gospel, according to Scripture, is grace only for the elect. The second of these statements taught that conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of heaven, while Scripture and the Confessions teach that there are no prerequisites, which man must fulfill in order to enter the kingdom of God, but that it is by regeneration that one enters that kingdom, and regeneration is a work of sovereign grace. Although, therefore, the schismatics, during the first period of their existence, claimed that they were Protestant Reformed, it was clear from the outset that they could never maintain such a claim. Principally, they occupied an impossible position.

The inevitable result was that they sought contact with the Christian Reformed Church. And at that very moment they were lost, not because they contacted them, but because of the way in which they sought that contact. In 1924-25 the Christian Reformed Church, through what was at that time Classis East and Classis West, deposed three faithful ministers because they could not subscribe to the Three Points. Did the schismatics, in their seeking contact with the Christian Reformed Church, bring up this matter first of all and demand that the Christian Reformed confess this sin? Not at all! As far as I know, this was not even mentioned. Instead, their committee had so-called "friendly" discussions with the committee appointed for the purpose of the Christian Reformed Church. The "friendly" discussion was, of course, chiefly about the Three Points and in regard to these the schismatics made several concessions.

However, at the schismatic "synod" of 1960, they still tried to save their face by addressing the Christian Reformed Synod and proposing that a union with the Christian Reformed Church should take place merely on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity without the Three Points.

This matter was before the Christian Reformed Synod of last June. And the following was decided (I quote from *Torch and Trumpet*):

"On Wednesday evening of the second week Rev. J. C. Scholten reported on a request of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (De Wolf group). The Synod of these churches had written our Synod requesting that the two churches unite on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity only. To this our Contact Committee formulated a reply in which the Three Points on Common Grace were maintained as historically necessary and presently relevant for the rest and peace of the churches."

I am sorry that at present I have no copy of this reply. However, it is evident that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church did not want any compromise but maintained the Three Points and that if a union would ever take place the schismatics would have to acknowledge that the Three Points were Reformed. And this is exactly what they did in their last so-called synod by a vote of eleven to five.

Indeed, a most sad and miserable ending, but an ending which was, at the same time, inevitable.

How many of the churches and their members will follow in the wake of this schismatic synod, is still a question, but I have no doubt that most of them will.

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church also proposed the following procedure according to which union may be effected:

"1. Each congregation which deems it advisable to continue as a separate unit shall consult with the local Christian Reformed church or churches. If they agree that there is room for another Christian Reformed Church in that locality, the matter shall be considered settled when approved by Classis.

"2. If in any instance there should be disagreement, the matter shall be submitted to the Classis of the Christian Reformed Church in that area and its decision shall be accepted by the churches involved.

"3. If the Protestant Reformed church has a pastor, he shall submit to a *colloquium doctum* at the classical meeting which, if satisfactory, shall give him regular standing as a Christian Reformed minister for the whole denomination.

"4. If a Protestant Reformed church disbands, so that the members may affiliate with nearby Christian Reformed churches, such members shall upon presentation of membership credentials be received into Christian Reformed churches.

"5. As soon as the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches shall have approved of the agreement of reunion, the minister of a Protestant Reformed church that disbands shall be eligible for a call in the Christian Reformed denomination. The minister will submit to a *colloquium doctum* after receiving a call, but a minister who desires it will be granted a *colloquium doctum* before receiving a call."

There seems to have been quite a little discussion on the floor of the Synod, not on the matter of procedure, but on the question whether or not the Three Points should be

maintained, together with the Three Forms of Unity, as a basis for union between the Christian Reformed Church with the schismatics. Thus, for instance, the Rev. B. Nederhof of Classis Alberta said according to the report in *Torch and Trumpet*: "I regret that I cannot vote for the motion as it stands, because it includes the item which says that it is still our conviction that the Three Points are relevant; it is not my conviction. The only basis on which Reformed churches can unite is the Three Forms of Unity, as the history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands in 1869 and 1892 has proved. That does not mean that we should forget these things—I too am in agreement with the Three Points of 1924. . . . But things that happened 37 years ago may not have the same bearing today. . . . If these brethren do not violate the peace, there is sufficient ground to believe that union can be accomplished without the Three Points. . . . Does Christ, the King of the Church, want us to retain anything that is not necessary?"

And there were others that agreed with the Rev. Nederhof.

But the outcome was that the Three Points were declared relevant as a basis for union.

And how could the Synod do otherwise without condemning the actions of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924-25? Did they not depose faithful Reformed ministers because they did not and could not agree with the Three Points? If, then, now they would set aside the Three Points as a basis for union, would they not, by implication, condemn what they did in 1924-25 in regard to the deposition of officebearers?

Even as the matter concerning the union of the schismatics with the Christian Reformed Church stands now, it is bad enough. Do not forget that the schismatics voluntarily broke with the Christian Reformed Church just as in 1953 they separated themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches. This is (from the viewpoint of the Christian Reformed Church) a grievous sin. Must they not confess this sin? But of this there is no mention made by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. The schismatics are simply received without form of confession or apology!

Another matter that became a question of discussion on the floor of the Synod concerned the *colloquium doctum* (a conversation about doctrine) to which the schismatic ministers would have to submit themselves before they could be installed as minister in one of the Christian Reformed Churches. Some seemed to be of the opinion that this was not necessary. O, how easy they wanted to make it for the schismatics! But let me quote once more from *Torch and Trumpet*:

"With regard to the question of procedures, there was a good deal of discussion about the question whether or not and when a *colloquium doctum* was to be taken by the Protestant Reformed ministers. The reporter argued that this would give them ecclesiastical standing, since some have not had a college education, and our people would be assured of

their competence after their examination by classis. Rev. T. Hofman pointed out that the necessity of taking the *colloquium doctum* did not preclude their being placed on trio at once.

"After a prolonged consideration of the matter, in which every effort was made to guarantee the Protestant Reformed brethren a fair deal, the second part concerning procedures was passed as quoted above."

O, how nice the Synod was to these "Protestant Reformed brethren"!

And O, how different they acted in 1924-25 to those ministers that were synodically declared to be Reformed even though it were with a tendency to one-sidedness!

O, the damnable, corrupt politics in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And again, O how sorry I am that the Rev. Ophoff and I gave those miserable seceders, that now deliberately attempted to destroy our Protestant Reformed Churches, a complete theological training.

For that they had.

They were, most of them, without any higher education. It is true, as the reporter said at Synod, that many of them had no college education. But I may add that many of them did not even have or finish their highschool education. They were raw material as far as higher education was concerned. We, i.e., the Rev. Ophoff and undersigned, instructed them in Greek and Hebrew and in all the theological branches such as hermeneutics, homiletics, New and Old Testament history, exegesis, dogmatics, church polity, etc. And once more, I say that I deeply regret that we ever put forth our efforts to give *them*, i.e., those miserable destroyers of the church, a complete theological education.

However, we know that all things are in the hand of the Lord! And we know, too, that the Lord completely frustrated their attempts to destroy our churches. We now have peace and, although we are small, we enjoy a complete church-life.

May the Lord continue to keep our churches in the way of the truth!

H.H.

That "Final Letter"

There is a little periodical published by the schismatics (I care not to mention its name) which made its appearance a few years ago with the bold, but patently false, claim of guarding truth and justice. When I think of that paper in connection with that claim I am invariably reminded of the words of Isaiah 59:14: "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."

This is emphatically true of an editorial in the issue of that periodical of July 25, 1961, entitled "A First and Final Letter." This article refers to a letter sent by our Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of 1961 to the synod of the schismatics, and in the course of the article the letter is

quoted in full. The sole reason why this letter was not published in our Acts of Synod or in *The Standard Bearer* previously is that said letter was treated and adopted by our Synod in executive session in connection with other legal matters. Since, however, there is nothing secretive about that letter, and since it has already been published by those who received it, we reproduce it below for the perusal of our people. It speaks for itself. And indeed it bespeaks "truth and justice."

Here follows the letter.

"Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches,"

To convene July 12, 1961,

c/o Rev. J. Howerzyl, Stated Clerk,

Redlands, California

Dear Erring Brethren:

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in session June 7 to June 13, 1961, at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has decided to address to you and your membership this last admonition and warning to desist from the evil path you have chosen and have continued to follow ever since your acts of schism in 1953. Herewith we also reply to and reject the demand made in the letter of your synod dated January, 1961.

First of all, however, before admonishing you, we want to make two things abundantly clear:

1) You must not consider this letter of admonition in any wise as anything else than a solemn warning in the name of the King of His church against the evils which you have perpetrated in the past several years, and that too, in the name of the Protestant Reformed Churches. We are not interested in any legalistic jockeying for position; nor are we motivated by any materialistic desire of gain. With us it is a matter of our sacred obligation before God to maintain before God and men our God-given name as Protestant Reformed Churches, together with all that this name has meant in the past, and of which you have attempted to rob it.

2) Secondly, we want to assure you that we do not admonish you in a spirit of pride and superiority, but in all humility. That we have been able to continue as Protestant Reformed Churches, and to grow and flourish; that we have remained faithful to the truth as we always held and confessed it as Protestant Reformed Churches, even while many departed and followed after heresy; that we might continue to give forth a clear testimony to the truth among others and even organize new congregations;—in regard to all these and in accord with the truth of God's sovereign grace and covenant faithfulness, we confess that all that we are and all that we have is of grace only, and that we have absolutely nothing of which to boast in ourselves and over against you.

In admonishing you we shall not rehearse in detail all the history of the past eight years. As far as details are concerned, we refer you to our synodical letters of 1954 and 1959. Suffice it now to mention the following:

1) The schism had its beginning — and this still remains the fundamental nature and root of your entire sinful course — in your departure from the truth which we as Protestant Reformed Churches have always professed and maintained. This departure was concretely embodied in the two heretical statements of the Rev. H. De Wolf, known to and embraced by you all, namely: "God promises everyone of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved," and, "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God."

2) From a church political point of view, your evil way was begun when the Rev. De Wolf and his supporting elders refused to submit to the discipline of the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church, as advised by Classis East, but instead rebelliously organized a new congregation. It was continued when the churches were propagandized by this schismatic group, when their sympathizers in Classis West joined them and set their official stamp of approval on this ecclesiastical rebellion, when dissident elements of Classis East did the same, and when you organized a new synod.

Secondly, permit us to point out with fear and trembling that God has been your Judge in the subsequent history. Frequently it was pointed out in the period of struggle prior to the schism that you were abandoning the historic position of the Protestant Reformed Churches and moving in the direction of the Christian Reformed Churches, which cast us out in 1924. History has borne this out. Let us remind you of the following facts:

1) Shortly after you fomented schism in our churches, you officially rejected that thoroughly Protestant Reformed document, the Declaration of Principles.

2) Since 1953 many of your number, among them several of your ministers also, have defected, either individually or as groups, to the Christian Reformed Churches, and that too, without your dissent.

3) Worst of all, while you have not yet accomplished organic union with the Christian Reformed Churches, you have forsaken the "Act of Agreement" of our Protestant Reformed Churches when you officially decided and publicly stated that the Three Points of 1924 were not Arminian and Pelagian, as well as when you conveniently side-stepped the fact that the Christian Reformed Church was guilty of heresy and ignored the sin of hierarchical imposition of discipline on the part of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924. All this was plainly in conflict with the historic position of our Protestant Reformed Churches as expressed in the "Act of Agreement" and also in our synodical letters of testimony to the Christian Reformed Synod in the past.

Permit us to quote but the opening expression of that "Act of Agreement": "Whereas the Synod of 1924, assembled in Kalamazoo, Mich., adopted *three points of doctrine which, according to our most sacred conviction, are in direct conflict with our Reformed Confessions and principles . . .*" (italics ours). Cf. "The Protestant Reformed Churches in America," pp. 250, 251.

All this has taken place in the span of a few brief years,

and is the fruit of the seeds of heresy and rebellion sown in 1953.

And from all this it is evident to anyone, and must be evident to you, that your claim to being Protestant Reformed is false on the very surface of it.

Now if in all good conscience before God and men you could no longer agree with the Protestant Reformed Churches and remain affiliated with us, we would have no objection. That would be a matter between you and your God. But then your course of action would have been honest and upright. You would have left us openly and honestly and peaceably. Instead, you have committed schism and rebellion; you have sought to deprive us—and in some cases succeeded—of name and possessions. And also synodically you have perpetrated all these evils allegedly in the name of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in the meantime seeking to deprive us of the denominational name and the possessions which belong with it.

We earnestly call upon you to repent of all these evils, to desist from them, and, by the grace of God, to return to the way of the truth in the only possible way, that of upright and open-hearted confession before God and His church.

In the meantime, we want to impress upon you that by the grace of God we are resolved to maintain our rights as Protestant Reformed Churches, both with respect to the name and all synodical possessions. We do not relish further costly and wearisome litigation, but would much rather see these matters finished outside the civil courts. Nevertheless, we are compelled before God to maintain our rightful position as the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. And, if you insist on depriving us of that which is rightfully ours, we will be compelled, even in legal channels, if necessary, to claim as Synod the Protestant Reformed name, archives, and the real and personal properties of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. We have warned you of this intent in the past; we now reaffirm it, so that there may be no miscalculation on your part.

Above all, it is still our prayer that the Lord may so impress this word of admonition upon your hearts that you give heed, repent, confess, and return to the way of the truth.

Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches,

REV. G. VANDEN BERG, *Stated Clerk*

Copies to: Delegates and alternates to said synod.

In regard to this letter, the article mentioned above makes the following claims, all of which are either false, half false, or beside the point entirely. In the first place, it designates this letter as received from "the churches with the Rev. H. Hoeksema." This is a lie. For: 1) There are no churches with the Rev. H. Hoeksema. This is the language formerly used by our opponents in Reformed circles. And it simply evinces how thoroughly the schismatics have imbibed the Christian Reformed approach. There was indeed a time when all the schismatic leaders stood with us

and denied that our Protestant Reformed Churches were the "Hoeksema group" or the "Hoeksema churches." The Rev. H. Hoeksema is with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, but there are no churches "with" him. 2) The letter was received from the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and sent by the Stated Clerk, the Rev. G. Vanden Berg.

In the second place, the article claims: "the letter published below is the first official correspondence which our Synod has received from said churches since our separation in 1953." This is but a half truth, and therefore a lie. True enough, our Synod has heretofore not addressed the schismatic synod as a group. And let me point out that even now we do not address them as the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, but as the "Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches," that is, as the claimed, self-proclaimed synod. But what the article ignores is the fact that twice before, even as early as 1954, our Synod prepared and sent letters of admonition, similar in content to this one, to the schismatic membership individually.

In the third place, the article claims that the schismatic synod has sent letters to our churches requesting discussion of doctrinal differences and amicable settlement of property disputes already as "early as 1953." This is a downright lie. "As early as 1953" there was no split at the synodical level, first of all, and therefore there could have been no letters. But above all, the schismatics never addressed any letters to our Synod. Mind you, not a single one! They insultingly attempted to address us as "the synod gathered in Hudsonville" or "the churches with the Rev. H. Hoeksema" or "the eight original delegates of Classis East." But by the same token our Synod never officially received letters from them, and did not recognize the letters sent by the schismatics. And amicably settle property disputes? Nothing could be farther from the truth! They have done nothing else than blatantly expropriate property that was not theirs but which happened to be in their physical possession. And properties which were not in their physical possession they have by all manner of false claims and wicked oaths attempted to take from us by legal processes. And discuss doctrinal differences? As is now evident, they never wanted doctrinal discussion. They merely wanted to convert all to Christian Reformed doctrine. And even while we were still together in one ecclesiastical fellowship, they would never discuss; they were always ready to vote as a bloc.

The only element of truth in the entire article is that this is a "final" letter. Final it is indeed, because the schismatic group has now gone out of existence. But their last Synod does not mark the close of the Protestant Reformed denomination, as the article claims. Indeed not! They never were the Protestant Reformed denomination. But the Protestant Reformed Churches continue! And, by God's grace, they flourish!

Finally, let it be noted that with all its false camouflage

(Continued on page 469)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER XXII

God the Alpha and Omega

Revelation 21:5-8

5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

First of all, we wish to make some general remarks. In these verses we have a solemn confirmation by God Himself of the things which John had seen in the vision of verses 1 to 4, the passing away of the old world and the formation of the new creation, and especially the vision of the new Jerusalem. Throughout this passage, except, perhaps, in verse 5-b, the speaker is God Himself. And the contents are, in the first place, a statement that God makes all things new. In the second place, there is an injunction for John to write these words: for they are faithful and true. In the third place, there is a declaration that it is done, that it is come to pass, that it is all finished, and that God is the Alpha and Omega. In the fourth place, there is the promise that God will give the water of life to him that is athirst. And finally, there is a declaration that the wicked will be cast into eternal desolation. This we will now explain a little more in detail.

First of all, then, we have verse 5 and the first part of verse 6: "And he that sat [or, according to the Revised Version: 'he that sitteth'] upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." It is God Who is speaking here; and John hears these words although they are not directly addressed to him. He is the one that sits on the throne. Cf. Rev. 4:2, 3. And He therefore appears here as the sovereign Lord of all. In these words He here speaks and reveals Himself as the Savior, the Redeemer of His people, and the Redeemer and Renewer of all creation. All things He will make new in heaven and on earth. These words, we understand,

look back upon the vision contained in verses 1 and 2, but emphasize the truth that God, the sovereign Lord, will cause all these things to come to pass. "And he said unto me [Revised Version: 'And he saith'], Write: for these words are true and faithful." These words are probably of the interpreting angel, since they contain an injunction for John to write. The words may mean either that John must write that these words are true and faithful, or that he must write down these words because they are true and faithful. In either case the meaning remains the same. The emphasis is on the fact that the words just spoken, namely, that God will make all things new, are true, that is, they are in harmony with reality. In spite of all appearances to the contrary here in this world, all things shall surely be made new. Faithful these words are, because they concern the promise of God. For the renewal of all creation is the ultimate realization of the promise of the gospel. They therefore concern God Himself. Hence, they are faithful, dependable. They shall never fail. God will surely fulfill His promise. And therefore John must immediately write down these words, or he must place special emphasis upon the fact that they are true and faithful. "And he said unto me, It is done [or: 'they are come to pass']. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." It is evident from the contents that these words are again spoken by God directly: for He alone is the Alpha and Omega. Cf. Rev. 1:8. The viewpoint is that of the vision in verses 1 to 4. There John saw the new creation and the new Jerusalem. Here it is stated that they are come to pass, or that the promise of God is completely realized. In the light of these words and from the viewpoint that all things are accomplished, the rest of the passage must be understood. It is now become fully evident that God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things. All things are of Him, and all things are also unto Him. He must have the glory. He determines the end from the beginning. There is nothing that does not serve His purpose.

Verses 6-b to 8. We read: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." This is evidently a promise to him that is athirst now, here in this world, but that shall be completely fulfilled when all things are made new. As to the contents of this promise, we must state, in the first place, that it promises the water of life as a free gift of grace. And the meaning is that God will constantly supply all that is necessary to have and to enjoy eternal life: perfect knowledge of Him and perfect fellowship with Him. In the second place, it speaks of the fountain of this water. This fount is ultimately God Himself. But that promise He realizes through Jesus Christ our Lord. From Him we shall drink of the water of life. In the third place, we must not forget that it is a promise to him that is athirst, that is, to the spiritual man in Christ, to him that longs for God and His righteousness. And then we read: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things [Revised Version: 'All these things']; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." In these words the promise of verse 3 is

repeated; but nevertheless there is the following difference. In the first place, the promise is here in the singular. To inherit these things is therefore an individual matter. Then, too, sonship is here mentioned: he that overcometh will be God's son and heir. Thirdly, the emphasis here is on "he that overcometh," thus designating the one that will inherit all things. A battle must be fought against the powers of darkness in this world. And only he that is faithful and victorious in that battle shall inherit all things. Then we read, on the contrary: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." In these words those are designated that shall not inherit all things, but whose part shall be in the lake of fire. Notice that they are classified as fearful, referring probably to nominal Christians that are afraid to fight the battle and therefore are always inclined to compromise with the world. Secondly, they are professed unbelievers, who openly reject the gospel and oppose Christ. And these are, in the third place, abominable, filled with the abominations of the great whore, Rev. 17:4. And not only are they filled with the abominations of the great whore, but, according to the text, they naturally also walk in their abominations. For thus we read in verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." In these words it is very plain that these abominable men and women walk in their abominations: for they walk as murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. And they shall be cast into the lake of fire, which burneth with fire and brimstone. And this, according to the text, is the second death. The first death is, of course, the death of these unbelievers and sorcerers and idolaters and liars in the present life, ending with physical death. Really they are dead now. They never lived. But that death is finished when they die the physical death. And, therefore, now they are in the first death; but when they shall have been cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, they shall be in the second death, which is no annihilation, but, according to all Scripture, is the death which they experience and which shall never end.

CHAPTER XXIII

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:9-27

9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates, on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

All things are to be new in the eternal future of the kingdom of heaven and in the perfect church. We expect a new heaven and a new earth, that is, a new and entirely different state of things. Essentially this new state of things shall consist in this, that God's tabernacle is then with men. H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Manna

And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. Exodus 16: 13, 14

Marah laid the pattern for the life of the nation of Israel that would obtain throughout the wilderness journey. There the people first began to murmur because of the rigor of the life they were called to lead. There God clearly demonstrated that He was perfectly able to provide for them in all of their need. There God set forth His statute and ordinance to prove them, saying, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee."

From Marah Israel moved to Elam. There they camped. It was a pleasant place to be with its seventy palm trees and twelve wells of water. During the stay at Elam the camp was quiet; but underneath there was a deepset division that had developed. There were those who remembered the marvelous works of Jehovah their God and trusted in His abiding love. For them the Song of Moses still re-echoed in their hearts. They looked forward in faith, confident in the promises of God. And there were also the others. They too had sung the Song of Moses on the shore of the Red Sea; but already it was forgotten. They were discovering that the way of the wilderness was to be hard, and doubts were creeping in. They wanted material prosperity, and, as long as it did not come, they would object. Henceforth this division would become ever more evident in the life of the nation. The two elements would be constantly vying together for control of the nation. The latter group being by far the more numerous, except for the repeated intervention of Jehovah, they would surely overcome.

Elam provided a peaceful camp. Under the shade of its palms, the people found rest. But it could not last. The cloud of Jehovah would lead them onward. Soon the tents were packed, and Israel set forth again to the rigor of the wilderness way.

A few days of travel passed, and again the discontents had an opportunity to speak. This time it was food. The supply was getting low, and looking about in the wilderness, they saw none that was to be had. First there were just sullen faces with mutterings under the breath; but before long there were animated and angry conversations. Men circulated

through the camp spreading the flames of rebellion. What were they going to do for food? Soon what they had would be gone, and they would all be left without. This was not what they had been promised. It was not right. It was not fair. Some became outspoken, and united themselves into a crowd. With flushed faces they made their way to Moses and Aaron. Their voices were angry and loud. "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into the wilderness, to kill the whole assembly with hunger."

To them Moses and Aaron would not answer. They would not meet anger with anger, heated words with heated words. The implication was very clear. They, Moses and Aaron, were being blamed for the fear of the people. The people accused them because they were men, and the people dared not lay the blame to God. Silently Moses and Aaron turned to do the only thing they could. They went in prayer to God. As they prayed, God came to Moses and spoke. "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

Meanwhile, as the people waited, a hushed silence fell over the camp. Tension was drawn to the point of breaking. One short month had passed since their departure from Egypt, and already the third crisis had come. The trouble was in the route they had been made to take. They never knew what was coming next. Every day anew the way ahead looked impossible. It made them uncertain and afraid. Why could they not travel an easier road? Then they would not feel so much like rebelling. Still, there were some whose discernment went deeper than this. They had an underlying awareness of guilt. As yet, they realized, they had never really been in need. The presence of Jehovah was before them in the cloud, and He had always provided for them in time. It was just that they had to trust so exclusively in Him. There was never anything tangible upon which they could rely. That made it so hard.

Finally Moses and Aaron returned. First they went to the waiting group of leaders. With stern words of reprimand, they spoke. "At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord."

Next, all of the congregation was called together. The people gathered at the edge of the camp, and Aaron stood before them. Tensely the people waited for him to speak; but at the same time, there was an awareness of the cloud of Jehovah that hovered at a distance in the wilderness. Aaron's pronouncement was short. "Come near before the

Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings," and with that he pointed them toward the cloud. Before their eyes the cloud began to glow. Brighter and brighter it shone until the glory, the beauty, the awful light of God's presence blinded their eyes. While the people stood trembling, Moses was commanded to speak to them again. "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God."

Slowly the people returned to their tents and waited. They had seen the glory of Jehovah and heard the messages of Aaron and Moses. A feeling of anxious anticipation filled the camp. They could try to go about their usual activities, but their minds would only reflect again on what they had seen and heard. They had been told that they would eat flesh, but from where? They had been told that they would have bread, but how? It all seemed again so utterly impossible; yet they could not dismiss it from their minds. In groups or alone, they waited. And then, there arose an excited cry. A dark cloud had been sighted on the horizon. For a moment their hearts beat faster. Was it an approaching storm of judgment such as they had seen roll repeatedly over Egypt? They knew that they had displeased Jehovah by their complaining. But no, it approached too swiftly for that. Closer and closer it came vibrating as though with life and with the sound of many thrashing wings. It was a flock of birds covering the sky, quails without number. The birds came; they hovered over the camp; and then they settled down. In sheer amazement the people hesitated; but then they reached out and captured the birds with bare hands, as many as they wanted.

Countless fires burned brightly that night in the camp of Israel. The people had fresh meat to eat. They had thought it to be impossible, but Jehovah had brought it to pass. To the faithful it was an occasion of greatest joy. They were assured of the faithfulness of their God and of His abiding love. Repenting from their murmuring, they had peace in their souls. But there were also the others. In their mouths the meat was tasteless, and bitter in their stomachs. They would have almost preferred not to have seen the quails even if many had starved. Then they would have been justified in their complaints. Now they stood condemned.

And still there was more to come.

Early the next morning another excited cry went up. The earliest risers, awaking in the morning's dawn, found the ground covered with white like snow. Quickly the people turned out to examine this new thing which they saw. Small, white kernels, like coriander seeds, covered the ground as far as the eye could see. The people looked and cried, "Manna? (What is it?)" It was a substance such as human eyes had never before seen. They stooped and sifted it through their fingers. They lifted it to their lips and found it sweet to the taste like honey. It was a miraculous substance perfectly adapted for food. It could provide all of the nourishment needed by the human body even amid the rigorous life of the wilderness. Moses stood

before the people and explained. "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your people; take ye every man for them which are in his tents."

A feeling of festivity filled the camp as the people hastened to find containers. They found this new kind of food exciting. It was a delicious food, and an omer (perhaps about 5 pints), was sufficient for every man's daily need. Soon they discovered that not only could it be eaten raw, but it could be seethed or baked as they chose. The manna was an indisputable testimony that Jehovah their God was fully capable of supplying their every need, and He did even when they were unthankful and wicked. But the manna was also a means by which they were being proved. Some there were who followed Moses' command exactly, gathering only enough for one day. They understood that God would supply more food every morning and believed that it was so. But there were others who would take no chance. They gathered as much manna as they could until under the heat of the sun it melted away. They wanted to be sure that they would have food for the morrow regardless of what Moses said. The next morning a putrid stench hung over the camp for worms had invaded the pots where this extra manna was kept. With angry words Moses administered to them their reprimands.

With the sixth day of the week a new command was given. Moses brought it to the people. "This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." Again there were some that obeyed. They trusted the word of the Lord. But there were others that feared the stench. They preferred to gather in the morning even if it were the sabbath. But in the morning there was none, and it remained for them to go hungry. Again Moses spoke, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the sabbath day."

Jehovah was teaching Israel a great lesson. They could exist as a nation only through complete dependence upon Him. It was the truth set forth by Moses and later quoted by Jesus, "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). It was as though they heard beforehand the words of Jesus, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:25, 33).

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 2:1-7)

b.

In the former article we took notice of the implication of the concept "all men" here in the writings of Paul. We might ascertain that the term "all men" is by no means the same as "every man," every man without exception, nor is it equivalent of "every man who in the dispensation of God comes under the preaching of the gospel."

It is quite evident, we saw, that the term "all men" refers to all *kinds* of men, to every kind of men in the station and place in life; it makes no difference whether they be male or female, lord or servant, rich or poor, Greek or Jew. The entire middle-wall of the partition has been removed by the blood of Jesus Christ shed upon the Cross of Calvary. This is clear from the text as well as from a kindred passage from Paul's pen in Titus 2:1-11.

Here in this passage under consideration we may be quite certain that Paul has all *kinds* of men in mind, the entire human race in the *organic* sense of the term, since Paul explicitly mentions "kings and all who are in authority." This definitely points to men in every station of life.

Such is, briefly, the matter which we may deem to be established in the former article.

At this point in our discussion the point should be raised as to why Paul so explicitly singles out "kings and all who are in authority" and even urges Timothy to instruct the congregation concerning such prayers for all men.

In the first place, Paul insists on this since such is in conformity with the very genius of the end of the commandment, namely, love out of pure hearts, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. Compare chapter 1:5. It is imperative for the church in the world that they do not suffer shipwreck as to the faith. Shall the church be a light on a candle-stick giving light to all who are in the house, then she shall surely have to walk in the love of God, in a faith which is energized by love. Only such a faith can guarantee a walk in a good conscience, that is, such a walk in which we judge ourselves in the light of God's law to be in conformity with his will, and acceptable to him. For good works are those which proceed from true faith, are performed in accordance with his law, and are unto the glory of his great grace and mercy! Such is the key-string in the golden harp of God in the hearts of His people in the midst of an evil world.

Such is the spiritual-psychological connection between this section in chapter 2:1-7 and the foregoing chapter.

To walk in good works in an evil world is a very, very *prayerful* work; it is consecrated endeavor, and it is the sweet-smelling incense upon the altar of God. Unless it is that it is a stench in the holy nostrils of God. This explains

the solemn, "I beseech you first of all that prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving be made for all men." Moreover, it certainly also explains the deep motive of urging prayers for "kings and for all who are in authority." The motive is that the church may walk in a good conscience toward the ordinance of God's authority and over-all rule in all the world.

That this over-all motive is indeed present here in this passage is evident from the very nature of prayer.

It should be borne in mind that prayer is not simply a "means" to obtain what we desire from the Lord; it is far more than that. Prayer is incense to God. According to the Heidelberg Catechism prayer is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires from us. The other part of thankfulness is the keeping of God's commandments out of faith and unto the glory of God's grace.

It is not for nought that Paul enumerates, and that, too, in climactic effect, that the petitions, prayers and intercession be with *thanksgiving*. Now certainly thanksgiving is more than a feeling, mere sentiment. It is a basic attitude toward God, and a worship with very real and exact spiritual content and motivation. For thanksgiving is first of all a matter of strictest *justice*. It is just that God be acknowledged and thanked. And it is certainly just that God be acknowledged and thanked as He who rules over all, the God of the ages, the incorruptible and immortal God. Does God not have dominion over the very hearts of kings. "He turneth it whithersoever he wills." Prov. 21:1. It is not so that a man deviseth his way, but Jehovah directeth his steps. A divine sentence is in the lips of the kings; his mouth shall not transgress in judgment." Prov. 16:9, 10. Or do we not read: "It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness, for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him that speaketh right."

In view of all this is it not *just* to thankfully acknowledge that kings stand by God's appointment and ordinance, and that their very heart is in His hands? However, it also is very *truthful* to thankfully acknowledge that the Lord is God, even over the kings!

Such we do fundamentally in prayer. We pray to the one true God who has revealed Himself to us in His Word, and we humble ourselves before His majesty in the deep consciousness of our needs, and we trust that God will hear us for Christ's sake.

In view of this rather basic and directive consideration concerning the very nature of prayer it is not so difficult to understand that Paul impressed upon the minds of the Ephesian believers the urgency and the need of the completeness of such prayers. Hence, the terms: *supplications*, *prayers*, *intercessions*. Each of these terms indicates an aspect of prayer as the chief part of thankfulness. *Supplications* refers to prayer from the view-point of the great need of the heart. Here the Christian bows very, very lowly before God, before the divine majesty of God. Applied to "all men and to kings" this means that it is a heartfelt need to remember them and

commit them to God. *Prayers* refer to the askings, to requests directed to God Himself. *Intercessions* refer to remembering particularly others in our prayers. Each element must be present in a full-orbed prayer life.

So much for the nature and the elements in prayer as here enjoined by Paul.

The reader has by this time possibly asked: why must such prayers be made for all men, and particularly for kings and all who are in authority? To this we answer that the deepest motive is the *well-being* of the church. It is imperative that the church "live a quiet and peaceful life, in all godliness and sobriety." Such well-being is for her, and that, too, for the entire church in all the world. Such well-being depends in large measure upon the decisions of kings and all who are in authority.

It may not be superfluous to remind ourselves that the Scriptures were written to the church in the world, as she is the church under the Cross. The fundamental presupposition is every where in Scripture that there is a suffering for righteousness' sake. Certainly it is given unto the church to suffer for the sake of Christ. Now this too must be done because of love from a pure heart, a good conscience and faith unfeigned. Peter warns the church that it is not beautiful before God to suffer because of our faults. And certainly shall we not do such we must love the brotherhood, fear God and honor the king. I Peter 2:17.

Possibly a close reading of the text here in I Timothy 2:1-6 shows that what Paul has in mind in praying for kings is the well-being of all the "brotherhood" in the world. They must live a quiet and peaceful life. One cannot pray for the one without the other. Furthermore, let it not be overlooked that:

1. Paul is speaking of a quiet "life" here not in the sense of life everlasting, but rather the life of this present world, the "bios" life, of marriage and giving in marriage, family life, life of the community and nation, as this particularly affects the life of the church in the world. They must live a life, if possible, without persecution.

2. They must live a life in quietness and peace. None need seek the rack, the prison and the death-cell. It is not non-Christian to live a quiet life in the land.

3. However, it must all be done with sobriety, that is, with Christian dignity. And such dignity is first of all a walking before God's face. Only he who acknowledges God has true dignity before men. Think of a Daniel in the court of the Persian king.

That is the purpose of these enjoined prayers.

It ought to be observed, by all means, that Paul does not say that we should pray for the salvation of all men, in the sense, that *every* king's salvation is the end in mind in this prayer. Such is not stated in the text nor is such a legitimate conclusion from what we read in the verses 4 through 6. No *class of men* in God's church ought to be excluded from our prayers. God has taken them all in His plan unto salvation. He has redeemed His people out of every tongue and

people and nation. And kings and all in authority too fall in this class. Think of Cornelius, the centurion in the Italian Band. Did not Paul preach so that Christ was made known to all the men of the Roman Praetorium? Well may we, therefore, pray also for kings in their position that they do righteousness toward the Church and if it be God's will, bow humbly before God's throne.

Before we end this instalment on this section permit us to remark that it is quite true that Paul is here writing in view of the Ephesian church. Had not Paul written a most wonderful letter to this Church, called the "Letter To The Ephesians"? In this letter the chief thought is that there is one church, one Lord, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God Who is above all, in all and through all. The unity of the body of Christ; many members yet one body.

Such is the church in all the world, composed of believers out of every walk of life.

If such be the case then too the scope of our prayers must be for the entire church of God in the world, as Christ gathers, defends and preserves her. We must not pray simply for our little family circle, nor for our own congregation. I once heard one remark: our preacher does not pray for the denominational needs; it is simply, "me, my congregation and I."

It seems that Paul is counteracting some such evil tendency in this Ephesian church. They must fully understand and live from the faith that there is one God and Savior! It must be fully understood that there is one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus. It is to the service of this great Savior God that Paul is called and separated as a teacher and preacher—a teacher to the Gentiles.

G.L.

THAT "FINAL LETTER"

(Continued from page 463)

the article ignores the main thing, namely, the contents of the letter itself. Not a word is said about that letter as such; nor is an answer attempted. Nor, although their "administrative committee" has received directives for a reply, has our Stated Clerk received a reply to date.

Truth and justice?

"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."

H.C.H.

IN MEMORIAM

We, the Consistory of the Hope Prot. Ref. Church, wish to express our sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Dykstra and family in the recent death of her mother,

MRS. J. ZINGER

May the Lord comfort the hearts of the bereaved.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4.

Rev. H. Hanko, President
D. Meulenbergh, Clerk

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN HIS FEAR

God's Royal Priesthood

(8)

The son of a prophet in due time may himself be a prophet.

The son of a king, provided he is the oldest son, may look forward to having his father's throne.

But the son of a priest knows without having any doubt to becloud the issue that he will also be priest. In fact every son born in the tribe of Levi knew that his whole life was dedicated to service of God in the tabernacle or temple. He had no problem to decide what his vocation would be. He had no choice in the matter. His work was all cut out for him by God Himself. For God set aside the whole tribe of Levi for this work and the house of Aaron for the priesthood.

However the priesthood of Aaron is not the first of which we may read in Holy Writ. The first priest to be designated as a priest is Melchizedek, who is called priest of the Most High God in Genesis 14:18. There is also reference before the days of Aaron to priests of the gods of the heathen. Joseph's wife, according to Genesis 41:50, was Asaneth, the daughter of Potipherah, the priest of On. Although it must be admitted that the word priest here could also mean prince. But in Genesis 47 further mention is made of priests of Egypt. The heathen nations did have priests who offered up sacrifices to their idols long before God set aside the tribe of Levi to serve Him in His tabernacle. But the first suggestion in Holy Writ of the work of the office of the priest is found in Genesis 4, where we have the account of Cain's and Abel's offerings to God.

That work of the priest which set him aside from all other men and all other offices undoubtedly was that work of offering up to God the gifts of the people. We would at this time like to point out that this work of offering up gifts is a broader idea than that of sacrificing. We have come to the point where we use these words interchangeably. I was even tempted a moment ago to say that the priest offered up the sacrifices of the people. That statement is not inclusive enough. All the offerings were not sacrifices, even though in a sense all sacrifices are offerings. Consider that the word sacrifice means literally a slaughter. It means the offering of that which has life and whose life is taken away by means of a slaughter. Gold and silver can be an offering, a gift unto God, but they can hardly be sacrifices. I say, we use those words interchangeably, and we have gotten to the point where by sacrifice we mean giving something up, parting with something. We speak of the sacrifices we make so that our children may have a good education, the sacrifices we make for the cause of God's kingdom. And we mean that we go without things, we give them first to kingdom causes because we know that this is right. "Seek ye first the king-

dom of God and its righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," Matthew 6:33. And, by the way, this is a very important text for God's royal priesthood. It is a truth by which he lives. It expresses the very activity of his life and his calling in the world. However, there is a marked difference between a sacrifice and an offering. Abel did come with a sacrifice when he brought an offering to God. And his offering was an act of faith. Cain deceived himself into thinking that he brought an offering; but because he despised the sacrifice that God had ordained and taught to Adam and Eve, when He slew a lamb and clothed Adam and Eve with the skin thereof, God rejected his offering. His heart was not right with God, and his offering made that plain.

This brings us to the truth that, even before Melchizedek, the work of the priest is presented to us in Scripture, even though the name priest is not used. Cain and Abel functioned in the office of priest. The one was God's royal priest, the other was Satan's shameful priest. But here already we do see man offering and sacrificing unto God. We can go back one step more and point out that Adam also performed the work of a priest and was in Paradise God's royal priest. We do not refer then to the fact that Adam also must have sacrificed lambs unto God before Cain's and Abel's offerings and must have taught his sons to perform this priestly work before God. Certainly this matter of sacrificing a lamb unto God was not an invention of man. Man did not "hit upon" a matter that God found pleasing. Abel did not just happen to choose a sacrifice that pleased God; and God did not accommodate Himself to a human invention. Do not forget that Christ in Scripture is called the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Long before Abel came with his sacrifice or offering of a slaughtered lamb, yea long before God slew a lamb to clothe Adam and Eve, long before Adam and Eve fell, even before they were created, in God's counsel Christ was already the Lamb slain on Calvary's brow for our sins. It was for that reason that God slew a lamb to teach Adam and Eve, and through them the whole Church, that we can approach Him, that our prayers can be heard, that there is salvation only through the death of the Son of God in our flesh. Adam learned this priestly work of sacrificing a lamb directly from God. And Adam as a faithful covenant parent in his prophetic office taught his children the work they were to perform in their priestly office. Both of his sons did not by faith embrace that truth. The one despised it and set his own priestly rules and expected God to accommodate Himself to man's fleshly choices and thoughts. The other by faith took hold of the truth in Christ and sought forgiveness through His blood. And we may certainly say that Adam also functioned in that same office and sacrificed his lambs to God before the incident recorded of Cain and Abel.

But we said that Adam in Paradise already performed the work of priest as God's royal priest. That means that before he fell and before he was driven out of Paradise

Adam was in a royal priesthood. There was a priesthood before sin entered the world. Even as there was a prophetic office and a kingly office in Paradise before the Fall, so there surely was also a priestly office. As we have observed, when treating this prophetic office (see S. B. Vol. XXXVII, March 15, 1961, pages 277 and 278) the emphasis in Holy Writ is upon the priestly office. Not that the prophetic and kingly are of less importance, but we read in I Peter 2:9 (from which our general theme is borrowed) the pointed words, "Ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation . . ." Notice that the emphasis is upon the priestly office. Surely, then, we may say that this priestly office likewise was to be found in Paradise before the Fall. Man was created with mind, will and strength. He did not obtain a will after the Fall. But with all three in Paradise he stood in a threefold office.

It is to be understood that after sin entered the world the work of the priest, of necessity, underwent a change. That is equally true of the prophetic office. After the Fall God's prophet has the calling to oppose the lie, to condemn it in no uncertain terms and speak of a Christ Whose coming was not necessary until the entrance of sin. We say "not necessary until the entrance of sin" not because sin imposed something upon God and made it necessary for Him to do something He did not intend to do. We mean that apart from the sin which He had decreed would come there is even in His counsel no reason for the decree of a Saviour Who dies on Calvary's brow as the Lamb of God. And we may say that after sin entered the world there are sacrifices which the priest must offer up to God. There must now be a lamb that is slaughtered. There must be a bloody offering. This Adam never did. In fact Adam in Paradise before the Fall did not even have an altar in the literal sense of the word. Yet he was priest, and his prophetic office served that priestly office, while the kingly office became possible as God's king of all the earthly creation only because of his priestly office.

But let us first consider this priesthood after the order of Aaron, for it is better known unto us, and then we can point out the differences between it and Adam's priesthood before the Fall. After Mt. Sinai the sphere of labor of the priest was in the tabernacle—and later in the days after Solomon in the temple. The prophet went from place to place and went out to contact the people of God who were walking in sin or needed the comfort of God in their persecutions, captivities and afflictions. But the priest labored in the tabernacle and temple, to which the people came with their sacrifices and offerings and to hear the blessing of God pronounced upon them. And when we think of the priest in his sphere of activity, the tabernacle, we think immediately of sacrifices and offerings. The reason for this matter of sacrifices is, as we already suggested, nothing less than SIN. Although Adam brought offerings to God, gifts which he presented to God, this was not as a sacrifice for sin. In fact our word offer means literally, to bring unto or present. This is also true of the Hebrew words *alah*, which means to cause

to go up—to go up to God—and *qarab* which means to cause to come near or to bring near—once again unto God, and also the Greek word *prosphero* which means to bear towards, and the word *doron* which means a gift.

All the temple service centered around this work of the priest. That which demanded man's attention as soon as he came into the outer court of the tabernacle and the temple was the altar of burnt offering or the brazen altar. It stood out in bold relief there before the eyes of those who entered the temple, even as today the first thing to demand the attention of those who enter the house of God is the Bible on the pulpit. That altar was the Bible of the Old Testament in that it was the Word of God in Christ as the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. But this altar of burnt offering was nowhere to be found in Paradise, for no lambs needed to die, for the simple reason that death which is the wages of sin did not need to be paid, since there was yet no sin in God's earthly creation. Instead of an altar upon which lambs died, Adam had a tree of life whose fruit had power to sustain his earthly life without end. It all goes to show that Adam's priesthood was far different.

We might also point out that Adam lived in the Holy of Holies of God's temple in Paradise. He had free access to the heart of that temple, for he went daily to the center or midst of the garden where the tree of life stood. And there he had fellowship with God without an altar. Sin had raised no barrier in that earthly creation. There was no veil between Holy of Holies and Holy Place. And from the heart of Adam there rose a sweet smelling savour of prayers that as yet did not need to include a request for the forgiveness of sins. But as priest Adam did offer up to God the whole earthly creation and did utter prayers of praise.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to its fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. John J. Dykstra, in the loss of her mother

MRS. J. ZINGER

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

Rev. H. Hanko, President

Mrs. D. Meulenberg, Secretary

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses sympathy to its fellow elder Mr. Bert Van Maanen in the death of his father,

MR. EVERT VAN MAANEN

May our covenant God comfort the bereaved and strengthen them in the words of II Cor. 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Rev. J. Kortering, President

Mr. Peter Hoekstra, Vice President

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

INFLUENCE OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION

(continued)

We were quoting in our preceding article from the book of "Radio Replies" by the Rev. Dr. Leslie Rumble in which Dr. Rumble sets forth the Roman Catholic position on "Tradition." We will now continue with these quotations.

519. It seems to me that Catholics are guided by their Church, and not by the Bible.

And the answer of Dr. Rumble to this observation is as follows: "You cannot separate the two like that. It is true that Catholics are guided by what their Church teaches. It would not be true to say or imagine that they are not guided by the Bible; for all that is taught in the Bible is included in the teaching of the Catholic Church. Any notion that there is opposition between the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Bible is due to either a wrong idea of Catholic teaching, or of the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures."

520. To my mind the Bible is a sufficient guide, without the need of anything else.

You would not have the Bible save for the Catholic Church. Also, not all that God has revealed is contained in the Bible. And yet more, the Bible cannot be a sufficient guide when it requires another guide to explain its meaning. Remember that the first Christians owed their faith, not to the Gospels, but to the Church. The divine authority of the Church was the first fact as far as men were concerned in the order of proof. Before a line of the New Testament was written it was the Church that preached Christ to the first converts. Jesus commanded no writings, but told the Apostles to preach the truth, saying, "Teach all nations." And He promised them, "He who hears you, hears Me." The Apostles had to win belief in themselves and in their mission before they could win belief in their Master. It was on their testimony that the first converts believed in Christ. Had you lived then, and had you gone to one of the Apostles demanding proof from the written Word, he would have been quite unable to provide proof from Gospels which had not yet been written! He would have said to you, "Such is the unanimous teaching of the Apostles as we have received it from Christ." And either you would have accepted the teaching authority of the Church represented by the Apostles, or you would have been without the Christian faith.

The above paragraph is the answer of Dr. Rumble. First of all, Dr. Rumble again affirms in this answer that not all

that God has revealed is in the Bible. The Bible is not in itself sufficient. But, what must we do with this word of Scripture, as recorded in Revelation 22:18: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"? One might object that these words apply only to the Book of Revelation. What of it? Has the Roman Catholic Church also added to this book of Revelation in its Tradition? And, secondly, this answer is pure sophistry and evasive. Rome places equal authority in Tradition besides the Scriptures. But, these traditions are, to some extent, based on the memory of men who remembered the sayings of Christ and of the Apostles. Now it is true that Christ did not dictate any of His sayings. It is also true that the faith of the Church in its New Testament infancy was dependent upon the word of the Apostles, that they did not have the Gospels as yet. But does this mean that these Apostles had to win belief in themselves and in their mission before they could win belief in their Master? Of course not! Because Christ did not dictate His sayings to men He inspired holy men, such as the apostles, to proclaim His word. And the apostles were fully aware of this element of Divine inspiration. Because Christ would not leave His word simply to the memory of men He therefore inspired holy men to write His Word. And this is a far cry from the Roman Catholic doctrine of Tradition.

521. But we do possess the Gospels now, and we cannot go against them.

Of course, granted our possession of the New Testament, we must accept all that is written there in the sense intended by God, and nothing which contradicts that sense. But the New Testament contains only part of the Christian message to the world. There are doctrines over and above those contained in the written fragmentary books of the New Testament. And for such doctrines we must rely upon the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church — traditions preserved from the very beginning.

522. Are words of Christ extant other than found in the New Testament?

No. We have no other records of the exact words of Christ save those contained in the New Testament. (So, Dr. Rumble acknowledges that there are no other words of Christ extant [publicly known] save those found in the New Testament. The New Testament is the only exact record of the words of Christ. — H.V.)

523. Does the Catholic Church recognize any instruments not found within its Bible, with the degree of solemnity as if they were?

Besides the Bible, the Catholic Church recognizes the divinely safeguarded tradition which has been preserved and transmitted in the Church. You must remember that Christ Himself established tradition as the main vehicle by which His teachings would be preserved in the Church and communicated to men. He did not expressly order any gospels to be written. He demanded faith in His doctrines as they were

preached by word of mouth. Before the New Testament was written, the only rule of faith was the oral teaching of the Apostles. Later on, part of the knowledge possessed by the Apostles was committed to writing, but part only. Not all revealed truth was written down. The divine teaching has been preserved and handed down completely in the Catholic Church, both by that section written in the New Testament, and by that section of revealed truth which was not committed to writing, but which is declared by the living voice of the Church. For example, which Books of Scripture are canonical, the very inspiration of those Books, the teachings on infant baptism, or on the matter and form of the Sacraments, and many other things, are known to us by the traditional and living voice of the Church only. But, as I have pointed out, Christ intended that, for He did not order anything to be written, but established His Church and sent it to teach all nations what He had revealed, and its applications in practice. (In connection with this answer of Dr. Rumble, one might ask the question: why were not all the teachings of the Apostles written down in the New Testament? Christ did not order any gospels to be written. So, what determined the Scriptures, Christ or His Church? — H.V.)

524. Why do you rely so much on the testimony of those whom you call the "Early Fathers"?

Because they were men of undoubted learning and holiness, and lived in times much nearer to the days of the Apostles than ourselves. Being men of learning, they knew the truly Christian outlook prevailing during the years immediately prior to their own age, and throughout the whole Church during their lifetime. Being men of great holiness, their integrity in setting down the truth is above suspicion. And being in close proximity to the days of the Apostles themselves, they were ever so much better fitted than ourselves to judge the nature of Christianity as first given to humanity. Above all are the early Fathers worthy of credence when their independent writings are unanimous in declaring the teachings and practices of early Christianity. Any later teachings which will not harmonize with their verdict would obviously be a corruption of the Christian religion.

The above paragraph of Dr. Rumble is surely not sustained by the facts. It is certainly not to be accepted as true that, because these Fathers lived so early in this New Dispensation, they were therefore so thoroughly acquainted with the teachings of the Apostles. They certainly wrote things which cannot be supported by the Word of God. Besides, it is surely not true that the present day doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church are completely in accord with the writings and sayings of these early Church Fathers. Notice, too, how these early Fathers, according to Rome, have equal authority with the Apostles, inasmuch as Tradition is equal with the Scriptures.

525. If the New Testament is not the supreme authority for Catholics, why do you use it alone on many occasions to prove your contentions?

When I say that the New Testament is not the supreme authority, I am referring to it, not in itself, but as a source of doctrine to various individuals. As the Word of God, it possesses supreme authority in its right sense. But as individual readers are quite liable to get the wrong sense, they must be guided by the authority of the teaching Church if they desire certainty as to what the New Testament means. The authority of the Church is not above that of Scripture; but it is above that of the individual judgment as to what Scripture means. Since the New Testament is of supreme authority in itself and in its right sense, I am justified in using it as proof. Then, too, when I am talking to people who profess to accept Scripture only, I am quite justified in showing that what they think to be in Scripture is not there; and also in showing them that many things are there to which they have never adverted. There is a difference between admitting that Scripture is the only authority; and making use of the only authority other people will accept.

The sentiments of the above paragraph of Dr. Rumble are plain. Indeed, the Scriptures possess supreme authority. But it possesses this supreme authority only in its right sense. That is, it possesses this supreme authority only if understood rightly. And the Church is the only body (in the final analysis the pope) that is able to interpret this Word of God, and it is the only body that can therefore tell the individual believer what that Word teaches and what he may believe. But this surely does not give due consideration to what we read in I John 2:27: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

526. Do you ask us to believe in a Church which will perish rather than in the Word of God which will endure forever?

No, we ask you to continue to believe in the Word of God, but completely; and therefore to believe in a Church that will not perish. For, according to the Word of God, Christ said, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." You must therefore believe in that imperishable Church; and the Catholic Church alone can be that Church. (Indeed, that Church will exist forever, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. But, this Church that will last forever is not simply the Romish Church inasmuch as it is founded upon the apostle Peter, to whom then have been given the keys of the Kingdom, but it is that body of Christ that is founded upon the wonderful confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. — H.V.)

H.V.

Thy perfect righteousness, O God,
The height of heaven exceeds;
O who is like to Thee, Who hast
Performed such mighty deeds?

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Belgic Confession

ARTICLE I (continued)

4. *God is Immutable.*

The eternal, incomprehensible, invisible God is the Unchangeable One. This immutability of God is already implied especially in the attributes of God's simplicity and eternity, but it may be singled out, on the basis of Scripture, as one of the divine perfections. Even as God is perfectly one in all His perfections, and as He is God from eternity to eternity, so He is perfectly and eternally the same, not subject to change. Abundantly the Scriptures reveal this truth. Our God is *Jehovah*. And every time the Scriptures employ this name of God they reveal that He is the Unchangeable One. Thus, when the Holy One reveals Himself to Moses in the burning bush as the faithful covenant God, we read, Exodus 3:13-15: "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Through this same Moses it is revealed that "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. 32:4. Jeremiah declares: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Lam. 3:22, 23. And again: "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation." Lam. 5:19. And through Malachi God's immutability is set forth as covenant faithfulness as follows: "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal. 3:6. In Hebrews 1:10-12 we read: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." And to mention but one more New Testament passage which plainly teaches this divine attribute, we read in James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God's immutability, then, is that divine attribute according to which He is eternally complete in His Being, His

Nature, His purpose, and His works, and therefore remains eternally the same in His infinite and constant fulness, above all becoming, all change, all increase or decrease. God is the eternal I AM! The creature, who exists in time and space, can never say, "I am." He is always swept forward on an indivisible moment of time out of the future into the past, ever changing and becoming. But God *is*. And He is all that He is in perfect Self-consciousness and in the infinite and constant fulness of His divine Being. He does not age. He does not increase in virtue and power; He does not grow weaker and decrease in virtue. In His Essence and all His virtues, in His mind and all His divine thoughts, in His will and all His divine purposes, in His infinite life and divine love, in His works and all His manifold glory, He is absolute fulness, the Self-sufficient God.

Nor must we conceive of God in any other wise. When the Scriptures upon occasion make mention of a divine repenting, this certainly must not be understood as positing a change in God. Nor must we facilely pass this off as an "anthropomorphism," a human form of speech concerning the Unchangeable One, without anything further. But we must remember that this too is the revelation of the immutable God. This eternal and immutable God reveals Himself in time. And what is thus revealed to us in a succession of moments as divine repenting is eternally and unchangeably in the mind of God, Who changes not.

The practical significance of this attribute is rich for our faith and assurance. Most often in Scripture this divine immutability is presented under the aspect of divine covenant faithfulness. And for God's covenant people in the midst of the world, amid a scene of change and decay all around, and themselves still imperfect and frequently unfaithful, what an unbounden source of assurance it is to know that our God is *Jehovah*, Who changes not—changes not in His eternal love, in His elective purpose, in His eternal covenant of grace, in His unfailing compassions, in His great faithfulness and abiding mercies. "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that God is . . . immutable!" And therefore, in the words of the Baptism Form, "If we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God."

5. *God is Infinite.*

God is the Infinite One. He is infinite in all His virtues and in His very Essence. And for that very reason frequently God's infinity is presented in terms of time (God is eternal), and in terms of space (God is omnipresent, or immense). To God's eternity we have already called attention in connection with this first article. And of God's omnipresence, according to which God, as the Immeasurable One, transcendent above all space, is yet not only with all His power, but also essentially, in all creation and in every creature with His whole infinite Being, our Confession does not make

special mention. It is therefore well in the connection in which we find this term simply to understand God's infinity in the broadest sense of the word as that attribute of God according to which He is without limits in all His divine perfections. Better it might be to avoid the rather mechanical term "infinite," and to speak instead of God's "endless perfection."

Here again, of course, we stand before the naked truth of God's incomprehensibility. Who can fathom the Unfathomable? How shall the finite ever define the infinite? That this is true is clear even from the very limited "definition" given above. It is a negative one. For how shall we say anything positive about infinity without dragging it down into the sphere of the finite, the limited? God's perfections are *end-less*. They are *without limits*. More than this we cannot say. And even then we speak in terms of "ends" and "limits."

Nevertheless, the Scriptures reveal this divine perfection in many ways and by means of various terms. First of all, we may say that the Old Testament name of God that is so often translated by our usual word for the deity, "God," carries the connotation of God's endless perfection. This is the name *Elohim*, which is a plural form, but a form which nevertheless everywhere is followed by a singular verb. And we may undoubtedly seek the explanation of Scripture's use of this name along the line that it is a plural of intensity. When God reveals Himself through the name *Elohim* as the one God, He teaches us that He is the God of all perfections and excellencies. God is one in all His virtues; but we cannot know Him except in the manifold revelation of His glorious perfections. And the name *Elohim* reveals God as the Excellent One, Whose glory we can only know in the revelation of His many wonders. He is the God of endless perfection. But, in the second place, Scripture teaches this attribute of God explicitly in many passages. Let us take note of just a few passages. We read in I Kings 8:27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" In Psalm 139 are the well-known words often cited in connection with God's omnipresence: "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. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee . . . How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." Ps. 139:7-12, 17, 18. And in Psalm 145 God's greatness is extolled by the psalmist as follows: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to

another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness." Ps. 145:3-6. In Acts 17:24 the apostle Paul preaches: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And in I Timothy 6:16 God is described as "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto."

From a practical, spiritual point of view this attribute of God requires, first of all, that I shall look away from myself and all creatures as an object of adoration and trust, and wholly thirst after God, Who is the only and inexhaustible and overflowing Fountain of all good. And, in the second place, it implies that in His presence I should humbly feel my own insignificance and humbly walk with my God, which is pleasing to Him.

6. *God is Almighty.*

We must bear in mind that also this attribute of God, sometimes classified as a communicable attribute, that is, as an attribute of which there is a reflection in a creaturely measure in man, is nevertheless a uniquely divine perfection. There is no comparison between the strength of the creature and the power of the Almighty. The difference between them is not one of degree, which after all would place the power of God within the confines of His own creation; but it is an essential difference. And therefore, bearing in mind the truth of the divine simplicity, we must bear in mind that already all we have confessed previously, as well as all that remains yet to be confessed concerning God's attributes, is to be applied to the divine omnipotence. God's might is one, simple, spiritual. It is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite. And it is perfectly wise, just, good. Also of God's omnipotence, therefore, the question must be put: "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." Isaiah 40:25.

When we turn to Holy Writ, we find no difficulty in multiplying passages which speak expressly of this divine perfection.

First of all, we may observe that the attribute of God's omnipotence is so strongly emphasized in Scripture that it is expressed in God's very names. He is named the "Mighty One of Israel," Isaiah 1:24. In blessing Joseph, Jacob says: "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above," etc. Genesis 49:24, 25. According to Genesis 17:1, "when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." And frequently we read simply of the "Almighty" in the book of Job.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Administration of the Lord's Supper

"Every church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification; provided, however, that the outward ceremonies as prescribed in God's Word be not changed and all superstition be avoided, and that at the conclusion of the sermon and the usual prayers, the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, together with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read."
— Article 62, D.K.O.

Within the jurisdiction of every consistory is the task of administering the Lord's Supper in such manner that is most edifying to the congregation. It is not left to the individual nor even to the church as a whole to decide which ceremonies are to be observed in celebrating the sacrament, but this authority resides in the ruling body of the church. Even this prerogative of the consistory, however, is not without limitation. The Church Order clearly prescribes that the consistories shall see to it: (1) that the outward ceremonies prescribed in God's Word remain unchanged, (2) that all superstition be avoided and, (3) that the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, together with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read. Consistories are bound to retain the essential elements in the administration of the sacrament but apart from these there are other things that are optional in each church. Local circumstances and the condition of each congregation must determine the policy as judged by the consistory.

Consistories then should not impose changes in this regard upon the congregation merely for the sake of change. Sometimes this is done to the detriment rather than edification of the church. All ceremonial change is not necessarily improvement and before any are to be enacted they should be carefully weighed in the light of possible effects they may have upon the congregation. We are too often influenced by what other churches do and inclined to conform our practices whether such conformity is spiritually beneficial or not. We loathe the insinuation that failure to conform to the popular idea makes us old fashioned and narrow minded. To avoid this we are ready to make alterations which at first appear to be quite innocent but eventually pave the way for other changes that are positively harmful. Consistories must move with extreme caution.

The authority of the consistory is strictly limited to those things that have to do with the ceremonial aspect of the sacrament. No consistory can change the sacrament *essentially*. In this respect there is a fundamental difference between the Reformed and Roman Catholic conception. The latter holds to the theory of transubstantiation according to which the elements of the sacrament are mysteriously but actually changed into the real body and blood of Christ. Reformed Churches maintain the sacramental view which is that the bread and wine are signs of the body and blood of

Christ, so that Christ is not appropriated *physically* by the communicant but through faith. This is an essential difference which unavoidably also reflects itself in the manner in which the sacrament is administered. Consistories of Reformed Churches must exercise constant vigilance so that nothing is introduced into the administration of the sacrament that would tend to destroy its essential idea. The ceremony must not be adorned with superficial practices that tend to superstition. The celebration of the Lord's Supper must not be designed so as to appeal to the physical eye but rather made attractive to faith. Simplicity is its adornment. Our Lord instituted it with simplicity and the closer we can remain to that original institution the more readily faith can apprehend the deeper significance of the holy supper. The Supper is designed to nourish faith by bringing to remembrance the death of Christ and arousing in the consciousness of believers the need and appreciation of its benefits. Frivolous additions appended to the celebration only becloud that end so that spiritual edification is deterred.

Which elements are essential in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and which are optional? The Church Order states "that the outward ceremonies as prescribed in God's Word be not changed." What the Church Order here fails to say is what these outward ceremonies are. Our other Confessions supply this information and from them we conclude the following to be elements that belong to the essence of the sacrament:

1. The proper elements of the sacrament are *bread* and *wine*. Though some substitute wafers and grape juice, this is improper and contrary to the ordinance of Christ. Bread is the proper symbol of nourishment. Used in a broad sense the term bread denotes that which is necessary for man's existence. Without bread we die. In the sacrament this element denotes that our spiritual life is inseparably connected with the body of Christ. Without Him we have no life in us. That which is indispensable unto eternal life is in Him alone. Wine in Scripture denotes joy, gladness and prosperity. As such it expresses a beautiful symbolism when it points to the truth that the believer's joy and prosperity springs from the fountain of Christ's blood. All the blessings of salvation which cause the heart of the believer to be filled with gladness are rooted in the blood that was shed for the remission of sins. Most appropriate is it that the wine in the Lord's Supper is designed to direct our faith to the root of our spiritual prosperity.

2. The bread must be *broken* and the wine *poured out*. As may be surmised these acts purpose to bring before the believing mind the fact that Christ's body was broken and His blood shed. This symbolism is essential for without it the true meaning of the sacrament cannot be ascertained. It is therefore improper to break all the bread before the ceremony. If the individual cup is used and for practical reasons these are filled before the service, one large cup should be retained into which the minister can pour the wine and so preserve the symbolism.

3. The sacrament must be observed in the public gathering of the church. It is not to be celebrated at any time and in any place. This may be in accord with Roman Catholic practice but it is not in harmony with Reformed principles. The sacrament belongs to the institute of the church and can only be celebrated in an officially instituted gathering of the congregation. This is literally stated in Article 64 of the Church Order and we believe it is also the intent of the statement found in Article 35 of our Confession which reads: "We receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God . . ." It is indeed difficult to explain the practice of many today who claim to adhere to the Reformed traditions and follow the practice of the Romish Church in this regard administering the sacrament in hospitals, convalescent homes and perhaps even in private homes.

There are several other matters connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper which are not of an essential nature. One of the first practical considerations confronting the churches of the Reformation was the question whether communicants should stand, sit, kneel or walk when they received the bread and wine. In the Roman Catholic Church the communicants knelt and venerated the elements. It was not because there is sin in kneeling but because this could easily lead to an idolatrous practice that it was ruled out in the Reformed Churches.

It seems also that the early practice in Reformed Churches of having the communicants walk past the minister to receive the bread and wine was soon discarded. At least by 1571 the synod spoke only of standing or sitting while partaking of communion. Three years later the synod judged that standing was the most appropriate posture at the Lord's Table but the very following year this decision was reversed and it was decided that it made no difference whether communicants sat or stood. Today the custom of sitting has become the accepted one.

In connection with this there are still minor differences in the customs of different churches. In some churches the elements are passed through the entire auditorium. In others a certain part of the church sanctuary is set apart for those who take communion. In others, especially in small churches where the number of communicants is few, chairs are arranged around the communion table and at the time the sacrament is to be celebrated, the communicants rise and take their place around the table. Which of these methods is to be preferred must be decided largely by local circumstances. The consistory must select that method that best serves the needs of the particular church.

Another question which arose in connection with the administration of the sacrament is whether the communicants should partake of the elements as soon as they are received or whether they should wait until everyone has received them and then all partake together. The latter method is somewhat difficult in a large church unless the Holland practice of administering "tafels" is introduced. This means that a

certain part of the congregation comes forward and takes their place at or near the communion table and thus celebrates the Lord's Supper as a group. Depending on the size of the congregation, there may be several of these administrations and the services become rather long and drawn-out.

Although Monsma and Van Dellen in *The Church Order Commentary* favor the abolition of this practice, they do point out certain good features in it which they like to see retained. They write on page 260 as follows:

"But there was something in this old way which had real merit. Separate, small group administrations required the believers to arise and to go forward to take their place at the Lord's Table as a distinct act, before the whole congregation. There was a confession in that act. . . . The old way, moreover, introduced an element of self-expression into the service which is worthy of appreciation and which was favorable in its reaction on the communicants. Consequently we think that those churches which have maintained the two or three distinct administrations for each celebration have done wisely."

Hard and fast rules governing these things cannot be made. Neither is this necessary because these matters of administration do not have a bearing upon the real significance of the sacrament. There are more of these things which, D.V., we will have occasion to write about later. For example there is the question of the common or individual cups, the matter of the communion offering, the question as to whether there should be silence, music or the reading of Scripture during the Communion. We have consistories in our churches who must decide these things and in each instance they must arrange the entire service so that it is "most conducive to edification."

G.V.d.B.

Notice of Annual Board Meeting

The Annual membership meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held Thursday evening, Sept. 28, at 8:00 o'clock in the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. The speaker will be Rev. C. Hanko. The board of the R.F.P.A. invites all our Protestant Reformed men to join with us in this work of witnessing for the truth and urges all members to attend this important meeting.

ACTS OF 1961 SYNOD

The Acts of the 1961 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches are now available. You can purchase yours for \$1.00 from the minister or clerk of your church or send \$1.00 to undersigned.

Get your copy today and keep informed on the important issues decided by the Synod.

Stated Clerk of Synod, G. VandenBerg
9402 South 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois

ALL AROUND US

BLUE LAWS

There are forty-nine states in the union — all but Alaska — who have on their statute books what have been called “Blue laws.” These laws prohibit certain public activities on Sunday on the part of the citizenry. Recently these laws came before the United States Supreme Court being challenged as to their constitutionality. There were those who maintained that the laws violated the First Amendment to the Constitution — the amendment which forbids laws respecting the establishment of any one particular religion by the state. The “blue laws” of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts were being challenged.

In Maryland the particular question was whether a discount store could sell such items as a can of floor wax or a toy submarine on Sunday. By a vote of 8 to 1 the highest court in the land ruled that they could not.

In Pennsylvania, the same question arose when an open discount house attracted a “great volume of traffic” on Sundays. The court ruled 8 to 1 that the discount house could be prosecuted for violating that State’s “blue laws.”

In Massachusetts and also in another case from Pennsylvania, the question was a little different. Jewish merchants in the state, orthodox in their beliefs that Saturday is the proper Sabbath, closed their stores on Saturday and opened them on Sunday. The Court ruled that the State of Massachusetts could keep a Jewish Super Market from selling on Sunday even though the store did a third of its business on this day. In Pennsylvania the Court gave the state the right to prevent Jewish merchants from selling clothing and home furnishings. These laws were upheld by a 6 to 3 vote.

Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the majority opinion in both cases. He insisted that the “blue laws” did not violate the First Amendment; and, in noting that the “blue laws” often were religious in origin, he pointed out that their purpose had changed over the years. They are now used, he said, “To set one day apart from all others as a day of rest, repose, recreation and tranquility. People of all religions and people with no religion regard Sunday as a time for family activity, for visiting friends and relatives, for late sleeping.”

Apart from the fact that Chief Justice Warren’s reasons for upholding the “blue laws” are poor, these laws bring up an interesting question. Obviously they were originally made because there were men who felt that it was part of the government’s business to enforce the observance of the Sabbath. This in turn was based upon the premise that, at least in limited instances, the governments have the right to enforce the first table of the law of God. Following this same pattern, there are several states in the union that have laws against profaning God’s name as well.

This question of the government’s right to enforce the

first table of the law has always been a sticky question which has usually aroused considerable controversy. We are in agreement with the general principle that the government has not only the right but also the calling and obligation to enforce the first table of the Decalogue. However, two things should be borne in mind: 1) this further implies that the government has, in the words of the Belgic Confession, the calling “to promote the true religion.” Yet this principle runs precisely contrary to the First Amendment. There is therefore, obviously, an inconsistency in the laws of the government regarding this point. 2) Although the government has the calling to enforce the first table of the law, this must necessarily be limited to the proper sphere in which the government functions. That is, the powers that be have no right to enter and enforce such legislation in the home or church. They have the right to enforce their laws only in the sphere of the state and of the public domain. They may prohibit a man from violating the Sabbath on the public streets, but they cannot punish him for staying in bed all day. They may prosecute for profanity in the middle of downtown; but they cannot enforce laws against profanity in the home.

But even then, we will have to admit quite frankly that this whole matter of the relation between church and state is very difficult and a question worthy of considerably more thought and study than has been given to it in the recent past.

A DICTATOR CHURCH?

The National Council of Churches has, since the days when it succeeded the Federal Council of Churches, been the object of considerable criticism. The main criticism has usually been that the NCC was reaching into areas it had no right to enter, was assuming to itself powers which were practically dictatorial, was trying to become the sole mouthpiece of all Protestantism. Usually these charges were pooh-poohed by the staunch supporters of this organization.

Recently, however, it is becoming more and more apparent that these charges certainly had a basis in fact, and that the NCC constitutes a real threat to the church.

The goals of the NCC were outlined in a speech at a recent meeting of churches by Dr. Douglas. These goals, as reported in the *Torch and Trumpet* were 1) the development of a journal which would speak responsibly for the ecumenical church; 2) an effective scheme for organizing congregations on an ecumenical basis; and, 3) more effective use of radio and television on behalf of the ecumenical movement. It was especially this last goal which reveals the intention of the NCC. Dr. Truman roundly condemned certain radio broadcastings for not communicating the Christian gospel but peddling instead denominational wares. He added, “The National Council of Churches ought to be encouraged to take a much firmer stand than it does against the misuses of time for denominational propaganda.” For a long time already the NCC has tried to persuade, sometimes with con-

siderable success, radio and television stations to keep independent religious groups from broadcasting unless their programs were approved by the NCC itself. This means that only the corrupted NCC version of the gospel is to be allowed the right of broadcasting, while our own Reformed Witness Hour will be roundly condemned.

Rev. P. Y. De Jong writes concerning all this:

From all this it ought to be clear to everyone in which direction the Council is moving. Plainly it is the outspoken foe of all denominational distinctiveness. It will exert every possible influence to become the spokesman for all Protestants in the United States. Nor does it seem to bother these gentlemen, who prate long and loudly about our freedoms, that many of their efforts involve a curtailment of our freedoms. Liberalism seems to be tolerant of anyone and anything except historic Protestantism as embodied in the official creeds of the churches. No wonder some of us shake our heads, when occasionally voices are raised urging a more active and positive alignment on our part with this movement. Such suggestions sound strangely like asking us to sell our Reformed heritage for a mess of ecumenical pottage.

To this we might add that as the trend toward ecumenism gathers momentum and more and more churches are swallowed up in the yawning mouth of one super denomination, it will become increasingly difficult for the true church of Christ to maintain its position in the world and sound forth the clear call of its witness. There is no room in this organization, nor in others like it, for the church of Jesus Christ.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC'S DESCRIPTION OF THE REFORMATION

In a recent issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, a certain Rev. Thaddeus MacVicar begins a series of articles about the historic Council of Trent which was called by the Romish Church in the sixteenth century to try to stem the tide of the Reformation. In this introductory article, the author describes the need for the council by describing what in his opinion was the true character of the Reformation and the Reformers. Worse slander of God's servants whom God raised up to deliver the church from the shackles of Rome is difficult to imagine. He writes in part:

Since the fateful year, 1517, when Martin Luther blazed the trail of revolt against the Holy See, millions had abandoned the Church, or had been snatched from her fold by fraud or violence . . .

This central fact, however, should be noted well: the vast majority of those who repudiated the Catholic Faith, scarcely understood it any longer, and already lived in opposition to its moral teachings.

History bears out the truth that the first Protestants were ignorant, or lax, or bad Catholics. Those who shouted loudest against abuses in the Church were themselves guilty of the abuses. Moreover, their new religion merely perpetuated the human spirit behind the old abuses; the spirit of naturalism, self-gratification and pride. The rank and file of the first Protestants raised a great uproar over decadent Catholicism; but what they really feared was the return of strict Catholicism.

Luther offered them a convenient way to salvation, in fact, complete assurance of salvation: by faith alone. There was no longer need of working out one's salvation "in fear and trembling." Sin had become as unimportant as good works. Religion was so much easier without confession, the Sunday Mass obligation, periods of fast and abstinence, tithes to the Church and alms to the poor.

Luther's notion that good works are useless for salvation emptied monasteries and convents of the spiritualess, lax, and even corrupt, religious, who were so numerous at the time. They now gave up all pretense at keeping their vows, following a severe rule, dedicat-

ing themselves to works of mercy, on the plea that such things are not pleasing to God.

Thus it became easier, wherever Protestantism took over, for secular princes to seize the monasteries and other estates of the Church. Monks and nuns who remained faithful to their vows had to emigrate to Catholic countries. Those who preferred to marry might live on pensions paid by the new owners of their erstwhile religious houses. The priceless opportunity offered kings, nobles, and communes to confiscate the wealth of the Church was a major factor in the rapid, violent success of the Reformation . . .

In Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli, a worldly soldier-priest, blazoned the new ideas among his people. He set the comfortable tone of his "reform" by announcing that the Church's laws on fast and abstinence need not be observed, and that priests and nuns should be urged, even forced, to marry.

Zwingli seems to have been another of the Reformers whose religion sprang from strictly personal problems. His life was already spotted with allegations against his chastity, which charges he never troubled to deny. In 1522, he and ten colleagues had petitioned their bishop for permission for priests to marry. "Your Honorable Wisdom," they reminded the bishop, "has witnessed the shameful life we have hitherto, unfortunately, lived with women, giving grievous scandal to everyone."

Zwingli's cause, like Luther's, pitched his countrymen against one another in bloody civil war. Zwingli himself fell on the field of battle in 1531.

Elsewhere in Switzerland, at Geneva, the French layman, John Calvin, set up his *Bibliocracy*. Geneva became a city governed by the Bible; but the Bible as only John Calvin interpreted it. In religious matters he assumed a degree of infallibility beyond anything Catholics ever dreamed of claiming for the pope.

Unlike the easy-going Protestantism of Luther and Zwingli, the Reformation in Geneva was a regime of fear and repression. As its supreme spiritual and political master, Calvin ruled his city with a rod of iron for 27 years (1437-1464). Those who contradicted his teaching he put to death or exiled. What he considered heresy, blasphemy, idolatry as well as adultery, were capital offenses. Geneva, with a population of 13,000 during Calvin's reign, witnessed 58 executions and 76 sentences of exile.

Spies circulated constantly among the people. Servants had to report on their masters, and children on their parents. The theatre, games of chance, choral singing, luxury in dress, drinking in taverns, convivial parties at home, were all forbidden under stern penalties.

The soul of Calvin's teaching was his terrible doctrine of predestination, which, in final analysis, meant that God created a small number of human beings (chiefly Calvinists) for salvation; He creates all the rest solely to damn them to hell.

Calvin's Protestantism spread the farthest of any type, due largely to his carefully worked-out theology, his genius for organization, and his university. The university, called the *Academy*, sent forth trained ministers who established bibliocracies wherever Calvinism could get the political upper-hand, as in parts of France, in England, Scotland, and America (New England).

Such a mixture of half truth and down-right historical inaccuracy is seldom seen on the pages of the religious press. No one claims, of course, that all the people who left the Romish Church at the time of the Reformation left for purest reasons; nor is it true that there were no wicked people who joined the Protestant Churches. But the article is nevertheless strangely silent about those hundreds of thousands of courageous saints who, living Godly lives, were willing to lay down their lives for the sake of their faith. There is no mention of the cruel armies of Rome that bathed the streets of the Netherlands and France with the blood of the sons of the Reformation. This is blood which the harlot of Rome will never be able to wash from her hands.

For the rest, many of the remarks are so inaccurate that they can be proved wrong from reliable historical sources both Protestant and Catholic.

H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

August 20, 1961

The pre-convention Hymn-Sing was held in Hudsonville Church, Sunday evening, August 13. Chas. Westra, of Southeast church conducted the "sing," with Jim Jonker, of First church, at the organ and Mrs. B. Lubbers, of Hudsonville, at the piano. Special numbers were: a medley of hymns arranged for the piano, by Mrs. B. Lubbers, and a tenor solo, by Gerald Kuiper, of Hope church, accompanied by Miss Bonnie Bylsma, of First church. Lammert Lubbers, of the *Beacon Lights* staff, gave a good description of the plans for travelling to and from Loveland so the delegates and the parents might learn those plans first hand. The hymn-sing was scheduled for 9:15 so that the Grand Rapids people might attend — with excellent results.

The published annual financial report of Adams St. School again revealed "the good hand of our God upon us" even as upon Nehemiah of old. After a year of anxious board meetings, and extraordinary expenses (\$1200.00 for termite treatment alone) and a twice conducted deficit drive, the treasurer balanced out only six dollars short of last year. *"Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised."* Psalm 48:1a.

The July 30 services at Edgerton were re-arranged so that Rev. Lubbers might arrive to conduct an evening service there. Elder Gunnink conducted a reading service in the morning. The change necessitated the cancellation of the evening young people's meeting. Rev. Lubbers also preached in Doon the first two Sunday afternoons in August, with Rev. Van Baren preaching for the Missionary in Tripp in the morning and his own pulpit evenings, thereby obviating reading services entirely.

Corresponding with the above paragraph, all the bulletins reveal that this past summer did not provide real vacations for our clergy — only vacations from making new sermons, not from preaching them. It seems they all traded pulpits with one another so that reading services were kept at a minimum, proving that our ministers are worthy nominees to the household of Stephanas, I Cor. 16:15.

Edgerton School Society scheduled their annual "cleaning bee" on August 17. Because the many hands that made the work light were also loving hands, the task was also pleasant.

Rev. and Mrs. H. Hoeksema left Grand Rapids August 17 to travel to Loveland by train — the Reverend to give the key-note speech at the Young People's Convention — then on to Redlands, Calif., combining business with pleasure; the business part being a Synodical Committee assignment.

The Prot. Ref. Action Society has published two more pamphlets: the one by Rev. B. Woudenberg, entitled, "My

Counsel Shall Stand," a message treating the Word of God as it is recorded in Isaiah 46:9, 10; the other pamphlet was written by Rev. J. Kortering, explaining 2nd Peter 1:10 under the theme, "Making Our Election Sure." Should any of our readers be interested in receiving the pamphlets published by this society they may be had upon request. The address: The Reformed Witness, Box 18, Doon, Iowa.

A notice in First's bulletin urges the people to notify friends and relatives in Europe to tune in the Reformed Witness Hour at 9:30 British time every Sunday morning. It is being received in the Netherlands on the 31 meter band, 9705 kcs. The program is also broadcast on the 41 and 49 meter bands simultaneously. This missionary venture is an excellent means for our small denomination to preach the truth to hundreds of thousands of potential listeners — a deserving object of our prayers, don't you agree?

Grand Haven's annual picnic was scheduled to be held August 17 at Tunnel Park on Lake Michigan. This picnic was under the auspices of the Sunday School Society.

The Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour informs us that Rev. A. Mulder, Pastor of the Prot. Ref. Church in Kalamazoo, Mich., will, D.V., be the guest speaker during the month of September. The titles of Rev. Mulder's four radio messages are four questions found in the Holy Scriptures regarding the salvation of God's people. They are: "Who then can be saved?", "What must I do to be saved?", "Are there few that be saved?", and, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" For printed copies of the radio sermons write to: The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

Evaluating the many church bulletins mailed to us we note that most of them are written by the minister of each congregation, and, we unwaveringly nominate Hudsonville's as the best in the friendly-letter-from-the-pastor division.

Oak Lawn's and South Holland's consistories have drawn up a plan by which the catechism classes of the two churches may be conducted in their own Christian School during the coming year.

A filler in Hull's bulletin was used by Rev. Kortering to bulwark his sermon on Lord's Day 25, and was a quotation from a work of H. Veldkamp entitled, "Zondags kinderen," and the whole quotation was in the Holland language!

A reminder: An eager interest in the affairs of the Church of Christ should prompt each family to obtain a copy of the 1961 Acts of Synod. Contact your Clerk or Pastor.

Thought for the harvest season: As we behold the harvest of the fields we may know it is a picture of the heavenly as we are also reminded in I Cor. 3:6, "So then is neither he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." May the appreciation of that truth cause us to join Asaph in Psalm 75, "Unto thee O God do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.