

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."
PHILIPPIANS 2:12b, 13

I think that the connection of my text must be found in the first five verses of this chapter. There Paul had admonished the church at Philippi to live the Christian life. And the very root of that Christian life is expressed in verse five: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," etc.

And what follows is a beautiful commentary on the life and death of Christ, which can be summed up in these words: He humbled Himself in the cursed death of the cross. As we have often remarked: the fundamental law in the Kingdom of God is humility. As Jesus Himself expressed it one blessed day: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. 11:29.

These last words of Jesus spell out the Christian life.

It is the working out of your salvation on this sorry earth.

* * * *

Now let us first see what it cannot mean.

It certainly does not mean that salvation is in any way the work of man.

He is hopelessly inadequate to do so. He will not do it; he cannot do it; he dare not do it; and, he may not do it. He must be and remain in the prison of death because of his sin. He is sold under sin.

Natural man is in the pit of sin and death, and he may not come out of it. Of course, it is not so that man could wish to come; could yearn to come out, but because of God's

sentence of sin and death cannot free himself of this yoke of sin and death which have the right to rule over him. Why not? Because he is a willing slave. He agrees with God's sentence over him. He loves his prison, and if you at any time would endeavour to free him from his prison, he would fight you to remain the captive of sin, the devil and of death. Man does not want to be saved.

Neither is it so that man is a factor in his salvation. That has also been taught numerous times, and many deluded millions have believed it. But it is not true. Salvation is not a matter of synergism, which means that God and man work together to establish and work out their salvation. Salvation is no admixture of the work of God and the work of man. And for the same reasons as enumerated above.

No, but salvation is entirely, exclusively the work of Almighty God! Hallelujah!

* * * *

Then what does it mean when Paul tells the church of all the ages that they must be obedient to him and the Gospel he preaches by working out their own salvation?

It means, beloved reader, that the salvation of God comes to manifestation *through* man.

Man is no machine. Man is a volitional, thinking being. Man possesses heart and mind and will. And it is God's will that all salvation shall proceed through man to its very completion.

And somehow, man becomes active in his own salvation.

It is God's purpose to have a heaven full of willing, singing and glorifying saints in that abode of the blest.

Salvation means love of God and the neighbor, worship and exultation, prayer and humility, praises of God and an eternal walk in the light.

Salvation in practice is a man or a woman or a child, standing on the earth, throwing up his hands, and singing from the heart: Oh, my God!

Our fathers have said many centuries ago: if a man utters just one longing, yearning sigh towards the Godhead, such

a soul is saved! And that is beautifully true. Witness the murderer on the cross. He turns his pain-laden body to Christ, and stammers: Remember me! Oh, remember me! And it was enough. He worked out his own salvation in fear and trembling.

And so it is with us, with all of us.

* * * *

And how do we come to this longing, yearning for God which is very salvation itself?

There was a time in the history of the church that the answer to that question was well known and confessed by the throngs that walked to heaven. Listen to this: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us *without our aid*. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the Gospel, by moral suasion, or such mode of operation. that after God has performed His part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful and at the same time most *delightful, astonishing, mysterious and ineffable*; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, etc."

And a little further: "Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, *becomes itself active*." And, no doubt, our fathers had before their mind the text we have set above this little meditation.

However, do not think now that this becoming active of the regenerated sinner is the *sinner's part of the work of salvation*. Because we read further on in the same head of doctrine of our Reformed fathers: "God . . . produces both the will to believe, and *the act of believing also*."

If you desire to check these references, you will find them in third and fourth heads of doctrine of the Canons of Dordt, articles 12 and 14.

Oh yes, salvation is of the Lord.

It is His work in us, and His work through us.

Both by the work of the Holy Ghost of Christ, and the Word of Christ, God works this salvation in us, and through us.

But, again, because we are both volitional and thinking creatures, we become active, being activated by the Godhead.

God changes our hearts, kills the old man principally, renews us so that the Lord Jesus Christ comes to dwell in our heart, infuses new qualities in our will, and gently leads us along the quiet waters.

The Holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ comes to dwell in our heart, and from without comes the Word of God, which makes the heart pregnant with praise, adoration, and

worship, or/and prayer, supplication and beseeching.

But one thing is sure: if and when God so works upon you and within you, you become a very humble man, woman or child.

* * * *

Therefore, to work out your salvation is to praise and glorify God while you have your sojourn in this wicked world.

Through the almighty power of the Spirit and the Word of Christ you put off the old man of sin, pride, haughtiness, filth, malice and all manner of iniquity. You say a loud NO! to all those things, first in your heart, then in your mouth, and then in your deeds and works.

You kill your old man of sin every day of your life, by saying NO! to him, and his works.

And through the same almighty power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of Christ you put on the new man.

You do that by saying a loud YES! to all that is beautiful, good, upright and true. You become a true man, an upright man, woman or child. You hate all sin, and you love all goodness. That's working out your salvation all the day long. By His Spirit and Word God placed salvation in your deepest heart; and by the same almighty Spirit and Word of Christ God activates you so that it proceeds from you, so that men see your good works all the day long. It becomes manifest that God has put a difference between Israel and Egypt.

That is called the life of sanctification. And without it, no man will see the Lord!

* * * *

And now, finally one more thing.

How shall we do that? What shall be the manner of this working out of our salvation?

With our nose in the air? Looking down on those poor, deluded, filthy reprobates who throng around and in the midst of the church?

Shall we behave as the Pharisees did? Shall we walk stately with our long robes, and fear to be touched by the multitude that knows not the law, and is cursed?

No, a thousand times no.

We shall do so *in fear and trembling*.

What is the meaning of fear?

It is not the slavish fear of the slave who cowers under the whip lashes of his master, for that fear is principally hatred.

It is the Godly fear of God. It is the awe we feel for Him, who has drawn so nigh to us, that He is working salvation in us.

Do it in fear and trembling, *FOR IT IS GOD!* He is very near unto you. What would you say if President Ike Eisenhower would suddenly appear at your elbow and say to you: How are you? You would be startled, of course.

Well, God is always at your elbow, and what is Eisenhower compared to the Holy One of Israel? Nothing and a vanity.

And therefore the Holy Ghost tells us to walk in fear and trembling all the days of our sojourn here on earth.

The wicked world is watching you. They know when you stumble and fall.

And when you do fall and stumble, the name of the Lord is slandered.

But and if you walk the Christian life in the beauty of holiness, in meekness and humility, in sweetness and graciousness, God's Name is praised and hallowed.

Work out your own salvation, and do it in fear and trembling!
G.V.

Notice

Available for pulpit supply:

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Attention

Office Bearers' Conference to be held
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, at 8 P. M.
at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.
All present and former office bearers welcome.
Speaker: REV. GEORGE LANTING
Topic: "*Praying for those in Authority*"
Secretary T. Engelsma

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On October 15, 1959, our dear parents,
MR. and MRS. PETER DE VRIES
hope to commemorate their 45th wedding anniversary.
We are thankful to God that He has blessed and kept them these many years. Our prayer is that they may continue to experience His loving kindness in their remaining years.
Mr. and Mrs. John F. De Vries
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra
8 grandchildren
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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EDITORIALS

An Exhortation to Theological Professors

On Sept. 4, 1959 the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema was installed as professor in our Theological School. At that occasion the Rev. G. Vos read the Form of Installation while the undersigned preached the sermon.

I was asked to publish this sermon in our *Standard Bearer*. And although the sermon, as far as I know, was not recorded, and I do not have a complete typewritten copy of it, yet, because I have a rather broad outline of it, and because the sermon as I preached it is still rather fresh in my memory, I think that I can reproduce it rather faithfully.

The text on which I spoke on that occasion is found in II Tim. 2:1, 2: "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

In these words, beloved, I find a strong temptation, especially on this occasion, to interpret and apply them literally. In that case, I would read the words as follows: "Thou, therefore, my son Homer, be strong in the Lord and in the grace of Jesus Christ. And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Thus the text would fit perfectly for the present occasion. For he that is about to be installed is, indeed, my son according to the flesh. Moreover, I also instructed him in the things whereof Paul speaks, so that also in this respect the text would fit perfectly: "the things which thou hast heard of me, thy father," etc.

Yet this would be a principal and fundamental mistake.

For, in the first place, Paul, in these words, is addressing Timothy. He is, indeed, speaking to him as his son but not in the natural or physical, but only in the spiritual sense of the word. Paul loves Timothy with a spiritual love in the Lord as a son which he has begotten spiritually. The text, therefore, does not and cannot refer to the father-and-son relationship between me and the one that is about to be installed as professor in our Seminary.

But there is more.

When Paul speaks of "the things which thou hast heard of me" he refers to himself as an apostle. And the apostles were infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. But I am not and I was not when, in the past, I taught my son in the seminary. Hence, also these words cannot directly refer to me and my son, but they must be applied to Paul and his spiritual son Timothy.

But do, then, these words not have any reference to this occasion? They certainly have. For Timothy is instructed, not only to receive the things he heard from Paul, but he must also commit them to faithful men and these faithful men must instruct others, and these others must be able to teach

still others, and this continues to the present time. Always, therefore, it is Paul that is first, together with all the authors of Holy Writ. All that follow are dependent upon them. Always, therefore we must go back in all our teaching to them. And only in as far as your candidate is a spiritual son of Paul, and only in as far as it can be said that I instructed him in the things which Paul and all the authors of Holy Writ spoke does my text apply to the present occasion.

Bearing this in mind, I speak a few moments on:

An Exhortation to Professors in Theology:

- I. What they must teach.
- II. To Whom they must teach.
- III. In what power they must teach.

I. You may ask me, perhaps, why I speak in my theme of theological professors. Does the text speak of them? My answer is affirmative. For after all a theological professor is nothing but a teacher in theology, and of such teachers the text speaks throughout. Timothy is taught by Paul, and he, in turn, must teach faithful men, and, again, these must teach others. The text certainly, therefore, speaks of teachers or professors. And that it does not refer to teachers in general but to professors in theology, is also plain from the text. For they all must teach the things they have heard of Paul. Those things refer, of course, to all that is revealed in the Holy Scriptures: the law and the prophets, all the revelation of the New Testament, in as far as it had already been completed at that time and still would be finished, with Christ as the heart and center of it all. These things Timothy had heard from Paul and must commit to others. There can, therefore, be no doubt about the fact that the text speaks of professors of theology.

But, once more, what are those things Timothy had heard of Paul? Or, if you please, what specifically is contained in the books of Holy Writ, that was taught by Paul to Timothy, which he must commit to others, and which must also be taught at our seminary and by the brother that is about to be installed as professor? I can answer very briefly: The Gospel! The gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel must be taught at our school. This gospel I would define as the sovereign revelation of the sovereign will of God to save His people and none other, from sin and death unto everlasting life and glory in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not, therefore, a superficial gospel which you may write on your thumbnail. It is not simply a general invitation to "come to Jesus" as is often preached from the pulpit and over the radio, an invitation with which no sinner can or will comply except through the sovereign grace of God. Nor is it, as the Christian Reformed Church teaches, a general offer of salvation to all that hear the gospel, for an offer is dependent for its acceptance on the one to whom the offer is made. All that teach and preach thus certainly do not preach the gospel but corrupt it. But, as I said in my definition, it is the sovereign revelation of the sovereign will of God to save His people, and none other, from sin and death unto everlasting life and glory in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This includes many truths.

It includes sovereign election and reprobation. Election is, as Reformed people have always rightly and on the basis of Scripture maintained, the heart of the gospel. Without the preaching of election there is no proclamation of the gospel. Just as when a man's heart stops beating he is dead, so the gospel is dead without the preaching of election. O, to be sure, this does not mean that we must always preach election and nothing else as some seem to characterize our preaching. It does not even imply that in every sermon we must always literally mention the doctrine of election. But it certainly means that the hearers must always be able to feel the heart-beat of election in every sermon we preach. And the same is true of the teaching in our seminary. The professors must never camouflage or soft-pedal the doctrine of election but, in all their instruction must clearly manifest that this doctrine is the heart of the gospel. For they must teach Christ and He is the first and chief elect and all that the Father gave Him are elect in Him.

All the rest of the gospel follows, on the basis of Scripture, from this most fundamental truth. The sending of Christ into the world, in the likeness of sinful flesh, was a sovereign act of God, according to which the Son of God assumed the human nature in unity of divine Person. It was an equally sovereign act of God in Christ that He took all the sins of His own, whom the Father had given Him, to the accursed tree to atone for them and blot them out forever. By the same sovereign God He was raised from the dead, exalted in the highest glory and is now seated, as the only sovereign in heaven and on earth, at the right hand of the majesty on high. Such is the gospel. And it ought to be very evident that no man had any part in this objective realization of the gospel and promise of God. God sovereignly realized it all alone.

Do not say that, although this is all true, nevertheless, the subjective application of the gospel depends, in part at least, on us. We must accept the gospel and we must walk in the way of the promise of God: otherwise we will surely be lost. I do not deny this. But do not forget that even in regard to this subjective application of the gospel the sovereign grace of God in Christ is first. Christ received the Spirit and that Spirit He sent into His church to abide with her forever. By and through that Spirit He applies all the blessings of salvation to His own without fail. He regenerates them and gives the new life of the kingdom of heaven. He calls them, through the gospel by His own powerful Word which is always efficacious, and when He calls we obey and receive and accept the gospel. He adopts us, justifies and sanctifies us, and finally, after having preserved us unto the end, takes us into eternal glory. God in Christ is always first and only when He sovereignly imparts His grace to us and in us, do we accept and fight the good fight even unto the end.

Such is the gospel. Another gospel there is not. These are the things which Timothy learned from Paul and which he must commit to faithful men. And these same things must

be taught in our school.

But, you say, is this really true? Granted that also "these things" are taught in our seminary, are there not many other things also taught at the same time? My answer is that, nevertheless, all things taught in our school are and must be related to the one gospel. Many subjects are taught that are directly connected with the gospel, while others are more remotely related to it. To the former, for instance, belongs the subject of exegesis, which is the interpretation of Scripture and which, for that reason, is very important. Related to this is the subject of hermeneutics which teaches the theory and rules of the explanation of Holy Writ. Then, there is, of course, the important subject of dogmatics which presents the doctrine of the gospel in systematic form. Thus there are many other subjects such as Old and New Testament history, typology and others which are all rather closely related to the gospel. And then there are also other subjects that must be taught and that are less directly related to the gospel, such as church polity which deals with the offices and government of the church, and church history as well as other subjects. Nevertheless, whether the subjects taught in our seminary are more or less closely related to the central subject of the gospel, they all belong to it and to the things which Timothy heard of the apostle Paul.

A word must be said about the phrase which the apostle adds here: "among many witnesses." The things spoken by Paul and heard by Timothy were spoken and heard among many witnesses. Who are these witnesses? Some have it that the apostle refers to the law and the prophets. But this interpretation is not very likely correct. In the first place, because the apostle, evidently, refers to witnesses that were present when he spoke. And, secondly, the law and the prophets belong to the very things which the apostle spoke and which Timothy heard. We prefer, therefore, to think of the church and its officebearers. And when Paul preached or taught those that had heard him had the testimony by the Spirit in their hearts that he spoke the truth of God in Christ. The same is true today. The gospel is never alone. Always it has witnesses. Even in our school this is the case. Not only the students, but also the theological school committee ought to be present, and even others, the more the better, to give testimony to the truth of what is taught.

II. Now the apostle exhorts Timothy that he must commit the things which he has heard unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

It is evident that the apostle does not merely mean, in these words, that he must preach the gospel to others, although in itself this is true also. But, as we remarked in the beginning, the apostle, in these words, exhorts Timothy to teach and that not in general to the whole congregation, although this must be done, too, but in a very special sense of the word. He must be a professor of theology and he must have a special class of students. That this is true is evident from the addition "faithful men" as well as from the further clause: "who shall be able to teach others also." In the midst

of the church, therefore, Timothy must find a special group of men whom he must choose as his students and whose special professor he must become.

But why, we ask, does the apostle emphasize that the men whom Timothy must thus choose out of the church must be faithful men? It does not refer to them merely as believers, although it is certainly true that they are believers also. But "faithful men" are those that are faithful to the things which Timothy has heard from Paul, faithful to the truth and to the church under all circumstances of life. Negatively speaking, they are men that will never depart from the pure truth of the gospel, no matter what happens. They are men that never will corrupt the church for their own carnal and selfish reasons and by their lies or compromise. And, positively speaking, they are men that always speak the truth and seek the good of the church, though because of it they are reproached and reviled, though they must suffer the loss of all things, yea, though because of it they must go into prison and into death. Such faithful men Timothy must choose in order that he may commit to them the things he had heard from the apostle Paul.

But once more we ask: why this emphasis on "faithful men"? The answer is not difficult. In the first place, it is not according to the flesh to preach and teach the gospel purely, without compromise and in all its implications. But, in the second place, and for that very reason, there are in the history of the church many examples of faithless men who, for various reasons distorted the true doctrine of the gospel. Sometimes, no doubt, their error and their corruption of the truth were induced by misunderstanding, although this cannot be an excuse for the Scriptures are very clear on the subject. The things which Timothy heard of Paul left no room for doubt or misunderstanding. More often, however, there were carnal reasons for the distortion of the truth by these unfaithful men. When the carnal crowd at Capernaum had heard the discourse of Jesus on the bread of life, they finally said: "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" John 6:60. Thus there were and there still are many in the church today that took the same attitude and still take the same attitude toward the truth of the gospel. The heart of the gospel, the truth of election and reprobation, is too hard for them and, therefore, they corrupt the whole gospel in various ways. And having distorted the heart of the gospel, they necessarily must corrupt the rest: the total depravity of the sinner, particular atonement and similar truths. There are other carnal reasons, such as the honor of men, worldly gain, and even personal hatred and dislike, that motivate unfaithful men to distort the truth. If it had not been for such carnal reasons, do you imagine that the Christian Reformed Church would ever have adopted the "Three Points" and cast us out because we could not possibly sign them. Before God and the Church I declare that this would never have been done except for carnal reasons! And I am convinced that the same holds true for the recent history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. O yes, there are many carnal

reasons why unfaithful men corrupt the truth of the gospel!

It is largely because of such unfaithful men and their distortion of the truth that the need of officially adopted confessions always arose in the church, in order that the things spoken by Paul, the whole truth of the gospel, may be preserved and defended over against gainsayers.

That by these "faithful men" the apostle does not refer to all and every member in the church but rather to a special class, is further evident, as we have already remarked, from what follows in the text: "Who shall be able to teach others also." To teach others is not everybody's work. It requires not only a full knowledge and clear understanding of the truth, but also special ability or tact to teach. Now, this will be your task, my son, who art called to be professor in our seminary and who wilt presently be installed in that office. When our churches, through their Synod, called you for this task, they thereby expressed that they considered you a faithful man who will never distort the truth of the gospel and who is able to teach others also. And when you accepted this appointment, you, on your part, declared that you believed that God called you to this special task and that He will make you faithful and enable you to accomplish the important work to which you are called. Do not disappoint the churches in the trust they have placed in you!

Thus the line continues. It cannot end and is not intended to end, by the apostle Paul, in those first faithful men that must teach others, nor in the others that are taught. But the others that are taught must teach still others and yet others until the present time and even unto the end of the present age. The teaching of the things which Timothy heard from Paul among many witnesses continues in the line of generations. And I do not hesitate to say that, by the grace of God, our seminary, small and despised though it may be, represents the purest manifestation of the gospel that was taught by the apostle Paul and which is taught in the whole of Scripture!

III. But how is it possible for Timothy and the faithful men that follow him, as well as for the present professors of theology, to perform this difficult task? In and by what power must they teach the things spoken by Paul and the truth of the gospel? I find the answer in the first part of my text: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And I would translate the word for "strong" by "be strengthened" or "grow and increase in strength." This is absolutely necessary.

In the first place, without the power of the grace that is in Christ Jesus Timothy will not even be able to receive the things that were spoken by the apostle Paul, nor will we. O, we may probably be able, to a certain extent to grasp them intellectually, but this is not sufficient. We must hide them in our hearts. We must spiritually apprehend them. And this we never can and will do apart from the grace that is in Christ Jesus. In the second place, we surely are neither able nor willing to commit these things unto faithful men that are able to teach others also without the grace that is in Christ.

For there is always the power of the flesh within us. And the flesh does not only fail to apprehend the things of the Spirit, but also always rebels against it. It despises and rejects the truth that God sovereignly chose some unto salvation and rejected others. In fact, it will have nothing of the absolute sovereignty of God: it prefers to be its own Lord and master. It will have nothing of the truth of the gospel that man is totally depraved and nothing but a slave of sin, incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. It prefers the false free-will doctrine. And this the attitude of the flesh over against all the things spoken by Paul and taught in the gospel. Besides, there is not only the power of the flesh within, but there is also the enemy without, the power of the devil and his host, the power of the world and its temptations, and the power of false doctrine which is always rampant in the church to confuse the minds of the believers. How, then, will it be possible to receive the things of the gospel as spoken by Paul and revealed to us in Scripture, and to commit them to others? The answer is: only by the power of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

We must be strengthened, according to the original, *in* the grace that is *in* Christ Jesus. We must, therefore, increase and grow in that grace. And this is but natural. We are not yet perfect. We are not yet wholly sanctified and delivered from the power of sin and death. In fact, in this life we only have but a small beginning of the new obedience. Hence, we must constantly dwell in the sphere of (*in*) the grace that is in Christ Jesus and by that grace we must always be strengthened.

This requires two things. In the first place, prayer. Only by constant prayer can we have fellowship with God in Christ and dwell in the sphere of his grace. This is true, of course, for all of us. But the apostle refers, in the words of our text, especially to professors of theology. They, above all must never neglect the prayer that they may be strengthened for their important task by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And we also earnestly entreat our whole church to commit their professors to the throne of grace that they may constantly be strengthened in the sphere of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But, in the second place, to be strengthened in that grace also requires faithful and earnest study of the things of the gospel. Never imagine, my son, that you already know enough of the things Timothy and also you heard from the apostle Paul so that you can henceforth rest on your laurels. That would certainly be your end. Without the Word of God you cannot increase in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That Word of God, the revelation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is very rich. There is no end to its riches. And it is your calling to bring forth out of that treasure of the Word of God things new and old. Hence, it is your calling to study diligently. Then only you will be found worthy of the calling wherewith God has called you, through our churches, as professor in our own Protestant Reformed Theological School.

My prayer and, I am sure, the prayer of our churches is that God may richly bless you! Amen. H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER TEN

The Two Signs in Heaven

Rev. 12:1-6

Now if we ask the question, "What is the identity of this woman and the identity of this dragon, and what are the things signified by these signs?" it is perhaps advisable to start with the dragon. In the first place, it may be said that from his very appearance we already infer that he signifies some tremendous and evil power. In the second place, to approach his identity more definitely, we recall that already in paradise we have met with a serpent, and that there the serpent was none other than the devil in person. But above all do we find little difficulty in finding the identity of this dragon for the simple reason that our chapter tells us in plain words that it is the devil. For in the 9th verse of this chapter we read: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." It is therefore beyond all doubt that in this dragon we have a picture of the devil in person. But the question still remains: why is he pictured in this manner in our text? What do the individual features of this great dragon stand for? Why is it that the sign of the devil is very appropriately this terrible dragon? And then we call your attention, in the first place, to the fact that he is pictured as a monster, that is, as a being with an altogether unnatural and deformed appearance in nature. And such is the devil. The devil is indeed a monster. Not that God had made him a monster: God made of him a glorious and powerful creature. But with his great and glorious power he fell away from God, rose in rebellion against the Almighty, with that power still stands in opposition against the God that made him, and thus he made a prodigy, a terrible monster of himself. The serpent may be the fittest symbol of the devil because of its subtlety and shrewdness. But the mere serpent does not picture the devil adequately. He must be symbolized as a monster serpent. God never made a serpent with seven heads and ten horns. The serpent as God made him has but one head and no horns at all. And thus it is with the devil. God never made a devil. The devil is selfmade as devil, as an evil power. And since he deformed himself in his attempt to exalt himself, he has become a hideous monster. You understand, of course, that all this is under the power and providence of God. But nevertheless, God did not make the devil as devil. In the second place, let us consider that also the greatness of the dragon is an appropriate sign of the devil. God made of Satan a great

creature among the angels. Perhaps we may say that he was the greatest of all the angels, great in power and glory. And this greatness the devil has not lost by his fall. On the contrary, he retained it. Only, that same greatness wherewith he was to glorify his Creator he now employs against Him as a real monster. In the third place, we must take into consideration the color of the dragon. He is red. And red is the color of blood, of war and destruction and murder,—again, a fit symbol of the devil, for he is the murderer from the beginning, according to Scripture. In the fourth place, our attention is especially called to the seven crowned heads and the ten horns which he possesses. The numbers *seven* and *ten*, as we have explained repeatedly, are symbolical numbers. They do not refer to ten kingdoms or ten kings or to seven kings literally, but they denote the authority and power of this dragon, the devil. Seven, as well as ten, is a complete number. They therefore both indicate completeness. But as we have explained before, seven is a holy number in this respect, that it generally is used to denote the completion of the kingdom of God and its fulness, while ten is the number that denotes the measure of time or space or power as it is allotted and limited to any creature by God's decree. A divinely limited measure of something is indicated by the number *ten*. Further, it needs no proof that the crowned head is the symbol of royalty and of kingly power and authority. Seven crowned heads, therefore, would symbolically indicate the authority and royal power of the kingdom of God. And therefore, as to the appearance of this dragon we would draw the conclusion that the devil is king in the kingdom of God, for he possesses the seven crowned heads. But we must be careful with the interpretation of this dragon. For remember: he is a deceiver. And therefore we must rather explain the ten horns first, before we draw our conclusion as to his real power. The horn is the symbol of might and strength and power in Scripture. And that this dragon has ten horns indicates, therefore, that the devil has just exactly as much power as God has allowed him,—no more and no less. It indicates that the power of the devil is limited by the sovereign decree of God Almighty and that the devil can do no more, no less, than that which God has decreed for him and which God wills him to do. But how must it then be explained that at the same time the devil seems to have the complete authority in the kingdom of God, as indicated in the seven crowned heads. We would explain it simply in this way. The devil is the deceiver. And by these seven crowns you must not be deceived. God did not put them on his head. He put them on himself. They are not real crowns either. They are not made in heaven, whence all authority issues forth; but they are made in hell. And therefore they are no good; they are counterfeit. The thing is that the devil is a pretender, an impostor, an intruder, a usurper. He intrudes into the kingdom of God. He usurped the power of the kingdom, and he put on his own seven crowns and tries to give his kingdom the aspect of the kingdom of God by these seven crowns.

But the reality of the thing is that he has ten horns. He has God-limited power and with this God-limited power he will never be able to maintain his seven crowns and his royal appearance. On the contrary, after he has done all that was permitted him to do, God will take those crowns away, crush those seven heads, break the horns, and cast the miserable dragon into eternal hell.

What may be meant by his drawing of the stars of heaven with his tail? This seems to be plain in itself. The stars in this connection must, of course, not be taken in the literal sense, no more than the entire portion. In this connection the inference is plain that they indicate the fellow angels of the devil. In Job the angels are called the morning-stars. And indeed this application is very appropriate for these spiritual inhabitants of the sphere of eternal light. And the devil himself has been such a morning-star, perhaps, as we have said before, the greatest and most glorious among them all. And although the passage in Isaiah 14:12 cannot literally be applied to Satan, yet the language in which this metaphor against the king of Babylon is used, is such that the latter is evidently a type of the devil. And therefore also the devil may fittingly be called Lucifer, the day or morning-star. This morning-star, as we know, rebelled against God Almighty. But he was not alone. He instigated a general rebellion in the heaven of heavens. He seduced others of his fellow angels to rise with him and exalt themselves against the Most High. And it is this feature that is pictured of the devil most probably in the fourth verse of this chapter. He dragged the third part, that is, in this sense, a great many, yet not a majority, of his fellow angels with him in his fall from heaven. And they together with him were cast down from their exalted place. And therefore, in conclusion we may say that in this dragon we have a sign of the devil as the powerful, bloodthirsty murderer from the beginning, the impostor and intruder into God's kingdom, the deceiver, who tries to appear as the king of the world but whose power is limited by God Almighty and whose ultimate defeat is certain, the rebel, who in his rebellion succeeded to drag along with himself a host of his fellow angels, that sank with him into perdition.

Now who is represented by the woman in the chapter? This question is not difficult to answer. Almost immediately we recognize in her the church of the living God in Christ Jesus. In the first place, this is true because we meet here with the same period of time that was mentioned in the preceding chapter in regard to the two witnesses. Those two witnesses, symbols of the church with her anointed servants, witnessed in the world, clothed in sackcloth, for a period of twelve hundred and sixty days. And thus we find of this woman, after she is delivered of her child, that she is in the wilderness for that same period of time, that is twelve hundred sixty days. The inference is very strong, therefore, that this woman is essentially the same body as was symbolized in the two witnesses, that is, therefore, the church of God.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Jacob Preparing To Meet Esau

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom . . .

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

GENESIS 32: 3, 6, 7

It was the apostle Paul who noted, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). This unsearchable wisdom of God we find so evidently demonstrated in the life of Jacob. As to the nature with which he was born, Jacob had very little which can be considered commendable. He was weak, cheating, dishonest, proud, ambitious, and sinful. One thing only Jacob had, that was, the elective grace of God. Deep and mysterious were the ways through which that grace led him. Again and again it brought him unto sorrow; repeatedly it set him before temptations where only too often he faltered; but always it was near to lift him up again, to guide, preserve and keep him, to mold, form and build him into a saint of God worthy to sit eternally with Isaac and Abraham, his fathers.

It was no doubt with a sigh of relief that Jacob saw the figure of Laban fade away into the distance. Twenty years he had spent in the household of his uncle; those years had been far from pleasant. During those years he had prospered immensely; but it had been in spite of his uncle, not because of him. Always and again Laban had tried to use Jacob only for his own advantage. No underhanded means was beyond him; lying, cheating, hedging on promises, changing terms of contract, all these and more Laban had tried. The worst of all, however, was that Jacob did not often have the strength to resist answering in kind. Life in Haran became a constant sparring match between two cunning minds. Such a life can not but be vexing to a righteous soul. With relief Jacob saw it come to an end.

Even more encouraging to him, was a revelation from God which appeared as Jacob and his host proceeded toward Canaan. A host of heavenly angels met him on the way. Of the details of this appearance Scripture tells us very little. About all we know is that Jacob named the place of their appearing Mahanaim, meaning, a double host. This has led to various speculations. Some have deducted from this that two different groups of angels made the appearance. Others

have felt that there was only one group of angels, and, with the host of Jacob, they formed a double host. Again it has been suggested that the vision of Bethel reappeared with the ascending and descending angels forming the two different hosts. Which of these views, if any, most accurately reflects what actually took place, we can hardly determine. Regardless of the form of the appearance, the meaning is quite clear. God was reaffirming to Jacob the promise which he had made at Bethel. It reminded him of God's Word of blessing, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee." The host of the Lord's angels watched over him in the way. A more comforting assurance a man could hardly have.

Had Jacob been a man of greatest faith, this revelation would have been sufficient to alleviate all of his worries. But Jacob we know, as we ourselves, was inclined often to falter. As Jacob approached closer unto Canaan, his mind became more and more uneasy. An old fear, through the years almost forgotten, began once again to raise its ugly head. When he came to Canaan, he would have to meet once again with Esau. It had been out of fear for Esau, his brother, that he had left for Haran in the first place. Esau had sworn to kill him. Through his extended stay in Haran, Jacob had found less and less occasion to think about this oath. His fear had become almost completely dormant. Now, however, as his footsteps once again led toward the place where Esau dwelt, this old fear began once again to revive. Although he had almost forgotten, what reason did he have to think that Esau's anger had abated? Each step of the way seemed to make this question more real and more critical before his mind. Even more, he began to review in his thoughts all of the old reports about Esau that travelers from Canaan had brought to him through the years. Esau had not retired in quiet seclusion unknown and unnoticed by all. Rather, his feats had been such that they attracted very wide attention. He had gathered about him a vast company of men, wild and belligerent like himself. As a wild Bedouin tribe, they had gone about laying waste the land wherever they went, especially the land of Sier on the east side of Jordan. If the wrath of such a group of men should be turned upon him and his household, what chance would there be for them to survive? Finally, to make Jacob's fear overwhelming, there was his conscience that was not free from guilt. His dealings with Esau in the past had not been all honest and straight. He had given to Esau occasion for wrath. What mercy could he justly expect?

Beset by his fear, Jacob felt that something had to be done. He called to himself some of his servants and sent them ahead to meet with Esau. The purpose of this was twofold: they were to try to discover the feelings of Esau toward Jacob, and they were to try as much as possible to soothe whatever wrath Esau still held. Neither would he leave these men to act according to their own discretion. He gave to

hem a carefully-worded message: "Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight." This message was carefully devised to leave a reconciling impression upon Esau. It bore a tone of meekness and humility such as Jacob had not had in former years. It assured Esau that he, Jacob, now had sufficient wealth of his own and there was no longer any necessity for him to contest with Esau for the inheritance of their father. It stated, finally, that he desired to live henceforth in Esau's good graces.

It was not long after leaving Jacob that these messengers met with Esau. Esau had heard of the approach of Jacob and was coming to meet him. The intervening years had, indeed, served to take the edge off Esau's wrath. While still dwelling in his father's home, it had seemed to Esau to be vitally important that he should receive his father's inheritance. Now he was independent and self-sufficient and the memory of Jacob's actions bothered him not nearly so much. Nonetheless, he did remember the antagonism which had always existed between him and his brother. Their lives had always been in conflict. Esau was coming to find out if Jacob by returning to Canaan was intending to renew this conflict. If Jacob did, he was ready to oppose him. Nor was the message of Jacob sufficient to allay his fears. He was not one to trust a man's mere words, especially not the words of Jacob. His reception of the messengers of Jacob was cold and formal. He received their message and sent them back without an answer. The only report that they could bring to Jacob was that Esau was approaching with four hundred men.

To Jacob this message was frightening. The only conclusion that he could make was that Esau was still angry and intent on destroying him. What could he and his few domesticated servants do against four hundred armed and hardened men? Desperately he sought for an answer. Always before his mind had been capable of devising some plan of action in his troubles. Now he sought in vain. He divided his household into two different groups so that, if one was attacked, the other could try to escape; but what comfort could be derived from a plan which at best could secure the safety of only half of his possessions and family. It was the grace of God which brought Jacob into circumstances for which he could not begin himself to devise the solution. It brought him to find assurance in his only true rock of defense. Jacob prayed. "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from

the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." It was a simple and beautiful prayer of faith, a prayer which in essence could be repeated by any child of God in time of need. As every child of God should, Jacob in his prayer found only one basis for his plea, the promised mercies of his God. As every child of God should, Jacob in his prayer trustingly laid all of his needs in the hands of his God. And, perhaps in this case most significant of all, he made a complete confession of his own unworthiness. In his own mind and heart, Jacob saw his sins whelming up against him. All of his past pride and arrogance and rebellion accused him of his guilt. In grieving awareness of his own depravity Jacob cried, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed thy servant."

It was a different Jacob that rose from his knees that day. Still the fearsome attack of Esau seemed to be pending; still that basic conflict that had always existed between him and his brother was there; but, he was being prepared to meet it in a new and a different way. Always before it had been in his own strength that Jacob had sparred with Esau. He had matched the ingenuity of his own mind against his brother's greater strength. This had led him repeatedly into sin and sorrow. Now Jacob was brought face to face with his own bankruptcy. His approach became entirely different. Jacob separated from his flocks 550 heads of cattle. These he divided into separate groups to go ahead to meet with Esau. The servants that drove them he commanded to tell Esau concerning these cattle, "They be thy servant Jacob's: it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us." Jacob took the approach of humility. He was beginning to learn that he who will be the first in the kingdom of heaven must first of all be the least. He was learning the truth later set forth by the apostle Paul, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him! if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:19-21.

God was already answering the faithful prayer of Jacob. Jacob had prayed that God would deliver him from his enemy. In his own mind that enemy was Esau, and, in a very real sense this was true. But also in a very real sense that enemy was himself as he was inclined to follow the proud and sinful inclinations of his own flesh. From this enemy also God would deliver him. In fact, a very great step in that deliverance was ordained to take place that very night before he actually entered Canaan by passing over Peniel.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 14, 15

VII.

(Romans 15:9b)

We now come to Paul's proof from the Old Testament Scriptures that Christ became a minister of the Circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, namely, to establish the promises of the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify for his great mercy in this gracious dispensation of God!

When we look at all these references from the Old Testament Scriptures it strikes us that these were certainly the things which were written before hand, and that, too, for our learning and instruction, that we might, as Gentiles and Jews, have hope in God! For without this ministry of Christ there is neither hope nor comfort for either of these groups. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

We also notice, when we take a rather careful study of these quoted Scripture passages here in the verses 9-12 of this fifteenth Chapter of Romans, that this matter of the Christ being made a servant of the circumcision is not simply the isolated teaching of certain passages, but that they constitute what is the very warp and woof of the teaching of Scripture, the more sure Word of prophecy of the God of our salvation. For proof of this we have but to notice the very beautiful account of the discussion on the way between Jesus and the two travelers to Emmaus in Luke 24. In the verses 25-27 of this well-known chapter we read: "And he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not the Christ to have suffered all these things, and enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them *in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*" (en pasais graphais ta peri eautou). Besides, does not Jesus say to the unbelieving Jews of his day, who perish with the Scriptures as a closed book in their hands, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Surely the entire Old Testament Scriptures in their Theological-Christological meaning are all centered around the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, his death and resurrection. Does not Peter write, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow . . ." I Peter 1:10, 11.

Paul has, therefore, in a certain sense, but to select at random!

However, when we take careful notice of these passages, it becomes increasingly evident that they are such passages which speak particularly of the truth that "salvation is out of the Jews" also for the Gentiles. That the promise is to Abra-

ham. "In thee and in thy Seed shall *all nations* be blessed."

That is singularly and uniquely taught in these passages.

We shall, therefore, give more than usual and casual attention to these passages. It is imperative that we notice these passages in the Old Testamental and historical setting in the history of salvation (Heilsgeschiedenis) noticing particularly the prophetic perspective of each of these passages. In thus doing we are not to forget the point of argument of Paul in Romans 14, 15, namely, that we are to receive each other even as Christ received us to the glory of God.

In this essay we would call attention to the words from both II Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:50 where we read: "*Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.*"

In order to properly interpret these words from II Samuel 22:50 as Paul would have them applied to the situation referred to in Rom. 14, 15, we should bear the following in mind:

1. That this Psalm is found literally in two different chapters of the Bible. It is found in II Samuel 22 and in Psalm 18. In both of these David, as the "sweet-singer in Israel" is heard to utter glad and prophetic strains!

2. That this Psalm was uttered by David, evidently, when the throne is established to him in Jerusalem according to God's sure promise, and such was inherent in his being anointed by Samuel as King in Israel, a man after the heart of God! For David sings of deliverance and salvation. For we read literally in II Samuel 22:1: "And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul."

3. Further, we may be certain that David sings this Psalm "being a prophet." He is "David, the Son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel," II Sam. 23:1. And, as such an anointed one, he sings of the greatness of God in his covenant mercy to Israel and in the calling of Israel among the nations! God's promise stands to David and to His great Son forever. For the Lord has said to his Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy foot-stool," Psalm 110:1. That David speaks as a prophet is quite evident, first of all, from what we read in II Samuel 23:2: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." David too belongs to the prophets, to the "holy men" who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21). He too, in the Spirit of Christ, searched out the time or what manner of time of the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow! Angels were desirous to look into the things of which he spake!

4. Therefore both II Samuel 22 and Psalm 18 are intensely prophetic of the sufferings of Christ in the saints of the Old Testament and of the glory and the deliverance to follow. It was suffering for righteousness' sake with Christ in order to be glorified with him (Romans 8:17, 18). It is true that David suffered in the Old Testament Dispensation

on the plane of the earthly. Yet, his suffering was typical of the suffering of Christ. And just as his suffering was typical of the suffering of Christ, so was also his deliverance from the hands of his enemies and from the hand of Saul a type of Christ's deliverance from and victory over all His foes and the powers and demons of hell! For thus does the Psalm end: "Great deliverance giveth he to his King, and sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed, to David and to his Seed forevermore"!

And this prophetic-Christological Psalm, when it is fulfilled in Christ in the fulness of times, comes to stand before us thus that Christ came to be the greater David, the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God as depicted here in this Psalm. And thus mercy comes to the Gentiles! Such is the Mystery of godliness.

More particularly concerning this Psalm we should notice the following:

1. That this Psalm is *Jehovah-centered*. This means that this Jehovah of the Old Testament is the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," only He is such in the Old Testament terms, and is here sung of in poetical strains. Sings David: "I love thee, O JEHOVAH, my strength." All is of Jehovah. He is David's all in all. He is the great deliverer, v. 1.

2. That roughly speaking this Psalm (both in II Samuel 22 and Psalm 18) is divided into *three parts*. In the verses 4-6 David speaks of his great distress, and he couches this distress in terms as "cords of death", "floods of ungodliness", "cords of Sheol", "snares of death" and "all that would swallow me up!" And all this distress is represented, as far as David is concerned, in David's enemies, even in the persecutions of his father-in-law, Saul! In the verses 7-19 David speaks of Jehovah's great deliverance which he wrought for David simply because "he had delight in" David! See verse 19 where we read: "He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me because he *delighted in me*." The terms and phraseology here in the verses 7-19 remind one of the glory, majesty of Sinai, which caused even Moses to tremble. Notice: "then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the mountains quaked. He bowed the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under his feet!" Here we have a description of the Divine Theophany, Jehovah's presence to protect David. And in the higher sense it refers to the Theophany of God in Christ. He dwelt among us, and "we have seen His glory, glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"! Did not God deliver his Son on the Cross through his death and resurrection, because He delighted in Him. Does God not say from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom is all my good-pleasure, (delight) Hear ye Him"? And in the verses 20-27 David sings of the righteous cause which is his. All is justice. Mercy and justice kiss each other. David has a righteous cause, and he will be strong to put down all his enemies. This really refers to David's exaltation first of all upon the Throne, and principally to the exaltation of Christ upon the Throne on the right hand of the majesty of God on high.

This is really the exaltation spoken of in Hebrews 1:2, 3: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the expressed image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he hath by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

We may, therefore, conclude from the foregoing observation concerning this Psalm of David, that we are here dealing with the Spirit of Prophecy, in which David from the earthly plane of his own suffering and experience rises to the more glorious and distant suffering of the Man of Sorrows, the man of God's infinite delight. Thus we understand too that the "issue" between David and Saul was not merely one of the rivalry of two kings, but it was the true man of God being persecuted by the false Saul is, therefore, really one with the nations. Was he not chosen by the people to be a king "to judge like all the nations"? (I Sam. 8)

And is this not repeatedly brought into bold relief at the various encounters of David and Saul when Saul seeks David like a roe upon the mountains? In I Samuel 24:4-7 when David is at Engidi, David cut only the "skirt of Paul's robe." Was David intent to kill Saul? God forbid! He says, "Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my Lord . . . seeing he is Jehovah's anointed." David waits for the Lord's exalting him. Thus we read in I Samuel 26:9 that David stayed the hand of Abishai against Saul saying: "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the *LORD shall smite him*; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish."

Even in the mouth of Saul and emphatically from the mouth of Jonathan the exaltation of David as the LORD'S anointed is certain. Does not Jonathan have a rendezvous with David in the wilderness of Ziph, and does not Jonathan "strengthen his hand in God" and tell him: ". . . and thou shalt be king over Israel . . ."? And does not Saul say once and again in effect: "And now I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand." See I Sam. 24:20; 26:25.

And when David interprets this history, this great deliverance in the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of prophecy, he sings of the greater redemption which will come forth from his great Son and Lord, the Christ. Thus through His deliverance he will sit on the Throne and the Christ will come and sit upon the throne of his father David forever.

If such be written before hand for our instruction shall we not heed it and receive those whom Christ has thus mercifully received?

For the reception is no after-thought. It is the promise made to the Fathers, and which is established in Christ's ministry as the truth of God in all the Scriptures and thus mercy has come to us, the Gentiles. G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

The Fear That Removes Fear (2)

Today man's chiefest fear is war.

Basically his fear is always fear of death.

That is why he fears war today. That is why he fears cancer and a heart attack. That is why he fears the lightning, the earthquake and the tornado. That is why he fears that which is high and that which is low. That is why he fears that which is hot and that which is cold. He fears death.

And he fears death because he knows that then he shall come to stand before God. He knows that he cannot stand before Him and that he deserves the fierce wrath of God in hell.

Today — as we wrote last time — he fears a terrifying, annihilating war with frightful weapons of destruction and with swift and widespread death to mankind. Yet the folly of it all is that men wait breathlessly to hear what sinful men, who have shown that their words cannot be trusted, have to say. Upon their words they will wait for some hope of peace in the midst of mounting signs of war. God Whose Word is truth and Who has always shown Himself to be faithful to His Word, they will not hear. From Him and from His speech they turn away. They stop their ears and close their eyes when He works His signs of the times in their presence. They give no thought to the better things which He promises to give by removing the present things that can be shaken. For them these are not better things because they center around God and fellowship with Him. This they do not want. The fear of God is not before them and in their hearts. Therefore in the fear of His hell and of man's brutality they must live.

But man has other fears than war.

This is the day of tranquilizing pills. This is the day of nervous tensions. Ours is an age when "nervous breakdowns" and mental disorders are increasingly common occurrences. Fear grips man on every side. He knows not which way to turn. Fleeing from one terror he runs headlong into the next. He has irritations and they build up into aggravations only to explode in frustrations.

Where does he go in his fears? What does he do for his "nerves"? He runs to the psychiatrist and finds no help because he does not know the fear of the Lord. The fear that removes fear is foreign to him and to his worldly psychiatrist. He finds no peace of mind. And fear is indeed a matter of the mind. The slumbering man can sleep in peace while the house round about him is burning furiously to the danger of his life. But the moment he awakens and his mind comprehends what is taking place fear grips him and terror seizes his heart and mind. Therefore men have striven by psychoanalysis to take away man's fears and to give him peace of mind. He subscribes to the theory that abnormal mental reactions are due to the unwise repression of desires which he rejects consciously as evil and yet in the depth of his soul wants to satisfy. Taking his cue from that eminent Austrian

psychoanalyst, Dr. Sigmund Freud, he states that man's mind is disturbed because he has been too good and has been repressing certain desires as evil and thus been doing himself great harm.

In effect this Freudian idea — which is desperately wicked — teaches man that he must not be afraid to sin against God. His frustrations, his tensions and fears are due to a fear to do the sinful. The fear of the Lord is not the beginning of wisdom, but the wise man is one who dares to follow his sinful impulses and desires. That man will remain mentally healthy. This thought was openly voiced at the 67th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association. One of the questions discussed at this meeting of the nation's psychologists was whether the ideas of sin and hell serve a purpose in the modern world. Imagine that! You might just as well ask whether the Word of God, the Scriptures, which testify on every page of these things, serve any purpose in the modern world. Surely the fear of the Lord is not in such a discussion. The principle of wisdom, therefore, is not to be found there. And out of such a discussion can never come the principles of treatment that will remove fear and set the mind at ease.

A former president of this association, O. Hobart Mowrer, fought vigorously for the idea that the matter of sin should be brought back into the treatment of disturbed minds, contending that the Freudian theory has produced another evil. Moral restraint has been lost. Man is encouraged to walk in all the immorality and crime that his wicked heart and mind devises to do. Mr. Mowrer was strongly opposed by Dr. Albert Ellis who, as a faithful disciple of Freud, insisted that repression of sinful desires would impair the mental health. He stated that giving someone a sense of sin is the worst possible way to help him in his mental distresses and that it is virtually impossible for that man to become seriously upset who under no circumstances blames or punishes himself for a deed or a desire.

That sounds very familiar, does it not?

A beautiful woman, pure and holy, walked in a garden of resplendent glory. She and her husband had no tensions. They could not understand the word *frustration*. They had perfect peace of heart and mind. Their mental health was perfect. But a lie was voiced that to have sinful impulses was good for man. He must not be afraid to sin against God. There really is no hell, and by eating of the fruit of the tree man would rise to a new and higher degree of freedom and glory. To follow the lust of the eye — the beauty of the fruit — to follow the lust of the flesh — the goodness of that fruit for food — and the pride of life — the attaining to God's position to choose for one's self what is good and evil — that is the wise thing to do. The fear of the Lord gets you nowhere. It builds a wall around you and makes life very narrow and empty. Man must sin to improve his lot. God has spoken of sin and of hell, but these things should not be mentioned in the world (not even that early world). What desperate wickedness! What utter folly! The fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Let no man rob you of that truth. You need that to remain mentally healthy.

Now to fear God is to know that He is God. It is to know and believe that He is highly exalted above you as your Lord and God. If you do not know that you cannot know sin, nor can you have room in your thoughts for hell. If you do not know that He is God, you can have no wisdom. You do not know the very principle of wisdom. Without God nothing has any meaning. All things came from Him. All things depend upon Him. All things are made for the glory of His name. And all men are made to serve Him. If you do not know that and you dare to refuse to serve Him, you are a fool and have not the very beginning of wisdom within you. For He is God in spite of what you say and do. Our denial of Him is not going to put Him away. Our denial that we must serve Him with all our soul and mind and strength is not going to make Him cease to be God. He is and remains God, and therefore everyone denies this, either by word, or by refusing to serve Him, is a fool. And exactly because He is God and continues on His own sovereign way, those who do not fear Him and, walking in their own way, run up against Him must have frustrations and tensions and fears. If I run down the railroad track toward the speeding freight train with its tons and tons of weight and call out my unbelief that there actually is such a thing as a train speeding towards me, am I not a fool? And does all my protestation remove that train from the track? Does all my crying out of my unbelief and all my continuance on my own way change the fact that there is a mass of steel rushing towards me with overpowering force? Still more, does all my denial and refusal to be afraid because of my unbelief bring me joy and happiness or a gruesome and awful end? Shall I ask, then, whether the idea of God's hell and sin against Him serves any good purpose in this modern world? Of course it does.

Sin and hell, or let us say sin and punishment are facts that must be held before the minds of men. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" is the word of God to man in his state of righteousness before frustrations and fears were known by him. Would we say the All-wise God made a mistake? Would we dare to say that He knew nothing of psychology and that it took a mere creature of dust, such as Dr. Sigmund Freud, to show God what psychology really is? Perish the thought! But then let us not behave that way. If we do not want to say it, then let us also not want to practice it.

This rather we will do when a man is troubled about his sins and fears lest he has committed the unpardonable sin, we will take him to the cross. We will agree with him that he has sinned. We will not try to set his mind at ease by denying the facts of sin and hell. But we will show him that God has blotted out the sins of His people in the blood of His Son and that concern for these sins, anxiety about their presence and a desire for peace with God in regard to them is undeniable evidence that the unpardonable sin has not been committed.

The worldly psychiatrist cannot do that. He does not fear the Lord and consequently has no use for and sees no value in the fear of the Lord in his patient. Our Christian psychopathic hospitals, Pine Rest and Bethesda have their Hospital Pastors as well as their Christian psychiatrists because there is no removal of man's fears in any other way than in the way of the fear of the Lord. Sin and hell (punishment) must not be unmentionable things to the mentally disturbed. But they must be acknowledged and confessed as the very reason why the cross is necessary. Man must know his misery, if he is to come to the joy of the knowledge of his redemption through the blood of Christ. Man must believe in the fall of man, if he is to appreciate the cross. Do the ideas of sin and hell serve a purpose in the modern world? Indeed, because also in that modern world there are the elect children of God. These fear the Lord and believe that He is God. They believe in Him as the God of their salvation in Christ. Therefore being justified by faith, they have peace with God, a peace that is enjoyed by faith in the acknowledgement of the facts of sin and hell and in the confidence in the blood of Christ to remove them both for his people. But to tell a man not to be afraid of sin and hell is devilishly wicked and utter folly. The fear of the Lord IS the beginning of wisdom; and therefore that wisest of mere mortals, King Solomon, declared, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Proverbs 28:13. Sin and hell are there. And you cannot set at ease the mind that is disturbed by the facts of sin and hell by denying them. You can never rid man of the knowledge that these are inescapable realities. He that covereth his sins does not prosper; he does not succeed even in covering these sins from his own mind. Surely he does not, by covering sin and hell with his own philosophies, cover them from God's eyes. No, there is only one way to peace of heart and mind. There is only one way to remove fear from man's heart and mind. That is the fear of the Lord which believes these facts of sin and hell and takes them to the cross. Faith in God as the God of our salvation in Christ removes all our fears and gives us the peace that passeth all understanding. For then our hearts and minds are kept in Christ. They are kept from all cares and anxieties, from all worries and tensions. Paul does not tell the church at Philippi to be careless and throw away all thought of sin and hell. He tells that church in Philippians 4:6 not to be full of cares, to empty their souls of them by going to God with them by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to take them to the God Who is never frustrated, never worries, never has anxiety. He will take you with your knowledge of sin and of the hell, which we deserve because of our sins, to Christ and His cross. And there you will find peace of heart and mind.

That is the wise thing to do: Go to Him and not deny Him by denying sin and hell. That is the wise thing because it is rooted in the principle of the fear of the Lord. That fear will remove all other fears.

J.A.H.

THE REFORMATION PREPARED IN LUTHER'S SOUL

On October 31 we shall again celebrate Reformation Day. This remains an important date in the annals of the church, just because our thoughts revert back to that memorable night of October 31, 1517, when Dr. Martin Luther nailed the ninety-five theses on the doors of the church at Wittenberg. That particular event still stands out in the minds of all Protestant Christendom as the dawn of the Reformation and the beginning of our deliverance from the yoke of Roman Catholic hierarchy. That is what makes this date so important to us.

Yet, you may well wonder why this particular date marking that particular event should be so important. It was not an innovation to nail a public announcement on the church door, since at that time it was a common practice to distribute news and information that way, particularly to those who were attending church. Nor did these ninety-five theses suggest in any way the dawning of a new day for a church that groaned under the oppression of Rome. It is true that Luther did attack many evils within the church, particularly the sale of indulgences. But at this point Luther still acknowledged the authority of the pope, and defended the indulgence as such. That is, he still recognized the right of the church to forgive sins in the name of Christ upon confession of guilt. He did not condemn the indulgence but rather the promiscuous sale of indulgences for the sake of financial gain for the church. And finally, we should note, that at this time Luther had not the slightest intention of breaking with the Roman Catholic Institution. Nor did this break come until almost four years later, on April 18, 1521, at the Diet of Worms, when he defied the authority of the pope and of the church councils.

What, then, makes that simple act of nailing ninety-five theses on the church door so important? Why does October 31 rightfully stand out as a memorable date for us even today?

The answer lies in the fact that God prepared the Reformation in Luther's soul long before this, and the first evidence of this work of God appeared on that night of October 31. Unawares to himself, Luther had reached a point of no return. He could only go on from that moment to carry out the conviction of his soul even though it meant a complete break with the Roman Catholic Church. This was possible because the Reformation was not a work of man but of God. In the providence of God the time had become ripe within the church for the dawning of a new day. Even politically the situation was such in Germany that the reformers could carry on their work unhindered by the civil government. God also prepared the hearts of His people so that when the tocsin rang, through the hammer blows on the church door of Wittenberg, the sound re-echoed through the world and aroused all true Christendom to seek deliverance from its bondage. But likewise, the Lord prepared the Reformation in the soul of the man He had appointed for this work, Martin Luther.

A brief survey of his life history up to this moment must clearly show this. For our convenience, we shall divide the first thirty-four years of Luther's life into five periods to show how the Lord prepared him step by step for this momentous task. They are as follows:

The period of early training and deep-seated fear of God.

The period of wrestling with the problem of his personal salvation.

The period of searching for peace in the convent.

The period in which he attained peace through the Scriptures.

The period in which he became burdened with the evils within the church institute to the point where he was compelled to oppose them openly.

We shall make a few remarks about each of these.

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, an hour before midnight, at Eisleben, in the home of very simple yet God fearing parents. At six months, his parents took him to Mansfeld where his father worked in the mines. They were very poor, so that at the age of 14 years Martin had to go out on the streets to sing for a living. At home he was brought up, as he himself later writes, under stern discipline. And in the schools he attended the discipline was equally severe. The result was that during this early period of his life he was filled with a deep-seated fear of God, which never left him. It was while he was attending school at Eisenach that the wife of a wealthy merchant took him into her home and invited him to share the bounties of her table. This pious family by their benevolent interest in his welfare also helped to establish his spirituality and piety.

The second period of which we spoke, in which Luther became aware of a spiritual unrest in his soul, began approximately at 18 years of age. In 1501 he entered the University of Erfurt, one of the best universities of that time in the country. There he studied chiefly scholastic philosophy, including such subjects as logic, rhetoric, physics, and metaphysics. He also studied the ancient classics and acquired knowledge of the Latin. Four years later he received his degree of Master of Arts. But it was during these years that he became deeply concerned about his personal salvation. The burden of the guilt of his sins weighed heavily upon him, frequently bringing him to the verge of despair. The uncertainty of his election and the fear of impending judgment troubled him incessantly. This second phase of Luther's life probably influenced him more than anything else to seek his refuge in a convent.

Martin's earliest intentions were to become a lawyer. But upon his return to Erfurt, after spending a short period of vacation at home, he was overtaken by a heavy thunderstorm and was almost struck by lightning. It is still a question in my mind how much importance should be attached to this incident, as well as many more in the reformer's life

which are often blown up beyond all proportion. But it is commonly accepted that this brought him to the third period we mentioned, his search for peace in the convent.

It was on July 17, 1505, that he entered the monastery of the Augustinian order at Erfurt and became a monk. We are told, "He was clothed with a white woolen shirt in honor of the pure Virgin, a black cowl and frock tied by a leathern girdle. He assumed the most menial offices to subdue his pride: he swept the floor, begged bread through the streets, and submitted without a murmur to the ascetic severities. He said twenty-five Paternosters with the Ave Maria in each of the seven appointed hours of prayer. He was devoted to the Holy Virgin and even believed, with the Augustinians and Franciscans, her immaculate conception, or freedom from hereditary sin—a doctrine denied by the Dominicans and not made an article of faith till the year 1854. He regularly confessed his sins to the priest at least once a week."* He himself said afterward, "If ever a monk got to heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there." But always the same problem loomed large before him, how could he find peace for his soul? He knew how to cry out with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" But he had not learned to add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

This phase of Luther's experience was of great importance for his later life. God was using also this experience and turning it for his good by the ever-present operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart. It was in the convent that Luther learned the utter hopelessness of salvation by works. And it was there that he began a systematic study of the Bible. There he realized how much more the Scriptures contained than had ever been taught him by the church, and how barren the Roman Catholic theology actually was.

This brings us to the period in Luther's life when he found peace through the Scriptures.

Johann von Staupitz, a Doctor of Divinity and Vicar-General of the Augustinian convents in Germany, aided Luther in his study of the Scriptures. Luther himself referred to Staupitz as his spiritual father who "first caused the light of the gospel to shine in the darkness of my heart." He directed him from his sins to the cross of Christ. He pointed him away from dead works to the power of grace which works faith in the heart. He taught him that true repentance consists, not in self-imposed penances, but in love to God and faith in the blood of Golgotha. He encouraged Luther to become a priest in 1507 and brought him to Wittenberg. He induced him to take a degree of Doctor of Divinity and to preach. He stirred him up against popery. But when the Reformation came, Staupitz remained in the Roman Catholic Church and that until his death.

Thus the peace of God gradually filled the soul of the reformer. He experienced in his own heart that only the

righteous man can stand in the presence of God and live. He also knew that there is no righteousness apart from Christ Jesus, but that all our righteousness is solely in Him. And he realized, to his own delight, that this righteousness of Christ is ours through the bond of faith that unites us to Him. He knew from experience that "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:18). And he could exclaim with exuberant joy, "Wherefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

This brings us to the final period in which Luther was aroused against the evils of the church and felt impelled to oppose them.

As a priest he came into still closer contact with the dead formalism of the church in which he was reared. In 1508 he became professor in Wittenberg. He first taught philosophy but became more and more interested in theology. He applied himself to an even more thorough study of Scriptures, giving lectures on the Psalms and on the epistle to the Romans. In the meantime he was still frequently cast between periods of black despondency and moments of peace and serenity.

In the autumn of 1510, Luther was sent to Rome in the interest of his order and at the suggestion of Staupitz. In company with two others he travelled on foot from convent to convent. He spent four weeks in Rome in an Augustinian convent and returned to Wittenberg in the following spring. This trip served to open his eyes to the corruption that was rampant, not only in the convents, but also in Rome. He was shocked by the unbelief, levity, and immorality of the clergy. Money and luxurious living were their chief ambitions. Even the pope was interested only in worldly grandeur and power. This journey to Rome left a lasting impression upon him and prepared the way for his bitter opposition to the Roman Catholic formalism and corruption.

The climax came when Tetzl arrived in Germany selling indulgences for the building of St. Peter's Church in Rome. Others before him had opposed this same evil, such as Wyclif in England, Huss in Bohemia, John von Wesel in Germany, John Wessel in Holland, but without any lasting effect. But now also Luther was aroused. The result was the nailing of the ninety-five theses on the door of the church of Wittenberg on the eve of All-Saints Day, October 31, 1517.

Here was a monk and priest, living within the church, yet daring to raise his voice against her corruption. From this first act the rest must follow. Having taken the first step, there was no alternative but to go on. God had created all the attending circumstances both religiously and politically, had prepared the man of his choice for the work that had to be accomplished, had appointed the moment for the Reformation, and was now bringing it to pass. Thus, approximately four years later, when he was placed before the Diet of Worms and required to retract all his writings of the past years, he was ready to defy the pope and the councils of the

*"History of the Christian Church," by Philip Schaff, page 115.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Article 12 (continued)

In the third place, we may notice once again that the Arminian employs the “big lie” technique in his attempt to discredit the truth. As is very plain from the language of the fathers in this article, this charge of the Arminians is nothing short of preposterous. Nothing could be farther from the truth than this allegation which they bring against the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance. And it seems that they almost felt that if they made their lie big enough and cunning enough, they might be able to overthrow the truth in the minds of some. For as the fathers indicate, this charge of the Arminians is the extreme and diametrical opposite of the truth: “This certainty of perseverance, however, is *so far from* exciting in believers a spirit of pride, or of rendering them carnally secure, *that on the contrary*, it is the real source of humility, filial reverence, true piety”

Coming now to the contents of the article itself, we may begin by making a few general observations.

In the first place, we may note that the issue does not concern “security” but “carnal security.” This is important. The fathers certainly do not intend to deny that the certainty of perseverance renders believers secure. If it did not render them secure, then it would indeed be a very uncertain certainty. No, but the issue is whether or noth this certainty of perseverance renders believers *carnally* secure. And there is a vast difference. The certainty of perseverance renders believers truly secure; to be carnally secure is to possess a false sense of security. The certainty of perseverance renders men piously secure; carnal security is a security in the ways of the flesh, a security in the way of sin and evil, a security that boasts of itself and in the meantime seeks the world, enjoys sin, and hates God’s precepts. And what our fathers flatly deny as being wholly out of the realm of possibility, while at the same time maintaining that the believer does indeed obtain a sense of genuine security, is that the certainty of perseverance renders one carnally secure, secure in his sin. Now someone may say that this lies in the nature of the case. And this is so. Nevertheless we may draw a practical warning from this obvious truth. It is this, namely, that we as Reformed believers should not be so panic-stricken by this argument of the Arminians that we abandon our Reformed position and deny after all that this certainty of perseverance renders us secure in any sense whatsoever. This is easily done. In the attempt to meet this argument one carves and

chips away at the truth of the certainty of perseverance by way of compromising and conditionalizing in a so-called Reformed sense until that certainty is virtually destroyed and the security is done away. This is wrong. It is a surrender to Arminianism. And we should be on our guard against it. It is not the style of our Reformed fathers. They did not face this calumny of the Remonstrants by saying, “Well, now, there is some truth in this charge, and it is possible that one is rendered proud and carnally secure by this certainty of perseverance, and therefore we must be on our guard against such carnal security and give a little more emphasis to the responsibility of man, etc., etc.” No, they faced this charge and answered flatly: “It is far from the truth; the very opposite is true.” And we should follow their example. There is so little militancy for the cause of the Reformed faith today. When those who oppose the truth are met, we can be so ready to belittle and compromise and well-nigh hide our Reformed faith in its distinctive character, as though we were really ashamed of it. And how boldly we ought instead to stand in the faith and cast far from us the false and foul accusations that are hurled against the truth!

In the second place, we ought to note that the fathers state a fact here, not a mere possibility. And this is of the utmost importance for the understanding of their answer to the Arminians’ accusation. They do not answer: “On the contrary, this certainty of perseverance *ought to be* the real source of humility, filial reverence, etc.” This would not be an answer to the accusation. It would still leave the door open for the possibility that what ought to be is in actual fact not the case. And therefore they answer: “This certainty of perseverance *is* the real source of humility, filial reverence, true piety, etc.” In other words, there is an inherent, binding, unbreakable relationship between this certainty of perseverance and all these Christian virtues. Where the one is given, there the other is sure to be found. You will never find a believer who has the certainty of perseverance, but who is at the same time proud and carnally secure. And wherever you find one who enjoys the certainty of perseverance, you will inevitably find that this certainty functions in him as the source of humility and all the Christian virtues mentioned in this article. You will find in such a Christian the very opposite of pride and carnal security.

In the third place, we may notice that the fathers speak of this certainty of perseverance as the *real source* of humility, etc. And this is correct, provided that we understand this to refer to the subjective spiritual source of these virtues in the heart and life of the Christian. All these virtues are gifts of grace, of course. And from that point of view the real source of them is the grace and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the article speaks of the internal, subjective spiritual source of these virtues. And that source *within* the believer is the certainty of perseverance. Or we may put it this way. The certainty of perseverance is a gift of grace wrought in the heart of the child of God. And that one gift of grace becomes at once the root of many gifts of grace

which blossom forth from it under the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

With these general observations in mind, we may give our attention to the specific elements mentioned here.

The first fruit of this certainty of perseverance mentioned here is *humility*. It stands over against the "spirit of pride" which the Arminians claim is excited by such a certainty. Now such pride is absolutely impossible, and true humility is the necessary fruit of this certainty of perseverance for the simple reason that this certainty of perseverance is all of free and sovereign grace. Pride and boasting, whether over against God or the neighbor, must have some ground, or at least some apparent ground. But the believer, persevering and assured of his perseverance by grace only, has absolutely nothing to boast. Such a believer has learned to know himself as one who cannot possibly persevere of himself. He has learned to know his daily sins of infirmity and the spots that adhere to his best works. He has learned to know himself as one who sometimes sinfully deviates from the guidance of divine grace and is seduced by the lusts of the flesh. He has learned to know that by his enormous sins he highly offends God, incurs a deadly guilt, grieves the Holy Spirit. He has learned to know that in himself there is not the power to return to God and to repent of his daily sins and to seek and obtain remission of his sins even after he has once become a child of God. And on the other hand, he has tasted the power of divine grace that never lets him go completely. He has learned to know that God Who never wholly withdraws His Holy Spirit from His own people. He knows that God of all grace who preserves in him the incorruptible seed of regeneration and by His Word and Spirit effectually and certainly renews him to repentance, to a sincere and godly sorrow, to a seeking and obtaining of the remission of sins. All these blessings of grace he has tasted. And there has been quickened in him the firm assurance of perseverance. And in the midst of it all, he realizes and acknowledges that there was absolutely no reason in him why he should be the object of so rich a grace and such abundant spiritual blessings. Where is boasting then? It is excluded! The believer knows this. And in true humility he falls on his knees before God, the God of his salvation, and confesses: "O my God! It is none of self, all of Thee!"

No, not pride but humility is the fruit of this certainty of perseverance. And pride and carelessness are found, on the contrary, exactly with those who deny the doctrine of free grace. If anyone who claims to be a believer and to have the assurance of perseverance manifests the spirit of pride rather than humility, he shows thereby that his assurance does not rest on good grounds.

In close connection with this virtue of humility stands the second fruit mentioned in this article, filial reverence or childlike fear. In the humble consciousness that it is all of God and none of self, the believer bows in humble dependence upon his heavenly Father; and, in the glad conscious-

ness that he is his Father's possession, that same believer willingly acknowledges his heavenly Father as the Lord of his life, Whose will, not in the fear of terror but in the fear of love and reverence, he delights to do.

This, in turn, leads, in the third place, to true piety and godliness in the walk of those who have this certainty of perseverance. Because God is the God of their life, and knowing that they are the objects of His saving grace for the very purpose that they should show forth His praises in the midst of the world, they in principle have as the controlling question of their entire walk this: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" It is only in the way of this true piety that they can ever enjoy the assurance of perseverance.

The article mentions, in the fourth place, the virtue of patience in every tribulation. Patience is that virtue according to which one endures to the end in spite of difficulty and in the midst of the battle. That patience is quickened by the certainty of perseverance not only because the end unto which we are patient is certain, but especially because we know and are assured that we shall attain to that glorious end. If the end is not certain, there is no incentive for patience. But if the end is certain, but we are not assured of reaching that end, then too there is no incentive for patience. But if we know that the blessed inheritance is there, reserved for us, and that we are preserved infallibly unto that inheritance, then we are able to confess: "The suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

Further, the article mentions the fruit of fervent prayers. Those who would deny this truth of the assurance of perseverance would seem to have reason, at first glance, to claim that such assurance would be detrimental to a life of prayer. But the contrary is true. It is not a state of doubt and uncertainty that fosters fervent prayer, but a state of assurance. For, in the first place, prayer must be characterized by confidence. What expectation of an answer to prayer can there be, except on the basis of this assurance of perseverance? How can I pray for preservation when I cannot even be certain that God can and will preserve me to the end? And, in the second place, that very assurance becomes the occasion and the incentive for the Christian to pray always and again for grace that he may persevere to the end, and that thus in the way of perseverance he may continue to enjoy this blessed assurance!

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Wednesday, October 7th, in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan, the Lord willing. Consistories will please take note of this in the appointment of delegates.

M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

DECENCY and ORDER

Unorganized Churches

"Places where as yet no consistory can be constituted: shall be placed under the care of a neighboring consistory."

— Article 39, D.K.O.

To this article the following decision of Synod is appended in our Church Order:

"If possible the organization of a congregation shall precede the administration of the sacraments. However, if the conditions are not ripe for the organization of a congregation, such members are to be enrolled in an adjoining congregation, and thus the sacraments can be administered under the supervision of that consistory. However, this shall not be done without the accompanying preaching of the Word, nor without sufficient representation of the consistory to have supervision of the administration."

In general the meaning of the above article is plain. It is not so much a question as to what this article means but the difficulty is confronted in the execution or putting into practice the rules prescribed in it. To use a colloquialism, *It is easier said than done!* The article itself refers to circumstances where there may be a group of believers who, with their children, desire to be organized as the church of Jesus Christ but, for some reason or another a consistory cannot be constituted and, therefore, the desired organization cannot be effected. The church cannot be organized without office-bearers. The offices of the church are an essential part of the institute.

Hence, the question: What are these people to do? They cannot, being believers, live without the church and *as yet* the church cannot be organized in the community where they live. A real problem indeed!

As a solution to this problem indeed!

As a solution to this problem some would advocate that those involved in such circumstances are duty bound to leave their places of employment, sell their farms, close their business and move with their families into a community where the church is found. We would not say that this advice is *never* to be given but we do contend that it should only be employed in circumstances where every other conceivable possibility has been exhausted and that for the following reasons:

(1) It is not in accord with the advice of the Church Order, Article 39.

(2) It has no direct basis in Scripture.

(3) It is questionable, to say the least, whether it is the Lord's will that His people, whom He in His providence has brought to and established in a certain community and then later called to the faith, should leave that community or re-

main there to perpetuate that witness of Him to the best of their ability.

(4) It is easier said than done. It is one thing for a Classis or a Synod to *decide* that people should move to the vicinity of the church but it is another thing in how far the ecclesiastical assembly is aware of the problems and difficulties such a decision may create. Furthermore, it must not be overlooked that when this advice is executed, those concerned not only temporarily lose their means of livelihood, but also their potential to contribute toward and support the church and related causes of the Kingdom. It may be that in their new community they are not able to obtain work to which they are adapted and the last end may prove to be worse than the first.

For all these reasons we would hesitate to go in this direction, except, perhaps, in a very rare or exceptional case where it is rather evident that it is the only feasible thing to do.

Article 39 advocates as a solution to this problem that such unorganized groups be placed under the care of the neighboring consistory. The words "*as yet*" in the article are significant. They would seem to indicate that in the circumstances the time is foreseeable when a consistory could be organized and the church properly instituted. Van Dellen and Keegstra state: "*De woorden 'nog geen' geven te kennen dat zoo'n toestand niet langer mag duren dan strikt noodig is.*" Translated: "The words 'as yet' indicate that such a circumstance may not exist any longer than is absolutely necessary."

This would indicate that it is far from ideal to have an unorganized group, located some distance from the church, placed under the care of the consistory of that church. To place an unorganized group under the care of a neighboring consistory does not solve all problems. The consistory will and should provide the fullest possible spiritual care that circumstances permit but it virtually is impossible in most instances to provide regular preaching services and for such a group that is most essential. It is also questionable how much catechetical instruction could be given to the children and youth of the unorganized group. This too is essential and for these reasons this situation should not be allowed to persist for an indefinite period of time.

One definite advantage in this arrangement, however, is that it would enable the consistory of the neighboring church to engage in church-extension labor in the area where the unorganized group is found. Perhaps it would be advisable that the consistory release its minister for this work for a definitely stated time. He could then devote all his time and effort to work the field and the fruits of these labors would then determine whether the Lord will have His church established there or whether those believers who are found there are called to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Genesis 12:1).

Historically, so the Church Order Commentary informs

us, the ruling of Article 39 was born in the post-reformation days when the organized churches were confronted with the question: "What should we do with those localities which have no Reformed Churches as yet?" It appears that the present decision was reached primarily and it was Calvin who had urged not to institute the administration of the Word and the Sacraments without the institution of the offices. He held that in order to maintain the purity of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, proper supervision and control was necessary.

In 1571 then, the very first Synod of the Reformed Churches of Holland which met in Emden, stipulated that ministers and elders of Classes "bearing the cross," i.e., being persecuted, should diligently ascertain whether or not there were any in their near-by cities or villages who were favorably inclined toward the Reformation, and urge such to do their duty. To this end the minister and elders of these Classes should attempt to organize churches, or at least the beginning of churches. In order to carry on this work the classes were to divide the various cities and villages amongst themselves so that no localities might be neglected. And the dispersed churches, churches consisting of believers who had fled to distant parts for their safety, should be active in their new localities it was urged. Dispersed believers should further the work of the consistories active in the gathering of churches by cautiously supplying the church officers with names of persons who had in the past manifested their interest in the true religion in their home community from which they had been driven, or in the place to which they fled.

This action of the Synod of 1571 was reaffirmed by the Synod of 1578.

By 1586 the work of reformation and church organization had progressed greatly. The Synod of that year decided that in localities which had no consistories as yet the classis should do that which the Church Order assigned under normal circumstances to the consistories. Neighboring churches, through their classical organization, were therefore to minister to the spiritual needs of those living in communities not yet having a church. They were to do this particularly, we may assume, by sending a minister who could sponsor the organization of churches, even as the former Synod had urged and decided.

All this was confirmed by the great Synod of Dort in 1618-1619 and so the decision became the 39th article of the Church Order which is preserved to the present day with only one slight alteration.

Undoubtedly the main principle involved in this article, although not expressed, is that the Word and Sacraments may not be administered apart from the institution of the church. The right to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments does not inhere in any individual or society, regardless of who or what they may be. That right Christ

has invested in His church, and therefore, although believers may certainly gather for mutual edification, the Word cannot be officially preached and the sacraments administered except through properly instituted offices in the church. That this principle is commonly ignored in our day needs no proof but what is most alarming is the fact that even in so-called Reformed circles there is more and more disregard (ignorance) for the teachings of the great Reformer and the principles of truth founded upon Scripture and which he was instrumental in conveying to the church. Calvin would undoubtedly shudder at the teachings and practices of many would-be Calvinists in our day. G.V.d.B.

FEATURE ARTICLES FOR THE STANDARD BEARER IN 1960

Date and Subject	Writer	Rubric replaced
January 1 —		
The Proper Relation between Church and School	C. Hanko	Voice of Our Fathers
February 1 —		
Calvin and the Burning of Servetus	R. Veldman	Decency and Order
March 1 —		
Matthew 19:7-8 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4	H. Hanko	Contending for the Faith
April 1 —		
John Knox and the Reformation	G. Van Baren	In His Fear
May 1 —		
Luther and Calvin — A Comparison	G. Lanting	All Around Us
September 1 —		
Capital Punishment	A. Mulder	Voice of Our Fathers
October 1 —		
The Significance of the Ninety-Five Theses	H. H. Kuiper	Decency and Order
November 1 —		
The Significance of the Candlesticks	R. C. Harbach	Contending for the Faith
December 1 —		
The Number Ten in the Old Testament	R. Veldman	In His Fear

ALL AROUND US

A Strong Protest Against the N.C.C.C.

From a friend and brother we received a pamphlet entitled: The National Council of Churches — A Menace To Church And State, for which we are deeply grateful. We have read much in recent years concerning this organization of a deprecating nature, but never anything so succinct, enlightening and thought-provoking as the pamphlet above mentioned. If our readers would desire a copy, they may address their request, including 20¢, to: The Southern Presbyterian Journal, Weaverville, N.C. If you really want to know what is wrong with the National Council of Churches of Christ, this pamphlet will tell you.

According to the pamphlet, the Southern Presbyterian Church is a member of the National Council, but the Journal which speaks for the Church rises in vigorous protest against some of the most recent pronouncements of the Council, warning the constituency against the pitfalls into which the Council is leading the churches.

Late last year in a meeting of the Council held in Cleveland, it was decided to request our government and the Nations to recognize Communist China. This political maneuver not only aroused the ire of men like Dan Poling and Norman V. Peale, but it also stirred the S. P. Journal to produce the pamphlet above mentioned. The Journal believes that the N.C.C.C. is attempting to fast remove the age-old distinction between Church and State. It is with this fact that the N.C.C.C. is a menace to Church and State that the pamphlet is mostly concerned.

To be sure, the pamphlet is also concerned that "the National Council is seductively and aggressively using the Churches to promote pacifism, socialism, and to give aid and comfort to the Communists." This is clear, the pamphlet points out, from a brief summary of the "Message" which the Council sent out December last which advocated the following:

"Diplomatic recognition by the United States of Red China.

"Admission of Red China to the United Nations.

"Co-existence with 'the Communist nations.'

"Avoidance of 'the posture of general hostility' to 'the Communist nations.'

"A call to 'fellow churchmen to work to overcome segregation in all areas, beginning with their own congregation and including housing, public services and economic or occupational opportunities."

"Ratification of the genocide convention.

"Internationalism to supersede national patriotism.

" 'Disarmament by multilateral agreement' with 'the goal of universal disarmament.'

"The use of military force only when 'sanctioned by and under the control of the United Nations.'

" 'The creation of a permanent United Nations police force.' Abolition of universal military training.

"Abolition of 'the system of military conscription' and of the Selective Service System.

"Opposition to 'the concept of nuclear retaliation or preventive war.'

"Extension of trade and travel without restrictions between the United States and Communist countries."

The authors of the pamphlet add here: "This could not have more nearly conformed to the Communist 'line,' if it had originated in the Kremlin."

But to return to the main theme of the pamphlet, namely, the Menace to Church and State, the pamphlet proceeds to point out wherein that menace consists.

It does so first of all by informing the reader that "there are three leading concepts of the relationship of Church and State" and pointing out what is wrong with two of them, while emphasizing the only correct position we are to take.

The three leading concepts are the following:

"The Roman Catholic concept is that the civil government is a part of and therefore subordinate to the Church. For this reason the Church of Rome seeks to influence and control governments in the name of the Church. These activities may be open or they may be carried on in secret. Where Rome exercises free power within governments Christian freedoms are suppressed. One has but to look at Colombia, Spain and other Catholic-dominated countries to realize that where free to do so the church persecutes and oppresses. For that reason thinking Americans view with genuine alarm the possible election of a Roman Catholic as President of the United States. No matter how loyal a citizen he may be, no matter how able and dedicated he may be to the highest good for America, if he is a loyal Catholic he is part of a system which is the very antithesis of the basic ideals on which our country was founded.

"The second concept of Church-State relationships was first made popular by Erastus, a physician in Heidelberg in the sixteenth century. The Erastian doctrine is the very opposite of that held by the Roman Catholic Church. He taught that the Church is only a phase of the State. The State being a divine institution was therefore responsible for both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people. Out of this doctrine there came the State Church, a church supported by and obligated to look to the State for the maintenance of doctrine, the proper administration of the sacraments, and of discipline. Here church officers are appointed by the State and are in a measure responsible to the State.

"The Reformed or Protestant doctrine of the Church is that both the State and the Church are divine institutions but that their objectives and functions are in every way different and independent the one of the other. The State is temporal in its administration, designed for the temporal welfare of its citizens. The Church is a spiritual organization, designed to witness to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to administer the ordinances and maintain the discipline of the Church and to constitute a visible witness of a redeemed citizenry, one in but not of this world; men and women separated unto righteousness who should live in the world as shining lights.

"This view of the Church emphasizes the spiritual nature of her calling and looks to believers to be true 'salt' and 'light' in the society of which they are a part.

"This view requires that the influence of the Church shall be exercised by Christians, as citizens of their country, and rejects the idea that the Church, in the name of the Church, should seek to exercise political controls or pressures on the State."

The pamphlet further produces a reproduction of one of the articles of the Church Order, which I presume is that of the Southern Presbyterian Church, which clearly coincides with the Reformed and Protestant doctrine of the Church.

"Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."

It is against the violation of this principle of the Church Order of which the N.C.C.C. has made itself guilty, that the pamphlet protests.

Write the authors of the pamphlet: "The conference in Cleveland is typical of the multiplied top-level meetings sponsored by the National Council in which carefully prepared programs are developed beforehand by some of the ablest men in the ecclesiastical world, men who are irrevocably committed to a particular philosophy of the Church, social action, and world affairs. This philosophy envisions the Church, as such, exercising political pressures on the government by which, in a very real sense, the government becomes the agent of the Church. To many of us this is a fatal concept, one which abdicates the high spiritual nature of the Church, and substitutes for it a secular and materialistic role for which there is no scriptural basis."

The pamphlet points out that the Council is not interested in promoting the truth of Scripture so that its doctrines are developed and the truth disseminated. Rather its chief concern is making political resolutions and persuading governments to act according to its pronouncements. This, the pamphlet contends, is the destruction of the principles for

which both governments and churches stand. It is the evil attempt to erase the distinction between Church and State. And history has proved again and again that where this attempt is realized there is bound to be trouble.

The positive character of the material in the pamphlet may be summed up in the following paragraph:

"The Witnessing mission of the Church should ever be foremost. 'Ye are my witnesses' — 'This Gospel shall be preached for a witness to all nations,' express the primary work of the Church. Once assume that it is the Church which is to conquer the world and the next step of assuming and conniving for worldly power is inevitable. It is this utterly un-Protestant Philosophy of the Church which has led some to say: 'When the General Assembly takes action God has spoken.' Recognizing such a danger the Westminster divines inserted in the Confession of Faith this clear restriction: 'God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His word, or beside it in matters of worship' (Chapt. 22, 11)."

It is in connection with the truth set forth in the above paragraph that the writers of the pamphlet make this significant statement:

"Wherever the Church has arrogated to itself temporal powers there is also the tendency to usurp the headship of Christ. It should be remembered at all times that the Church is the body and that Christ is the Head. It is Christ who will eventually conquer, not the Church. It is to Him that every knee will bow, not to the Church. The latter is the Bride, not the Bridegroom."

The above statement is of practical value for the church institute when, as so often is the case, she is asked to decide on matters that are not of an ecclesiastical nature. And how true it is that when the church is required to be on business for the King, she makes it her own business.

We believe that the pamphlet was well written. It hit the nail on the head. And it will certainly have its repercussions in those churches which are members of the Council.

It is gratifying to observe that in the nominal church which is fast becoming the tool of Antichrist, there are those who have the boldness to shoot their arrows of criticism at the Beast.

M.S.

O God of our salvation,
 Since Thou dost love the right,
 Thou wilt an answer send us
 In wondrous deeds of might.
 In all earth's habitations,
 On all the boundless sea,
 Man finds no sure reliance,
 No peace, apart from Thee.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Randolph, Wisc., 9-15-59

In *The Standard Bearer*, Sept. 1, under the heading, "News from our Churches" the statement is made referring to Rev. J. M. Mc Collam's resignation as pastor of the Prot. Ref. Church (cf. II Peter 2:22). There we read, "It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog turning to his vomit again, and the sow that has been washed to the wallowing in the mire." And that under the caption, "All the saints salute thee." Is this work of the saints? No that cannot be. I don't mean that we should condone an action of this nature, of course not. Consider for a moment of whom the apostle Peter is speaking here in this second chapter of his second epistle. It becomes very evident that the apostle is referring to people who have completely fallen away from the truth; false prophets, even denying their master who bought them. Bringing upon them swift destruction. And many other statements in this same chapter. Must we now place Rev. Mc Collam in this category? Far be it from us to do that, for we call ourselves saints. And it ill behooves us as saints to so flagrantly disobey the Ninth Commandment of God's Holy Law. I firmly believe an expression of this sort lowers the prestige of our church paper, *The Standard Bearer*.

Jake Fisher, Randolph, Wisc.

Answer: The apostle Peter refers to a proverb well known in his day, a popular saying with a double meaning which was used to convey a truth by way of comparison. Just as we say, "Birds of a feather flock together" when we see thieves resort together; or, we might use it when we note in a factory lunch room that Christians group together to eat and the non-Christians eat with their own group. The proverb used by Peter was not invented by him to convey his point, but was one then in vogue which he borrowed for his purpose. He said, in effect, "This well known proverb applies to the people of whom I write to you." In such same manner we also referred to that true proverb. We did not refer to the entire chapter, but merely to that verse which contained the proverb. We believe that the proverb applies to the case of the Reverend who, having had his dwelling in a church denomination which was predominantly Arminian and with strong tendencies towards modernism; and, having discarded the Arminianism to whole-heartedly embrace Calvinism in all its ramifications; he then broke his vow of ordination and returned to the sphere of Arminianism and modernism, albeit in another church denomination. The church group to which the Reverend had gone harbors, undisciplined, ministers who do not believe in the Virgin Birth, modernism in its crudest form. Therefore we believe, as the sow, after she has been washed, returns to her mire, so the Reverend has returned to the mire of the sphere of Arminian-

ism; and, as the dog returns to that which it had discarded, so the Reverend has returned to that which he had discarded. You will readily see that we do not place the Reverend in the same category as those whom Peter condemns, but place him in another category which the proverb portrays. Thus, as it is a *fact* that the Reverend has returned to that which he had discarded, it cannot be a transgression of the ninth commandment to record the same.

J.M.F.

THE REFORMATION PREPARED IN LUTHER'S SOUL

(Continued from page 16)

church, and thus make a complete break with the institute of Roman Catholicism. Then and there he made the bold and defiant statement, at least in substance, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

Plainly the Reformation was prepared by God in the soul of Martin Luther.

In conclusion, it may be well to add, that because of this peculiar beginning, the Reformation never found its completion in Luther himself. Luther opened the way, but it took a Calvin to point out the real doctrinal significance of the Reformation. For Luther the break with the Roman Church centered about the truth of justification by faith, but Calvin brought out that this truth rested in the more fundamental truth of the sovereignty of God. Calvin saw and taught that we can never maintain the truth of justification by faith alone without a clear conception of God's sovereignty and eternal predestination.

History has also proved this to be a fact. Although Luther himself remained sound in the truth, his close friend, Melancthon, weaned away from it and even favored a healing of the breach with Rome, particularly after Luther's death. And in the centuries that followed, Lutheranism often became man-centered rather than God-centered.

Thus Luther's work prepared the way for that other reformer, John Calvin, who with the theological principle of "Soli Deo Gloria" set the Reformation on a sound Reformed path.

C.H.

THE LORD OUR MAKER

The wicked Thou wilt surely slay,
From me let sinners turn away;
They speak against the Name divine,
I count God's enemies as mine.

Search me, O God, my heart discern,
Try me, my inmost thought to learn;
And lead me, if in sin I stray,
To choose the everlasting way.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Sept. 20, 1959

Rev. H. Hanko has declined the call to the church from Edgerton.

Rev. C. Hanko has declined the call from South Holland, but is still considering one from Randolph.

Edgerton has made the following trio: Revs. J. A. Heys, G. VanBaren and G. Vanden Berg.

New Addresses: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, 1218 Griggs St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich. Rev. H. Veldman, 817 Webster, Redlands, Calif.

We have attained a new goal! A Prot. Ref. High School Society has been organized! The evening of Sept. 15 saw a crowd of about 160 men and women gathered in Southwest Church, called together by a Steering Committee who had made all the arrangements for this memorable occasion. Sept. 15, 1959, is a date that will be celebrated by our children's children! Mr. James Swart, chairman of the Steering Committee, called the meeting to order, opened with prayer, and introduced Rev. C. Hanko as the speaker for the evening. Rev. Hanko gave an inspirational talk on "Making Plans—Proceeding to Attain Our Own High School." The speaker convinced us that it was necessary; he showed us that it was possible; and disclosed the procedure—past, present and future. The speech was truly an "inspirational" one as witnessed by the response when membership cards were collected. That evening 94 charter members were signed up, with promise of additional signatures from others who were absent. The Steering Committee was authorized to appoint a "Constitution Committee" to draw up a proposed constitution, and also a nomination for Board members, to be presented at a forthcoming society meeting to be held as soon as possible. As the speaker pointed out, the success of Hope and Adams schools—beyond the expectations of their charter members—is a sure pledge that, D.V., our own high school will also be a reality in the not too distant future.

Add to the list of societies who do not recess for the summer: Hull's Young People's Society.

Quote from Doon's (Rev. Van Baren) bulletin: "This week the society season starts again. If it is possible for us to attend, and yet we hesitate, let us consider questions such as the following: Have we an hour and a half to spare out of the 168 hours God gives us in a week? Do we truly enjoy the fellowship of the saints as it finds expression in this way? Can we yet learn from God's Word? Can we really afford not to make use of this opportunity?"

Rev. G. Van Baren gave the address at the Opening Exercises of the Doon Christian School Tuesday, Sept. 1.

The Young People of Hull's congregation gave a farewell party for Henry Hoksbergen who was to leave for training in the National Guard, September 13. After an afternoon of swimming the young folks enjoyed a supper in the park at Rock Rapids.

Sept. 15 was the date for the Annual Meeting of the Prot. Ref. Action Society. Rev. G. Vanden Berg of Oak Lawn, was scheduled to speak on "The Infallibility of the Scriptures."

From Oak Lawn's bulletin we perceive that they are re-scheduling a society meeting from Wednesday to Thursday so that Rev. Vanden Berg may be able to teach a catechism class in South Holland on Wednesday evening—until they receive a minister of their own.

Thirtieth wedding anniversaries were celebrated by two of our ministers recently: Rev. and Mrs. R. Veldman were surprised by their congregation Sept. 16 in First Church parlors, and Rev. and Mrs. C. Hanko held Open House Sept. 19. The occasion was also a celebration of the 30th anniversary of their entrance into the ministry for both the pastors. Sombre note: From their graduation class of six they are the two remaining true to the teaching received in our seminary.

The Sunday School Teachers' Fall Inspirational meeting was held Sept. 18 at Creston Church. Our Missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers, gave the inspirational message, telling of the origin and further development of the Sunday School movement, including the modern version of it. The speaker also gave the teachers some observations and suggested improvements which might serve to enhance our Sunday Schools. Mr. M. Koerner, president of the Association, led the teachers in the study of the season's first lesson—the thrilling story of the burning, fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. Sunday School teachers: we bid you, suffer little children to come unto HIM.

Family visitation is being conducted in all our churches at this time. In regard to this work Hope's bulletin admonishes, "As this work of the consistory begins, welcome these servants of God into your homes because they come in the name of Christ."

The Year Book of our churches, containing the Acts of Synod and all the statistics of our denomination, is on sale. Order your copy from your consistory. For only one dollar you, too, can have all this information at your fingertips.

Text for this issue: ". . . turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned, I repented . . ." Jer. 31:18, 19.

. . . see you in church,

J.M.F.

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST

Classis West of our Protestant Reformed Churches met in Edgerton, Wednesday, September 16, 1959. Rev. Heys, clerk of the previous classis, opened the meeting and Rev. Kuiper was the chairman of the day. It was an enjoyable meeting and we adjourned late in the afternoon.

The undersigned, having left Edgerton for Redlands, resigned as member of the classical committee. Elder H. J. Blankespoor of Doon was voted to replace him. The committee on rules for classical procedure reported that they had finished their work. This report will be sent to the various consistories for study and the treatment of this report was therefore postponed until the following classis, which will be held in Oak Lawn, the Lord willing, March 16, 1960.

There were two matters which required considerable time: classical appointments and the future status of our Pella congregation. In connection with the latter, the classis decided to advise Pella to request the mission committee to "work the field of Pella" as soon as possible, and, should this prove to be impossible, to advise Pella to request the classical committee to give them classical appointments. The matter of classical appointments presented us with a problem, due to the many vacant churches and our shortage of ministers. Classis decided in connection with this problem to forward a letter to Classis East, requesting that Classis to supply the pulpits of Randolph and South Holland according to the advice of Synod. In this same letter addressed to Classis East our classis also calls attention to the present situation in our churches, especially as involving our churches of Classis West. The following schedule was adopted for Edgerton: Sept. 27, Rev. Heys; Oct. 11, Rev. Van Baren; Oct. 25, Rev. Heys; Nov. 8 and 15, Rev. Vanden Berg; Dec. 13 and 20, Rev. Kuiper; Jan. 17, 24, 31, Rev. H. Veldman; Feb. 14, Rev. Van Baren; Feb. 28, March 6, 13, Rev. Harbach.

The church visitors submitted their report of their church visitation which was done last April and May. The classis approved this work of the church visitors.

Doon submitted a document to the classis, advising a revision of our synodical forms for subsidy. Excepting a minor change this document was adopted by the classis and will be forwarded, the Lord willing, to Synod next year.

It was also decided to ask the ministers of Classis West to submit two sermons for reading services before our next classis. And the same request will be forwarded to Classis East. These reading services present our churches with an acute problem and the need for sermons is very great.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. H. Veldman.

Rev. H. Veldman,

Stated Clerk.