

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### A HARLOT JUSTIFIED

*"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way."* James 2:25

*"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."* Hebrews 11:31

From our point of view, the most important question is: Am I a friend of God or of the world?

If the former, I will hate the world; if the latter, I am a hater of God.

There is no other alternative.

If you love God, it is proof that you have faith and the works of faith.

These works of faith had Rahab. And so, she opposed Jericho's cause, her own city. And she cast her lot with God's Kingdom which came to destroy Jericho.

And she was justified by her works.

To that we want to call your attention.

\* \* \* \*

Rahab was a harlot. That is, she had been a harlot: she was so no more. She had become converted. That is sure.

But she had been a harlot, and so she was a worthy representative of that wicked city Jericho.

Jericho was a city of great significance in the plan to occupy the Holy Land. It was the very key for the conquest. And that is the reason why Israel must receive that city from God Himself.

It was a strong city, with strong men and strong walls round about it.

Spiritually it was a city filled with iniquity of every

kind, immorality, adultery, idolatry and enmity against God. And so it was a city which could be representative of Canaan, and of the wicked world generally.

Rahab was a citizen of Jericho: a harlot. It figures. And it is mentioned purposely to indicate that she was a participant of Jericho's sinful life. She was Jericho's representative, as also yours and mine. You often find that in Scripture. Think of laughing Sarah, sinful David, lying Rebekah, cursing and swearing Peter, etc. They represent us.

Another point: note how wonderfully truthful is God and His Word. It never glosses over the evil of God's people. It tells the story just as is.

But Rahab had faith. We must emphasize this, otherwise we will depart from the true and faithful way of God.

Her works were not the works of the law.

They were the works of faith.

Let's look at the history.

There come the masses of Israel, the nomad people.

And make no mistake: this Israel is the God's Kingdom which is going to destroy the kingdom of Satan. The Kingdom of God will be founded on the ruins of the kingdom of Satan.

The world is always perishing, and the Kingdom of God is always progressing, even on the foundation of the world's ruins. These two always go together. And it will be beautifully shown at the end of the ages. Then the world will go down in flames at the same time when God's Kingdom will stand in all its glory before the face of God, His Christ, the angels and the righteous.

Rahab believed that.

She had received the excellent gift of God. And as soon as that faith reached her consciousness, she was loosed from Jericho. And in her heart and mind she was a justified person.

She believed in the cause of God. She had heard of that cause. She knew the wondrous history of Israel's redemption out of the house of bondage. And she believed it too.

And therefore she speaks of that which she believed.

With heart and soul she is in favor of God and His cause, and against her own city.

\* \* \* \*

Faith causes us to choose sides. She is for God and His party in the world.

Faith that speaks but does not work is dead. It is the faith which makes the devils tremble.

Rahab chooses for God.

The spies came as friends of God, and knocked at her door.

Well, she receives them, protects them and cares for them to the very end.

Rahab is a friend of God in her works.

And she is against Jericho. And that is quite correct. You cannot serve two masters. If you love the one, you will hate the other. That is the antithesis. That is the way it is throughout all the ages. If you are a friend of God you are a hater of the world.

And that is the way Rahab acted too. The king of Jericho hears about these two men, and that they had found refuge in the house of Rahab. He sends his servants to inquire. He knew that these men of Israel had come to spy out the city and the land. "Give those men up to me!" That is the command of the king to Rahab.

And what are *her works*?

She chooses for the spies and against her king.

She looked at the recompense of the reward. She is sure of Israel's victory and flees the wrath to come. She seeks the peace of Jerusalem and works the works of a living faith.

\* \* \* \*

That was great!

Oh, I know that Rahab has been severely criticized for her lying and deceiving. She went to the door and said: "Oh yes, there were two men here, but they are gone!" And all the time they lay upstairs under the stalks of flax! She continues: "Be sure and follow them and you will catch them!" But she is a deceiver. She will contrariwise give advice to the two men so that they may elude their pursuers!

What must we say about this lying and deceiving?

That is very simple. She should not have done that. She should have trusted in the Almighty God! There is no problem here at all. The Holy Scripture simply shows Rahab to be just as frail and weak as we are. We are all liars, everyone of us.

No, we will never defend the lie and deception. And God does not either. God forbid. His Name is Holy. Far is the Almighty from doing iniquity.

But here is the point: The Holy Scripture does not say anything about her lying and deception, but says much about the greatness of her faith and works of faith.

Her work of faith is great. She is surrounded by the people, the soldiers and the might of the world. But she stands foursquare on the cause of God. She turns against her own people and casts her lot with God and His cause. At the danger of losing her own life. Her life was at stake at the very moment when the servants of the king knock on the door of her house and question her. But it does not deter a person who has the living faith. Her works will accompany that faith. Even at the danger of losing her life. That is the great thing in the works of Rahab.

\* \* \* \*

And so Rahab is justified.

Now let us get one thing very straight: Rahab was not justified *because* of her works.

Why not?

Because she was already justified before the world was created. God loved her from everlasting to everlasting. She was given to Jesus Christ in the quiet wakes of eternity before the world began.

Second, because she was justified before God's tribunal before her faith had a chance to work. As soon as faith resides in you, you are justified before God's throne. Such is the nature of faith. Faith is the avenue to God's heart. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith means that this Jesus is in your heart. And He gives you the spiritual power to draw out of Himself all you need to live forever.

And, third, because no works of faith can wash away sin. Suppose that the works of faith could wash you clean as far as the present and the future are concerned. Even that is not true, but suppose it to be true for the sake of argument. But what about the past and all its guilt and evil?

No, but Rahab was justified in the way of her works. She was saved by means of the works of faith.

And that is exactly the case in this history.

Suppose that Rahab had spoken, but not acted? Suppose she had talked and talked to these spies about God and Israel and their cause and prospects, but not acted?

Then she would have perished with Jericho.

A faith that talks and does not work is dead, and is like the faith of the devil. He believes that there is a God, but he trembles.

There is plenty of such faith today, but it does you no good.

James militates against that kind of faith. Remember how he said: Suppose that a brother or a sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them:

Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled! But you do not give them a scrap of food or a rag to put upon their chilled body? Could such a faith profit you? Of course not.

So also here. If Rahab had talked theology and doctrine until she was blue in the face, and had not protected and cared for these spies, she would have been destroyed after the sevenfold walk about the city.

But now she believed, and spoke, *and acted*; proving that she had a living faith. The scarlet thread hung out of the window on the wall. It was seen. And she was saved.

And the harlot Rahab was justified.

And she received the unspeakable honor to become the mother of Jesus.

She is waiting in heaven for you.

G.V.

## ACTS OF 1961 SYNOD

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

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

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

## Notice for Classis West

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

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

The foes of Zion shall be brought  
To hopeless flight and put to shame;  
Their wicked plans shall come to nought  
And all mankind forget their name.

To them no kindly friend shall say,  
God bless you now and speed you well;  
No grateful heart for them shall pray,  
May God's rich blessing on you dwell.

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## EDITORIALS

### The Hymn Question Before Our Synod

We were discussing the hymn question as it was before our last Synod.

Those that argued against the motion to adopt hymns to be sung in our churches objected that there was no need of hymns for the simple reason that there is sufficient material in our present psalter for almost every occasion. It was granted that this is not the case with respect to the resurrection of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as He was poured out on the day of Pentecost.

As to the latter, the Psalter has a few references to the truth concerning the Holy Spirit.

If you will look to the back of your psalter, you will find the following references: 85, 141-143, 255, 287, 389-391.

Now, as far as the first reference is concerned, I can find no mention of the Holy Spirit here at all, neither in the versification nor in the original, Ps. 33, as we find it in our English Bible. This is, therefore, an error.

But we do find mention of the Spirit of God in numbers 141-143, as well as in the psalm itself. In the versification we read the well-known stanza:

“Gracious God, my heart renew,  
Make my spirit right and true;  
Cast me not away from Thee,  
Let Thy Spirit dwell in me;  
Thy salvation’s joy impart,  
Steadfast make my willing heart.”

And this is a versification of Psalm 51:10-12: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”

Then we have the next reference in Psalter No. 255 the last stanza, which reads as follows:

“While He proffers peace and pardon  
Let us hear His voice today,  
Lest, if we our hearts should harden  
We should perish in the way;  
Lest to us, so unbelieving,  
He in judgment shall declare:  
Ye, so long My Spirit grieving,  
Never in My rest can share.”

This is supposed to be a versification of Psalm 95:10, 11: “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.”

We may notice that in the text of Psalm 95 there is no mention of the Holy Spirit as it is in the versification. Not

the Holy Spirit but God was grieved with the generation of the unbelievers that could not enter into the promised rest. Nor do we read of the Holy Spirit in the infallible commentary we have of this passage of Psalm 95 in the third chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews.

Now what is the point I wish to make? It is this that, if we would make the Church of the new dispensation sing the Old Testament Psalms, it will be necessary to introduce New Testament elements in the versification of the Psalms. This is true emphatically of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit but also of other truths.

As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, that it is quite impossible to sing of Him in the Psalms unless New Testament elements are introduced, is very evident, for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit was not yet. Thus we read in John 7:39: “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given), because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” In the old dispensation, therefore, the Spirit of Christ, was not yet. This had to wait until Christ had been exalted at the right hand of God. It is true, in the first place, that the Spirit was given to the officebearers, to prophets, priests and kings. Secondly, that the Church, in general, received operations of the Spirit, is also a fact. No doubt, they were regenerated. But the contents of these operations of the Spirit and of that regenerated life were very limited in comparison with the life of the Church of the new dispensation. Believers of the old dispensation were always led by the Spirit to the shadows, to temple and altar, to priest and sacrifice. And, although these shadows pointed to Him that was to come, they did not understand these shadows. But all of a sudden, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, they understood, as is evident from the sermon preached by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost.

But if the Old Testament Psalms are poor in contents as far as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is concerned, the New Testament is abounding in reference concerning the Spirit of Christ.

And the same is true of our Confessions as well as of our liturgical forms. Thus we read in the Heidelberg Catechism, question 53: “What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost? First, that he is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; secondly, that he is also given to me to make me by a true faith, partaker of Christ and all his benefits, that he may comfort me and abide with me for ever.” When in our churches we preach on this particular Lord’s Day and we look for numbers in the Psalter that befit the subject material expressed in this Lord’s Day we find this very nigh impossible. The same is true of question 35: “What is the meaning of these words — He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary? That God’s eternal Son, who is and continueth eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the

virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that he might also be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted." Can anything be found in the Psalter that even approximates this truth, not only as far as the Holy Ghost is concerned, but also with reference to the virgin-birth of Christ? I do not believe it.

I do not belittle the Psalter. Most (and I mean most, not all) of the numbers contained therein are beautiful. The fact remains, however, that they were written in the old dispensation, and this is the reason why some of the doctrines, like that of the Holy Ghost, hardly receive mention. The reason being, as I have pointed out before, that "the Holy Ghost was not yet because Christ was not yet glorified."

Nor am I in favor of adopting the hymns that are sung in most of the American churches. Recently I attended one of these churches, and the hymns they sung there were not only superficial but positively sickening, and I could not sing them. It was all about the lovely and lowly Jesus that will come into our hearts if we only open the door and let Him in. It struck me that, in many of them God was not even mentioned!

No, but I am in favor of composing our own hymns, hymns that are true versification of Scripture and that shall not be sung in the churches until the Synod has set its stamp of approval upon them.

But I was saying that, not only in Scripture, but also in our Confessions and in our Liturgical Forms, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost occupies an important place. And this is not surprising. If we only consider the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as such, in the limited sense of the word, it would not be so serious that we find hardly any mention of Him in the songs we sing in the Church. But the importance of this omission we are bound to realize as soon as we bear in mind that we ought to sing of Him in our worship as the Spirit of Christ, as the One that is the author of our faith, as the One that applies unto God's people all the blessings of our salvation. As such He is presented in Scripture, and in that capacity He also occurs in our Confessions and in our Forms.

Thus, for instance, we are taught in the Heidelberg, question 65: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, whence does this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." Such, indeed, is the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. It is He that makes the means of grace efficacious. He it is that works faith in our hearts and He it is also that confirms it.

The same truth, namely, that the Holy Ghost is the author of our subjective salvation, is expressed in question and answer 67 of the Catechism:

"Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation? Yes, indeed: for the Holy Ghost teaches us

in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon the one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross."

Again, in Question 69 we read:

"How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross is of real salvation to thee? Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of my body is commonly washed away . . ."

And in question 72: "Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself? Not at all: for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanses us from all sin."

And again, in question 73:

"Why then doth the Holy Ghost call baptism 'the washing of regeneration,' and 'the washing away of sins'? God speaks thus not without great cause, to-wit, not only thereby to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; but especially that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins, as we are externally washed with water."

Remember that I refer to all this because that it was remarked by some at Synod that we do not need hymns seeing that the Psalter is quite sufficient for all our needs as far as singing in the worship of the church is concerned, and that one of the exceptions is the day of Pentecost and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I claim that, even if this were true, there is ample reason to introduce some New Testament hymns which are nothing else than versifications of Scripture and are approved by Synod.

H.H.

### Correspondence Between Our Synod and Government Officials Concerning Sunday Military Training

Of interest to our readers will be the following correspondence concerning Sunday military training. Through the courtesy of our Stated Clerk, the Rev. G. Vanden Berg, we have received copies of various replies to letters sent by our Synod of 1961 concerning this matter.

Upon overture from our Creston Consistory and from Classis East, the Synod decided to send the following letter to Major General Donald W. McGowan, Chief, National Guard; Chief of Reserve Affairs, Department of the Army (Navy, Marines, Air Corps); and Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense.

"We the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America in session June 7, 1961, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, wish to make it a matter of record that we are opposed to the policy of military training on the Sabbath Day. It is our

conviction that members of our churches who are subject to military training should not be compelled to violate their convictions concerning the use of the Sabbath Day.

"Our chief objection concerns the use of the Sabbath Day for types of training which can be easily accomplished by other means and at other times. We wish to emphasize that we are speaking of training for reservists or members of the National Guard and not for men on regular military duty.

"We ask you to take such necessary steps as may be required to insure that military trainees do not have to be deprived of the opportunity to attend their church services and of the privilege of observing the entire Sabbath according to their Christian convictions.

"We have churches in several states in our country and the problem is causing increasing difficulty. We recognize the need for military duty on the Sabbath Day under wartime conditions, but we ask you to adopt a policy which does not require military training for reservists and National Guardsmen on the Sabbath Day."

A copy of the above letter was forwarded to Representative Gerald R. Ford with the following letter.

"Gerald R. Ford  
"351 House Office Building  
"Washington 25, D.C.

"Dear Mr. Ford,

"You probably recall that you received a letter dated March 20, 1961 from the Creston Protestant Reformed Church in which the Consistory asked you to take into consideration their objections to the need for Army Reserve members training on Sunday. This letter you answered by asking Creston's Consistory to notify you if the young man in question was penalized for refusing to train on Sunday.

"Creston's Consistory has brought this matter to the attention of the Synod of our churches (Protestant Reformed Churches) with the request that a letter be addressed to the proper authorities to ask them to change this rule with respect to Sunday training. This the Synod has decided to do since this is a problem in other of our churches throughout the country.

"Grateful for the kind attention you have given this matter in the past, we are asking your assistance once again. We have addressed letters, a copy which is enclosed for you, to the Chiefs of Reserve Affairs of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Corps; to the Chief of the National Guard; and to Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense. We would appreciate your help in gaining a favorable decision with regard to this matter as well as any further advice you can give us.

"Thanking you for your kind attention in the past and for your present efforts to assist us, we remain,"

In reply to these letters of our Synod the following letters

of interest to our readers were received. We submit them for your study.

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

June 20, 1961

Rev. Gerald Vanden Berg  
Synodical Stated Clerk  
Protestant Reformed Churches of America  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Dear Rev. Vanden Berg,

Thank you for your letter of June 12th enclosing a copy of the resolution adopted by the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America concerning military training on the Sabbath Day.

I am pleased to know that you have sent copies of this statement to the Secretary of Defense and to those who administer our Reserve and National Guard program.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, the Honorable Carlisle P. Runge, has overall supervision of the training policies involving military forces. I have, therefore, written Secretary Runge enclosing a copy of your resolution and asking that as the representative of the Secretary of Defense he do everything possible to carry out the request of your resolution which I personally endorse. Enclosed is a copy of my letter to the Secretary.

Kindest personal regards,

Sincerely,  
Gerald R. Ford, Jr., M.C.

June 20, 1961

The Honorable Carlisle P. Runge  
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower)  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Enclosed is a copy of a resolution adopted by the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and signed by Rev. G. Vanden Berg, the Synodical Stated Clerk.

A copy of this statement by the Synod has been sent to the Secretary of Defense and other offices of the various services charged with administering the Reserve program.

A large number of sincere and conscientious citizens in my congressional district as well as in the other parts of the country are deeply concerned with any requirement that men be required to carry on military training on the Sabbath in violation of their conscientious objections to unnecessary work on that day.

I have discussed this matter on many occasions with officials in the Department of Defense and with officials in the Michigan National Guard.



You will note from the enclosed resolution that the Church has not objected to necessary work by regular members of the Armed Forces on the Sabbath. Neither does the Church object to necessary work on the Sabbath in time of a national emergency. But it does raise objections to compelling sincere Christian citizens to violate their religious convictions unnecessarily and without compelling cause.

I personally share the view outlined in the enclosed statement and would urge that the position presented be taken into consideration in the establishment of any policy concerning the training of our reserve forces.

Warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford, Jr., M.C.

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

June 28, 1961

The Reverend Gerald Vanden Berg  
Synodical Stated Clerk  
Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches  
9402 South 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois

Dear Rev. Vanden Berg:

Enclosed is a copy of a report I have just received from the Assistant Secretary of Defense concerning Sunday drilling by reserve forces. The Secretary sent me a copy of the letter which is addressed to you by Chaplain Clark on June 16.

I feel that neither of these letters get to the crux of the matter which both you and I attempted to point out to defense authorities. I do hope, however, that the protest lodged by the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and others will have the effect of cutting down the number of drills scheduled for Sundays. I trust that eventually the Department of Defense, which is under the Executive Branch of the Government, will be able to revise its policies in this regard.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford, Jr., M.C.

Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Washington 25, D.C.

June 27, 1961

#### MANPOWER

Dear Mr. Ford:

This is in reply to your letter of June 20, 1961 forwarding a copy of a resolution adopted by the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America pertaining to the conducting of Reserve training on Sunday. The resolution has been received in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and was answered on June 16 by Chaplain, Colonel, William L. Clark, Executive Director, Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

The effectiveness of our reserve components is best measured by their readiness for employment in the event of an emergency. As one means to improve this readiness, our efforts for the past few years have been concentrated on unit training rather than basic individual training. This has equal application to the reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. Realistic and effective unit training requires time and space that is not available in a two-hour drill period at night in an armory. Excellent training is accomplished, however by consolidating four armory drills into a training exercise of 48 hours or more. In view of the fact that our reservists are civilians and must earn their livelihood in civilian occupations, it is not feasible to conduct these consolidated drills during the middle of the week, and, instead, such exercises are conducted on weekends.

As pointed out in Chaplain Clark's reply to Reverend Vanden Berg, a copy of which is attached, these exercises do not exceed an average of one weekend per month. In keeping with the long established practice of the armed forces, military personnel even when engaged in intensive training are habitually given the opportunity to attend church services of their choice. In the case of the reserves, many units have their own chaplains who conduct religious services during periods of field training. In the event chaplains are not available, reserve commanders are authorized and encouraged to make it possible for their personnel to attend nearby civilian churches.

The feeling of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America is appreciated. However, in consideration of the contribution of weekend training periods to the readiness of the Reserve forces, we feel that the continuation of this type of training program is in the best interest of the Nation.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Carlisle P. Runge

Department of Defense  
Armed Forces Chaplains Board  
Washington 25, D.C.

The Reverend Gerald Vanden Berg  
Synodical Stated Clerk  
Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Dear Rev. Vanden Berg

Your letter to the Office of the Secretary of Defense relative to military training on the Sabbath Day has been referred to this office for reply.

Every effort is being made by the Department of Defense to maintain an effective National Guard and reserve program and at the same time to preserve the religious traditions of our nation. Due to continuing advances in modern warfare

techniques, constant emphasis must be placed upon reducing the mobilization readiness time of our reserve forces. National Guard and reserve units must be ready for immediate mobilization or they will be of no value to the defense of our nation.

Classroom training periods, normally held at night, are effective only in presenting theory; longer periods are required for the practical application. Since most reservists are dependent upon their civilian occupations for their bread and butter, they are not available for longer training periods at any other time than weekends.

Maximum participation of reservists will not exceed an average of one weekend per month. To compensate for this, chaplains when available are assigned to units to provide adequate worship services at the training site. When chaplains are not available, commanders have authority to authorize personnel to attend nearby churches for worship.

National Guard and reserve programs as they are now organized are popular with most reservists. The present system allows them to maintain their affiliation without jeopardizing their civilian occupations. It is felt that a reorganization of the program to eliminate weekend training periods would reduce it to such a point of noneffectiveness that the program could not be maintained nor justified. It would also result in an undue hardship on the majority of the participants.

Commanders of National Guard and reserve units are being encouraged to give their personal attention to the establishment of adequate worship programs for their personnel.

Your interest is fully appreciated, and we hope that this reply will help you to understand our position on this matter,

Sincerely yours,

William L. Clark  
Ch., Colonel, USAF  
Executive Director

National Guard Bureau

June 16, 1961

The Reverend Gerald Vanden Berg  
Synodical Stated Clerk  
Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Dear Reverend Vanden Berg:

This is in reply to the statement issued by members of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in session on June 7, 1961, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, relative to the conduct of National Guard training on Sundays and their concern for the religious welfare of those involved.

The law provides that the discipline, including training, of National Guard units shall conform to that of the Army and/or Air Force, respectively, and gives the States the

responsibility for conducting that training. Current training directives require a number of extended training periods (one- or two-day assemblies) for the Army National Guard. These assemblies generally held on Saturdays or Sundays, or both, are the best means of providing the additional training which is essential if the maximum mobilization readiness required of our present day forces is to be achieved.

Recently, an article by the wife of a National Guardsman was published in a newspaper in South Carolina. It expresses with evident honesty and frankness her opinion in regard to Sunday training, and I would like to quote from it as a part of my reply to you. She was concerned about a resolution adopted at a conference of ministers.

"I am wondering if those . . . against the Sunday drills ever voted against soldiers fighting on Sundays to protect the country in World War II and during the Korean conflict? Have they ever voted to stop all military personnel from performing any kind of work on Sunday? Would they have the entire defense of the nation come to a complete stop on Sunday? Would they cease the operation of radar scopes which would pick up signals from enemy planes, and just hope the enemy planes wouldn't bother to come around on Sundays? Would (they) . . . have the youth of America go into battle totally unprepared as far too many of them did during World War II? . . . Did they investigate and find out that religious services are available to every Guardsman during every Sunday drill on a voluntary basis? . . . My husband has been attending Sunday National Guard drills for some eight years now. His opinion . . . is that some of the best sermons he has ever heard were the sermons at Sunday Guard drills. There are many who attend these religious services at Sunday drills who do not attend church at other times. Would (they) . . . prefer that Guardsmen attend a one-hour service at their respective churches, then spend the remainder of the day playing golf, or riding around on dangerous highways, or looking at TV shows at home? . . . I wish (they) . . . would spend at least one Sunday with a Guard unit and see not only what fine religious services they are offered, but what excellent use is made of the day to train these young men, most of whom would otherwise be idling their Sundays away on some much less worthwhile recreation. I might also mention that possibly a nice share of the money they receive for their Sunday training eventually will find its way into the collection plates of their respective churches."

I appreciate the concern of the members of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches about Sunday training and hope this reply will present a point of view which heretofore may not have been considered.

Sincerely,

D. W. McGOWAN  
Major General  
Chief, National Guard Bureau



Headquarters Dep't of the Army

ARROTC 461.01

June 22, 1961

Reverend Gerald Vanden Berg  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Dear Reverend Vanden Berg:

This is in reply to your recent letter in which you expressed your church's opposition to military training for reservists and National Guardsmen on the Sabbath Day.

The unsettled international situation which exists in the world today, has placed some rather stringent demands upon all of us. Our Armed Forces are required to be maintained in a continued state of combat readiness which will permit rapid response to any threats to our national security. Since we are maintaining minimum strengths in our regular forces, our Reserves must be maintained in a state of mobilization readiness that will permit their rapid mobilization and deployment to augment and reinforce other Army forces. Such a situation imposes exacting training demands on the Reserve forces and requires some training beyond that which can be accomplished during the regular two-hour weekly training periods of Reserve units. Consequently, current Department of the Army training policy prescribes six multiple drills or weekend training assemblies for each United States Army Reserve unit during the training year. (Multiple drills consist of at least eight hours of training in one day, and weekend training assemblies consist of at least four hours of military training on two consecutive days of a weekend. Either of these two types of training might require reservists to train on Sunday or the Sabbath). These longer training periods are used for instruction in those military subjects which require considerable time for organization and conduct of training, such as small-unit exercises, range firing and staff training.

Directives of the Department of the Army and subordinate headquarters prescribe that when units conduct training on Sunday or the Sabbath, unit commanders will arrange, where possible, for the conduct of appropriate worship services at the training site for members of their command who desire to attend, or excuse personnel to attend civilian church services of their faith.

In view of the provisions to permit each individual to worship according to his own faith and the pressing requirement to keep the United States Army Reserve in a state of readiness, the Department of the Army considers that the policy discussed above will permit both the moral and spiritual development of our nation's youth and meet the demands of national defense. Our survival is dependent upon ever-ready defense forces as well as a continuing reinforcement of the moral fibre of our people.

Your interest in this matter is fully appreciated and I trust the foregoing will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

JACK M. TUMLINSON  
Major, Infantry  
Executive Officer

Department of the Navy  
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Rev. Vanden Berg:

We, in the Navy, share your concern for the spiritual welfare of the patriotic Americans who serve in the Naval Reserve.

Although the Navy has been very sincere in its attempt to observe the religious aspects of Sunday, it has been found, in some cases, that its members must perform military duties which may interfere with their participation in Sunday Divine services. For the active forces we have been very successful in reducing such interferences. However, some of our Reserve forces present a different problem. Our Reservists are civilians first, and military men second. Their primary responsibility, in our way of life, is to provide for their families. Those who belong to the Reserve must provide this support and in addition relinquish some off-work hours to military training. In general, the current working habits of the country require most of our Reserves at their civilian jobs during the daylight hours of the normal working week. For the majority, therefore, only the evenings and weekends remain for them to devote to military training.

Most of our Reserve programs take advantage of the weekday evening hours; however, in some cases, Reservists, such as those in the Naval Air Reserve and the Reserve Crews for our ships, must have operational training as a team. Since most of the Naval Air Reserve and all of the ships, manned by their own Reserve Crews, are in the highly specialized business of anti-submarine warfare, their training must be done over a longer period. This period is one week-end per month plus one two-week cruise per year. All of the participants in the weekend training programs have joined them voluntarily. However, all of our Naval Air Stations have a chaplain attached and time is allocated from training for men to attend religious services. Aboard ship where there are no chaplains we have a "lay-reader" program and time and space are made available there for religious services.

I appreciate your interest in the Naval Reserve and am pleased to have had this opportunity to explain the Navy's Reserve weekend activities through which our citizen sailors are contributing so significantly to our efforts to combat the Soviet submarine threat.

Sincerely,

w/s J. A. Tyree, Jr.  
Ass't. Chief of Naval Operations

H.C.H.

# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER XXI

#### *The Blessedness of the New Jerusalem*

Revelation 21:1-4

We have seen that the new creation and the new Jerusalem are united in Christ. Christ is the head of the church not only, but also the head of the new creation. And because Christ is the head of all, therefore the new Jerusalem and the new creation are very glorious. In fact, they are so glorious that we cannot even conceive of the glory that shall be. We can only imagine and speak of that glory in earthly terms, as also Scripture does. But sure it is that the new creation will be exceedingly glorious, far more glorious even than the first creation before the fall of man. And as the old creation is earthy, so the new creation will be essentially heavenly. Adam was of the earth, earthy; and so was the old creation. But Christ is the Lord from heaven; and as He is the head of the whole new creation, that creation also will stand forever in heavenly glory.

We further read in this same passage of the book of Revelation that the sea was no more, or, there will be no more sea. This translation, that is, "and there was no more sea," leaves the impression that there will be no sea at all in the new creation. But for that same reason, and also because the text is more definitely and correctly translated in the Revised Version. The Revised Version, as we already suggested, translates more literally, "and the sea is no more." This does not refer to the sea of nations, as some have it. For although the sea sometimes has that significance in the book of Revelation and also elsewhere in Scripture, the present context forbids this interpretation. Nor does it necessarily mean that there will be no sea at all in the new creation. And therefore, I prefer the meaning, as also is evident from the context, that the expression means that the old sea is no more. The sea as a barrier between nation and nation, between people and people, the sea as a dangerous element in the present creation will be no more. The sea was originally created without the curse of sin. And therefore the meaning is undoubtedly that in the new heavens and the earth there may be a new sea, but the old sea will be no more. There will no more be a sea that causes separation in the new creation.

And then we read in vs. 2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven," etc. Concerning this new Jerusalem, let us note, in the first place, that it is the perfect antitype of the old Jerusalem, the city of God, now, that is, in the new creation, perfected and glorified. Cf. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 11:10, 16; Rev. 3:12. In the first passage we read: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." And in Heb. 11:10 we read: "For he (that is, Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations,

whose builder and maker is God." And in verse 16: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." And in Rev. 3:12 we read the following: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." As to this new Jerusalem, we understand, of course, that we must not think of a literal city. There are indeed those who maintain that it is, who claim that also this description must be taken in a literal sense of the word. However, that is quite impossible. Against this idea is the text itself. Already in this present passage there is an indication that this new Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb. This is also expressed in verses 9 and 10 of this same chapter. The new Jerusalem and the bride of the Lamb are identical. Now the bride of the Lamb surely is no city in the literal sense of the word. Against this idea is also the development of Jerusalem as it occurs in the Word of God. As shown before, Jerusalem is manifested in a three-fold form. First of all, it was the capital of the old land of Canaan. Secondly, it is also the church of the New Testament in the broadest sense of the word. This is also very plain from Scripture, and I do not have to quote to corroborate this idea. But, in the third place, Jerusalem is also the perfected church, the bride of the Lamb in glory. Hence, Jerusalem is the church triumphant in perfect glory. And if you ask the question why this city is called the new Jerusalem, then we answer, in the first place, that the idea of Jerusalem was that it was the city of God. There God dwelt among His Old Testament people Israel. From there He had communion with them; from there He blessed them with all the blessings of salvation as it was shadowed in the old dispensation. From there He reigned over them and protected them against the enemies that were round about them. But we must remember that the earthly Jerusalem was imperfect. It is true that God dwelt among His people; but He did not dwell *in* them. The relation in the old dispensation was more or less external. Nor did the presence of God *fill* the city: He dwelt in the temple, particularly in the most holy place. Hence, in the old dispensation Jerusalem existed only in a typical form. And that typical form was ended through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His death the old Jerusalem passed away, as is evident from the fact that the veil of the temple was rent in twain. And therefore, the new Jerusalem is first of all realized in the church of the New Testament. It is the holy city of the new dispensation. It differs from that of the Old Testament form, first of all, in that it is no city of brick and stone. The believers themselves are the dwellingplace of God. In the second place, it differs in that God does not merely dwell *among* His people, but *in* them. Through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ God dwells in their hearts. And therefore, they have spiritual communion, are spiritually

blessed. The Lord reigns over them from within. But also this New Testament form of the new Jerusalem is still imperfect: first of all, because the entire church is not filled with God's presence. There are in the midst of the church as it develops in the world in the line of continued generations unbelievers and hypocrites. Moreover, the communion between God and His people is not perfect: for sin still reigns in their members. Perfectly God dwells only in Christ. And therefore the new Jerusalem is realized ultimately in the perfected church triumphant. That perfect church, that church triumphant, is the perfect city of God. In it is neither unbeliever nor hypocrite. In it there is no sin and no power of evil. The communion between God and His people in the new Jerusalem is perfect. And therefore, we may briefly summarize all that we have said of Jerusalem by the following remarks. First, the new Jerusalem is the perfect anti-type of the old Jerusalem, the city of God perfected and glorified. Cf. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 11:16; Rev. 3:12. In the second place, it is the perfected and glorified church, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. In the third place, this new Jerusalem comes out of heaven to dwell on the new earth. In the fourth place, it comes from God as its author. Cf. Heb. 11:10. And finally, it is a holy community, free from sin and consecrated to God, and therefore, beautiful, adorned as a bride for her husband, that is, Christ.

The passage continues by emphasizing the cause of the great blessedness that will be in the new creation, particularly in the new Jerusalem. Thus we read in verse 3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." This is undoubtedly the principle and the cause of the blessedness in the new Jerusalem. "I heard a great voice," the apostle says. This great voice, whose author is not mentioned here, expresses emphatically the central idea of the new Jerusalem, "the tabernacle of God is with men." This idea is further explained in what follows: "He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The idea of the tabernacle of God is undoubtedly the perfect fellowship of God's covenant. That covenant with its perfect fellowship of friendship is now fully realized and is the essence of the blessedness of the city of God. This is also the ultimate realization of all prophecy. Thus, for instance, we read in Ezekiel 37:27: "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The same is truly expressed in Isaiah 25:6-8: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord

hath spoken it." And almost the entire sixtieth chapter of Isaiah refers to the same thing. We will quote verses 18 and 19: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." We could continue this, as, for instance, in verse 20: "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

In verse 4 we read: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." A state of blessedness results from God's fellowship with His people that is described here in terms that denote the absence of all suffering and sickness and death. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: that is, He shall comfort them for all their suffering which they endured while they were in the present world, causing them to inherit the exceeding great reward of heavenly glory. And too, there shall be no more cause for weeping forevermore. And thus the text continues: "And there shall be no more death." Death is completely and in all its forms and operations swallowed up in victory. Positively, this indicates, of course, that the saints shall live forever in glory with Christ; and they shall reign forevermore. Death can never enter in the new Jerusalem and in the new creation. It follows that there shall be no more sorrow, which means, positively speaking, that there shall be everlasting joy and gladness. There shall be no more crying, but everlasting rejoicing, with songs of gladness. There shall be no more pain, but everlasting well-being and prosperity. For all these—sorrow, crying, pain—are implied in and are the result of death. When death is swallowed up and everlasting life reigns supreme in Christ, none of these shall ever enter into the glory that shall then be revealed. "For the former things are passed away." This is stated as the reason for the absence of all suffering. The "former things" are the present economy of things since the fall, since sin entered into the world. For then we are under the curse, characterized by death and suffering. And these are now passed away forevermore. And therefore we can shout with the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:51-57: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." H.H.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### The Song of Moses

*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song  
unto the Lord . . .* Exodus 15:3

Under the full light of the morning sun, Israel found itself in the quiet stillness of the wilderness. The air hung in hushed silence except for the gentle sound of the waves lapping rhythmically upon the seashore. The expanses of the desert stretched out before them in peaceful serenity. But within the children of Israel were in turmoil from the unprecedented variety of their thoughts.

Suddenly they knew themselves to be free men. All of their lives they had lived in the bondage of Egypt. They were used to rising wearily every morning to the call of their Egyptian masters. They were used to spending their days at the sole command of others. They were used to bending their backs to the cry of cruel taskmasters. They were used to ending their days in utter fatigue without one thought or consideration to their own, personal desires. Now suddenly they were free; free to live their lives according to the wishes of their own hearts; free to return to a land that they themselves could possess; free to labor for their own benefit and that of their families; free, above all, to worship Jehovah their God in liberty after the manner that they ought. The newness of this feeling, the exuberance of spirit it aroused in their hearts, the very joy with which it filled their souls was almost more than their minds could begin to comprehend.

And then there was the torrent of memories that surged again and again through their hearts; the memory of Jehovah coming to them through Moses to take their part against the enemy and to strike the Egyptians with judgments nine and ten times over again; the memory of that final midnight hour when the angel of Jehovah passed through the land smiting with pestilence and death the firstborn of every house that was not covered by the sign of the redeeming blood; the memory of that last symbolic meal composed of the flesh of the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, and eaten in haste, fully dressed and ready for travel because it was to serve as a source of physical and spiritual strength to carry them on to the promised land; the memory of their triumphal departure, urged on by the trembling Egyptians who willingly pressed into their hands jewels of silver and gold, an unexpected payment for all of their years of labor; the memory of that strange and mysterious journey that brought them to their freedom; the joy of those first few days of travel when the cloud of Jehovah appeared to lead them toward the south; the feelings of consternation and dismay when they found themselves closed in on every side by the sea and the mountains and Pharaoh's army so that even the bondage of Egypt seemed better to them than their expected end; the

hovering cloud of Jehovah urging them to go onward into the very depths of the sea and swinging around behind them to separate them from Pharaoh's army only after Moses had raised his rod to divide the sea asunder; the singular night-time passage through the deep with the winds of heaven holding the tempestuous waters in walls beside them while lightning and thunder flashed and rumbled overhead, and the glow of the pillar of fire gave light to guide their feet; the ascent from the sea as though from the very bosom of death to stand finally upon land that was free; the final justification of Jehovah over his enemies as He brought the walls of water flowing in upon them in their rash and foolish pursuit through the sea. All these memories pressed upon them as they stood amid the quiet stillness of the wilderness, basked in the rays of morning light. Only the bodies of the Egyptian army lapped up on the shore by the waves were to be seen as a reminder of all that had transpired through the hours of the night.

That morning as never before, the Israelites understood the greatness of Jehovah their God. Even as His name implied, He had been faithful to His covenant. For all that had taken place, they could take none of the credit. They had proved hesitant and even rebellious; but Jehovah had gone forth in His love to punish their enemies, to bring them out of bondage, and with many miraculous works to carry them on their way victoriously. Their hearts swelled within them at the greatness of their God.

At last there burst forth from the lips of Moses and of Israel a song of adoration to their God. After an opening refrain expressing the theme of praise, three glorious verses followed. Each verse opened with an expression of praise to Jehovah after which the first and second verses recounted His victory over Pharaoh and the third gave expression of their faith in the promises yet to come. So they sang:\*

*Sing will I to the Lord, for highly exalted is He,  
Horse and his rider He hath thrown into the sea.*

*My strength and song is JAH (Jehovah),*

*He became my salvation;*

*He is my God, whom I extol,*

*My father's God, whom I exalt.*

*Jehovah is a Man of war:*

*Jehovah is His name:*

*Pharaoh's chariots and his might He cast into the sea,*

*And the choice of his knights were drowned in the Red Sea.*

*Floods cover them;*

*They go down into the deep like stone.*

*Thy right hand, Jehovah, glorified in power,*

*Thy right hand dashes in pieces the enemy.*

*In the fulness of Thy majesty Thou pullest down Thine  
opponents.*

\*The translation is taken from the commentary of Keil & Delitzsch.

*And by the breath of Thy nostrils the waters heaped themselves up;*

*The flowing ones stood like a heap.*

*The waves congealed in the heart of the sea:*

*The enemy said: I pursue, overtake, divide, spoil,*

*My soul becomes full of them;*

*I draw my sword, my hand will root them out.*

*Thou didst blow with Thy breath;*

*The sea covered them.*

*They sank as lead in the mighty waters.*

*Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Jehovah?*

*Who is like unto Thee, glorified in holiness?*

*Fearful for praises, doing wonders,*

*Thou stretchest out Thy hand, the earth swallows them.*

*Thou ledest through Thy mercy the people whom Thou redeemest;*

*Thou guidest them through Thy might to Thy holy habitation.*

*People hear, they are afraid;*

*Trembling seizes the inhabitants of Philistia.*

*Then are the princes of Edom confounded;*

*The mighty men of Moab, trembling seizes them;*

*All the inhabitants of Canaan despair.*

*Fear and dread fall upon them; for the greatness of Thine arm;*

*They are dumb as stones, till Thy people pass through, Jehovah, till the people which Thou hast purchased pass through.*

*Thou wilt bring and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance,*

*The place which Thou hast made for Thy dwelling-place, Jehovah,*

*For the sanctuary, Lord, which Thy hands prepared.*

*Jehovah will be King for ever and ever.*

The voices of the men of Israel resounded from the mountains of the wilderness and re-echoed across the waters of the sea. The sound of victory literally filled the air. Even as they sang, the women of Israel with Miriam at their head took up the opening refrain. With timbrel and dance, they responded again and again, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." To the Church of all ages the joy of the children of Israel expressed in this song stands as a picture and a type of the triumphal rejoicing of the saints in New Jerusalem when they in like manner shall sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). In that day all glory was given to God. Could this nation ever doubt his power again?

When at last they resumed their journey, there was confidence in every step. Here and there among the throng there could still be heard the verses of Moses' song coming from the lips of those who even as they walked continued to sing. The conversation flowed freely as friends walked and talked together on the way. Only gradually did the people begin to notice how different the land was from that which they had left. Gone were the fertile valleys of Egypt with their ever flowing fountains and springs. Gone was the rich vegetation of trees, vegetables, and grain. All that was to be seen were the barren expanses of desert with only the thinnest covering of wilted grass. Dominating the scene was only the glaring blast of the mid-day sun with its burning, oppressive heat. But that was not a day in which to worry. They had tasted the joy of victory through the power of their God.

It was not until the second and third day afterward that the feelings of the people began to waver. Their joy they still remembered, but the monotony was beginning to tell. Everywhere they looked there were the glaring rays of the sun reflected from barren wastes. True, they did not suffer, for the cloud of Jehovah sheltered them from the greatest heat of the daytime sun; but it was oppressive just the same. And then there was the complete lack of fresh water. That which they carried in their skins had become warm and uninviting to the taste, and even that was about gone. Conversation began to lag, and the song of Moses was no longer heard; the joy of the nation so soon was changed into morbid silence.

It was on the third day that the crisis came. The word was passed through the camp that water had been seen in the distance. The strongest hastened ahead so as to be the first to receive its refreshment. They stooped to drink deeply only to rise spewing it out and crying, "Marah!" The water was bitter. One after another they tried it, but the result was always the same. The water was too bitter to drink. A tide of rage quickly passed through the people until they turned to Moses and said, "What shall we drink?"

It was Moses who went in prayer to God. He was shown a tree which when it was cut down and cast into the water the waters became sweet. The people were able to drink.

But something had happened at Marah. By the Red Sea there had been a joy and confidence that they thought would never end. But now it was known that weakness still remained. The Song of Moses they knew in principle; but only in the life to come would they be able to sing it with such confidence again.

B.W.

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What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.  
Ps. 116:12, 13.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 2:1-7)

a.

Many of us are acquainted with this passage from the pen of Paul, written by the Apostle as he was driven by the Holy Spirit, in which he enjoins Timothy to teach the church at Ephesus that prayers be made for all men. It seems to me, that, the reason and occasion for our being acquainted with this passage, is not that we were deeply and profoundly interested in the problem of prayer for all people; rather our interest centered in the question of refuting the errors of the Arminians and "Common Grace" enthusiasts, who appealed to this passage, each to sustain his respective errors!

The particular part of this entire passage to which the Arminians referred, as well as the Common Grace theorists, the Christian Reformed Churches, is found in verses 3 and 4, where we read: "This is good and acceptable before God, our Savior, who wills to save all men, and unto the knowledge of the truth to come."

It was because we took and take exception to the erroneous interpretation of those who advocate *general atonement*, as well as of those who advocate a *non-saving* grace of God, that we took a second look at this passage from Scripture and took pains to demonstrate that the exegesis of the Arminian teachers, being weighed in the balances, was found wanting.

And, thus doing, we performed an admirable and necessary service to the church of God in the world.

Possibly it is not redundant to remind ourselves at this juncture, in the interpretation of the passage under consideration, that we should beware of two pit-falls. On the one hand we must not fall into the exegetical error of the Arminians and of all heretics to simply lift this passage out of its context, and place it in the preconceived framework of their Arminian view of a "double predestination"; a predestination unto faith and a predestination unto salvation, and say then explicitly or implicitly "agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins . . . ." Thus do the Arminians. They fail to interpret Scripture in the light of Scripture, and thus do violence to the word of God. That we must avoid. We must fearlessly let the Scriptures speak. Our dogmatics may not determine our exegesis. On the other hand, we must also beware of simply showing what the text does *not* teach. This latter is always true. We must do more than simply handle the sword; we must also

employ the trowel. In this instance it means that we must not be content to show that the Arminians misinterpret Paul, as do also the Christian Reformed on this point, but we must listen to the positive instruction of Paul in this passage, to wit, that prayers be made for all men by the church!

This calls for a careful reading of the text, the context, the rest of this letter, and of the entire Scriptures which shed light upon this question.

The text itself reads in full as follows: "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between (of) God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all (a testimony) to be testified in due time, whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (verses 1-7).

It is our settled conviction, that, as far as the *objects* of our prayer is concerned, we must settle what *Paul* has in mind when he writes here that prayers must be made for *all men*! That is the duty of exegesis. It is the science of determining the meaning of the Author, God in Paul. That is all-determinative.

Now if a word has a certain meaning in text and context it has that meaning throughout. We may not arbitrarily make words mean what we will them to mean; that is not interpretation but interpolation!

The question is: is there anything in the text and context which gives us the *key* to the proper understanding of what Paul means with "all men"? A careless, superficial and painstakingless reading of the text might lead one to *read into* the text what Arminians and the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924 (and subsequent Synods!!) think they read in the text, namely, the intention of God to either save all men, since Christ, so they say, "died for all and for every man," or, what is principally no different, Christ's death is the evidence of a "favorable attitude for all to whom the gospel is preached"! The former is the view of the Arminians and the latter of the Christian Reformed Churches.

It should, therefore, interest us what Paul himself means with the term "all men."

In the first place we would observe, therefore, that the concept "all men" is by no means the same as the concept "every man." Paul writes the former and not the latter. There is a difference and a fundamental distinction between these two. The former is collective, while the latter is distributive in nature; the former does not count noses, the latter does. When you say "every man" as do the Arminians in Point II of the *Five Articles of the Remonstrants*, you



have allowed for no exceptions. Every is every! But in the case of the latter, namely, "all men," there are exceptions to those who are saved and for whom Christ died.

A fine point, indeed!

Let us keep this in mind.

It ought to be closely observed, that Paul speaks more than once of "all men" and of "all" in the text. Thus in verse 1 we read: "... and giving of thanks, *be made for all men.*" Again in verse 4 we read: "... who will have *all men to be saved* and come to the knowledge of the truth." And in verse 6 we read: "... Christ Jesus; who gave himself a *ransom for all*!" Besides we should notice, that, in chapter 4:10 we read: "... because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of *all men*, specially of those who believe."

To this may be added, moreover, what we read in Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men."

I ask now in all candor: is it not imperative, in the light of such frequent usage of the term "all men" to pay rather close attention to the text and context in determining the meaning from this usage? We may safely speak of Paul's *current usage* of the term. Especially if one bears in mind further what we read in I Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive."

What shall we say of this?

Shall we say with the Arminians, as the Remonstrants expressed their sentiments in Point II: "... Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins . . .?"

Lest we be accused of being unscientific in our exposition of the Scriptures, I wish to state here and now that I believe that it is a sound rule in the science of interpretation of any document that the less clear passages be interpreted in the light of the more clear passages, and not conversely. The latter is the method of those who would obscure the sense of the Scriptures, and thus pervert the Scriptures to their own destruction.

When the rule of *exegesis* is applied that we interpret Scripture in the light of Scripture, and less clear passages in the light of the more clear passages, it appears, that we shall not have any difficulty in understanding the meaning of the text, particularly, what Paul has in mind with "all men"!

Paying close attention to the text here in I Tim. 2:1-7 we notice that Paul in admonishing Timothy to instruct the church to pray for "all men" modifies this by adding "for kings and all who are in authority." This last phrase, placed appositionally to "all men," shows that Paul is not here thinking of "every man" in general as think the Arminians nor of "everyone to whom the Gospel is preached" as do the Christian Reformed Churches, but rather that he is referring here to every class of men amongst men. I believe that this

is clear, beyond any shadow of doubt, in a kindred passage in Titus 2:11 quoted above. There too "all men" refers to all *kinds* of men, from every walk of life, Jew and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, adult and children. In a word: all men, without distinction of rank or social standing among men. This is evident from the various admonitions which Paul writes in Titus 2:1-11. He has a special admonition for "aged men" (grave, temperate, etc.), for the "aged women," the "young women," the "young men," "servants" and "masters." And the reason for this all is given in Titus 2:11: "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men.*" Obviously, one does not expect Paul to prove that his admonitions are for "every class of men" by appealing to "universal salvation" and "a general attitude of favor," but rather that "all men" is simply a summing up of all the different classes who had been admonished by him in the foregoing verses: aged men, aged women, young women, young men, servants, masters. And even by implication "children." Compare the classes Paul addresses in Ephesians 5:22-Ephesians 6:9. Compare the Decalogue itself in Exodus 20!

We might point out that in the King James version the rendering of Titus 2:11 is not "the grace that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared" but rather "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men." In the one case the reference is to the "preaching" which comes to "all men" inclusive of the admonitions to each class amongst men. The other speaks of the grace which "saves" every class of men as we read in Galatians 3:27-29: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are *all* one in Christ Jesus." Here too the term is "all," that is, the entire distinction of Jew and Greek is gone. The middlewall of partition has been removed once and for all!

And thus it is in Titus 2:11!

No less, however, is this the case in I Tim. 2:1, 4 and 6. Also here the term refers to "all men, for kings and for all that are in authority."

However, we would caution here not to limit "all men" to kings and all in authority. It is for all men in the sense of every class of men, and, therefore, *also* for those in authority as a "class"! These must not be excluded for they are a part of the "all" for whom prayers must be made as *one* of the *classes of men* for whom Christ died.

We cannot in this installment enter in detail into the matter of the reason for Paul's enjoining that "first of all" prayers, supplications, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men. However, we would caution the reader to bear in mind that this exhortation is not *limited* for kings and all who are in authority. These prayers are for the entire church, every class of men!

More of this next time, D.V.

G.L.



## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### INFLUENCE OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION

The main principles of the Reformation, we have noted in previous articles, are usually considered to be two: the formal and the material. According to the formal principle, the Reformation acknowledged only one source of authority, the Holy Scriptures. With this principle they stood opposed to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism (Quakers, Anabaptists, etc.), and to Rationalism. The Roman Catholic Church acknowledged, besides the Word of God, also Tradition as a source of authority; Protestantism recognized only the sixty-six canonical books. The Roman Catholic Church claimed that the right and power to interpret the Bible belonged to the clergy, and this means, we understand, the Pope; Protestantism maintained that every Christian is able and has the right to interpret the Word of God. False Mysticism is characterized by its rejection of the objective authority of the Bible and reliance upon the "inner light"; Protestantism claimed that the objective revelation in Scripture must be the sole and only reliable canon for faith and life. And Rationalism would subject all things, even the Holy Scriptures, to Reason; the Reformers subjected Reason to the revelation of the Word of God. The material principle of the Reformation is expressed in the words: Justification by faith only. And, we understand, of course, that in this expression faith must be viewed as the free and sovereign gift of God, and that therefore our justification is purely a gift of God and not by works in any sense of the word. The Roman Catholic Church had become pelagian in its conception of sin and grace, and held that we are justified also by works. The Reformers rejected this view and maintained that the believer is justified only by faith. And this is surely also the undoubted and undeniable testimony of our Confessions, as we showed in our previous articles.

It lies in the nature of the case that the influence of these principles, the formal and material principles of the Reformation, was great and profound. A considerable part of the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the Church, the priesthood, the pope, the sacraments, etc., was not based on the Word of God at all, but simply on Tradition and upon the institutions of men. What Scriptural grounds does Rome advance for its conception of the sacraments? Rome has seven sacraments. They are, besides the Lord's Supper and Baptism: Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, Extreme Unction. What Scriptural grounds and proof does it advance

for the sacraments besides the Lord's Supper and Baptism? Is it not particularly true of these other five sacraments that Rome's Scriptural proof is woefully weak? What Scriptural ground does Rome have for its conception of the Papacy, with which conception its entire structure stands or falls? Was this conception not based upon two gigantic frauds, the Donation of Constantine and the Isidorian Decretals?

Roman Catholicism ascribes the same authority to Tradition as it does to the Holy Scriptures. These traditions are called unwritten because they are not contained in the Scriptures. They are, for the most part, now to be found written in the works of the Fathers, decisions of councils, ecclesiastical constitutions, and rescripts of the Popes. The Romish Church teaches that Christ taught many things which were not committed to writing, that is, not recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. Rome also maintains that these instructions have been faithfully transmitted, and preserved in the Church. And that Church also maintains that these traditions constitute a part of the rule of faith for all believers. Moreover, Rome maintains that the Scriptures can be understood and embraced only in the light of Tradition, that only the Church, and this means fundamentally the Pope, is able to explain and interpret these traditions, so that, according to Rome, the faith and doctrine and life of the people of God is exclusively dependent upon the clergy, and this, we understand, means the Pope.

This Roman Catholic position on Tradition is surely set forth in a set of Roman Catholic books, known as "Radio Replies" by the Rev. Dr. Leslie Rumble, M.S.C., and edited in collaboration with Rev. Charles Mortimer Carty, a diocesan missionary. This set of books is a volume of three books which contain questions addressed to and answered by the Rev. Dr. Leslie Rumble. Question 472, Volume II, reads: "Do you place more reliance on Catholic dogma and tradition than on the Bible?" And the answer reads as follows: "As remote sources of Christian doctrine Catholics accept equally the Bible and authentic Christian tradition. These constitute the written and unwritten Word of God. The immediate guide of Catholics is the official teaching of the Catholic Church. That Church expresses from time to time in a dogma the exact sense of some doctrine contained either in Scripture or tradition. As divine tradition can never be opposed to Scripture, and Catholic dogma can never be opposed to either Scripture or tradition, there can never be any question of placing more reliance on one than on the others. Of course, where a person's private interpretation of Scripture conflicts with a dogma of the Church, I would certainly place more reliance on the dogma of the Church than upon that person's private interpretation of Scripture." Notice, please, the following in this quotation. First, the Bible and authentic Christian tradition are accepted by Roman Catholicism EQUALLY. Secondly, the immediate guide of Catholics is the official teaching of the Catholic Church. That expresses from time to time in a dogma the exact sense of some doctrine contained either in Scripture or

tradition. This means that the clergy, that is the pope, has the sole right in the Roman Catholic Church to interpret and explain Scripture and tradition.

Then, the Rev. Dr. Rumble had been confronted with the proposition: "Tradition is no more reliable as evidence than mere gossip or rumor." To this Dr. Rumble answers as follows in Answer 473: "You are using the word tradition in a sense other than that intended by the Church in this matter. We intend, as a source of Christian truth, that divine tradition which is the collection of doctrines taught by Christ and the Apostles, but which were not written in the New Testament. They have been written in various 'Creeds,' and 'Professions of Faith,' and are supported by the unanimous consent of the Fathers who lived in the first centuries and knew the Apostolic teaching. St. Paul said to Timothy, 'The things you have heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who will be fit to teach others also.' II Tim. 2:2. The early ecclesiastical writers recorded the teachings of these 'faithful men': and those teachings are an authentic source of the revelation of Christ to be transmitted to posterity. Later, and merely human traditions, have nothing to do with this divine tradition, which has been specially safeguarded by the Holy Spirit." In this answer Dr. Rumble replies that the Roman Catholic Church means with tradition a collection of doctrines of Christ and the Apostles that are not written in the New Testament. And we understand, of course, that these sayings of Christ and the Apostles were written down by these men merely from memory. Christ and the apostles did not dictate these sayings to these men who wrote them and which now constitute a part of the Roman Catholic tradition.

In Volume III of this set the Roman Catholic doctrine on tradition is more elaborately set forth, in Questions 516-528. We will quote these quotations.

516. Has the ordinary reader no chance whatever of arriving at the correct sense of Scripture? In very many isolated passages of Scripture he could certainly do so. In a great many passages he would scarcely be able to do so. In many others he would have no chance at all. There is no doubt whatever that the Bible is one of the most difficult books to understand. One needs a vast knowledge of ancient languages, history, and customs; and must be quite at home with Hebrew and Greek allegorical, metaphorical, and typical expressions, quite apart from the spiritual insight required to penetrate the loftiest mysteries. How many individuals are thus qualified? The untrained lack the historical and philological information necessary to appreciate the true sense of what is written, and therefore make isolated texts mean what they wish, without adverting to either context or parallel passages. In the "Merchant of Venice" Shakespeare puts upon the lips of Bassanio the famous words, "In religion what damned error, but some brow will bless it, and approve it with a text."

517. Even though he were to fail here and there, could

not the average reader gain a knowledge from the Bible of the whole body of Christian doctrine in general?

That would not be possible, for Christian doctrine in its totality is not to be found in Scripture. Much of Christian doctrine is contained not in Scripture but in tradition; and a clear understanding of Christian doctrine requires in many cases the precise definitions of the Catholic Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (In connection with these answers 516 and 517, we would make the following observations. First, Protestantism recognizes, of course, the truth that the Scripture is a most profound book. However, we also maintain the perspicuity of the Scriptures. This means that, although it is true, on the one hand, that the Bible is a most profound book, it is also characterized by the fact that it is transparently clear, so that a child can understand its most fundamental teachings. And, secondly, Answer 517 teaches clearly that the Word of God, the Bible, is not sufficient by itself, and that the totality of Christian doctrine is not to be found in Scripture. — H.V.)

518. Tell me this. Are all Roman Catholic doctrines founded upon the Scriptures? Not all Catholic doctrines are to be found in the Bible. But none of them is opposed to any teaching of Scripture. Some Catholic doctrines are found directly recorded in Scripture; others are logically derived from teachings recorded there; others are founded upon divine tradition. Scripture itself guarantees divine tradition to be a sound source of doctrine. Thus St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle." II Thess. 2:14. The traditions which the early Christians learned by word, and which were not included in the New Testament writings, have been preserved in the Catholic Church. (In connection with this statement we would remark the following. Notice that some of the Roman Catholic doctrines are not founded upon the Scriptures whatever. Some of their doctrines are found directly recorded in Scripture; others are logically derived from teachings recorded there; others are founded upon divine tradition. In other words, some of the Roman Catholic doctrines are not even logically derived from the teachings recorded in the written Word of God. Some of their doctrines have no Scriptural basis whatever. And as far as the reference to II Thess. 2:14 is concerned [should be II Thess. 2:15] we may remark that the Thessalonians are exhorted by the apostle to hold fast that which had been taught them by Paul and other apostles, whether by word or as embodied in his epistles. This has nothing to do with the Roman Catholic doctrine of Tradition, as teaching things not even based upon the Scriptures. — H.V.)

H.V.

The Lord will send His blessings down,  
And harvest all our land shall crown;  
Before Him righteousness abides,  
And in His steps our feet He guides.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Belgic Confession

#### ARTICLE I

(continued)

It stands to reason, therefore, in the light of what we have said previously (confer May 15 issue) concerning this attribute of God's eternity, that it is ultimately impossible to produce a definition in the true sense of the word. This is in a way true concerning all God's attributes, but especially applies to those attributes which we sometimes call "incommunicable." The truth of God's simplicity, together with the divine incomprehensibility, precludes this. God in His eternity is the Incomprehensible One. As time cannot comprehend eternity, and as the creature of time cannot fathom the Eternal One, so it is impossible to define and to delimit this attribute of God's eternity. He that fails to reckon with this fact makes a fatal error. For in nevertheless attempting to define the indefinable and from the vantage point of time to delimit the eternal, he will say very loudly "Man, creature, time," when he thinks to say "God, Creator, Eternal One."

If with this in mind we must nevertheless make a "definition" of this attribute of God, we may say that it is that attribute of God according to which He, negatively speaking, is not bound to any time and, positively, that attribute according to which God, as being above time, lives His infinite, perfect life unceasingly with perfect consciousness.

The significance of this attribute is broad, especially when we take into consideration the fact that implied in this divine perfection are the truths that God is the Uncaused One, the Independent, the Unchangeable, the Incorruptible. He is the I AM. And the practical significance for the faith of the child of God is quite clear in this connection. God's counsel, God's purpose, God's work, God's election, God's love, God's grace, God's mercy, God's promises — these all are eternal as God is eternal. And before that eternal God I shall humbly confess my dependence on Him alone, never ascribe to Him sin, corruption, dependence, change, or any lack or imperfection, trust in Him completely, and hope for eternal glory according to His eternal promises.

#### 2. *God is Incomprehensible*

When the Sovereign of heaven and earth reveals Himself, it is always as the Incomprehensible One. And therefore, while again we may point to passages of Scripture which directly teach this incomprehensibility of God, we must nevertheless remember that God never reveals Himself in any other wise than as the unfathomable God. Elihu testifies: "Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out." Job 36:26. And in Job 37:5 he states: "God thundereth marvelously with his

voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend." The psalmist testifies in Psalm 139, when he contemplates the omniscience and omnipresence of Jehovah: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Ps. 139:6. And in vss. 17 and 18 of the same Psalm: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." And the psalmist of Psalm 145 extols God as follows: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." Ps. 145:3. In Isaiah 40 we read: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? . . . There is no searching of his understanding." Isaiah 40:13-18, 28. And the note of the incomprehensibility cannot be missed in the doxology of Romans 11:33-36: "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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

What is implied in this incomprehensibility of the living God?

In the first place, we must be careful to maintain, in the light of Scripture, that God's incomprehensibility does not mean that we can know and understand nothing of the living God. God is the incomprehensible, but He is not the unknowable. A god whom you and I can comprehend is not God; but a God Whom you and I cannot even know cannot be the object of our faith. Faith in the Unknowable is a contradiction in terms. In the second place, we must always remember that while God is not the unknowable, but certainly can be known by His creatures, He can be known *only when and in as far as He Himself makes Himself known to the creature*. In other words, God can be known only by revelation. Even as God Triune alone knows Himself with an infinitely perfect and eternal knowledge, so it is He only that is able to impart His knowledge to the creature and to reveal Himself. In the third place, while the Lord our God knows Himself and fathoms His infinite essence eternally and consciously contemplates His own glorious perfections from eternity to eternity, it must nevertheless be remembered that when He reveals Himself and makes Himself known to the creature, this does not mean that He forms a creature capable of re-

ceiving His own infinite and eternal knowledge of Himself. Such a creature would have to be infinite as God is infinite. But that God reveals Himself implies that God speaks concerning Himself and imparts the knowledge of Himself in a form in which the creature can receive it and in a creaturely measure. Behind and beyond the plane of revelation there always remain infinite depths of the divine Being and perfections which we can never fathom. In revelation God gives His Word a finite form and comes down to us. And while He reaches out for us and speaks to us in a form that is adapted to our capacity, God through that very means of revelation at the same time deeply impresses upon our minds and hearts that He is always infinitely greater than His own revelation, so that while through that revelation we know Him, we know Him only as the Incomprehensible One. To sum up, therefore, the divine incomprehensibility is that perfection of God according to which, in relation to our creaturely knowledge and understanding, God is always infinitely greater than that knowledge, so that we can never rationally search Him out and explain Him.

The practical spiritual significance of this perfection of God must be evident. In the first place, it implies that we shall not rationalistically construe our own conception of God, which can only be an idol, but let ourselves be instructed and guided by His own revelation of Himself. In the second place, the faith that God is incomprehensible impels one diligently and prayerfully to search the revelation of the living God for an ever clearer and fuller knowledge of Him. And, in the third place, it implies that we shall ever approach that revelation in a humble and worshipful attitude and in the profound consciousness of the depth of God's riches.

### 3. *God is Invisible.*

This attribute of God, which is closely related to the essential spirituality of God, is literally taught in Scripture in more than one passage. In Deuteronomy 4:12, 15-19, 23 we read: "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven . . . Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of

any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee." From the above it is also evident that the invisibility of God is one of the basic implications of the second commandment. In John 1:18 we read: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Romans 1:20 also teaches this invisibility of God: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." In Colossians 1:15 Christ is referred to as "the image of the invisible God." This same attribute is mentioned in I Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." And again, in I Timothy 6:16 it is taught as follows: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." Finally, in I John 4:12 we read: "No man hath seen God at any time."

What must we understand by this invisibility of God? Does it merely mean that God is beyond the range of our earthly vision? Or is there more implied in God's invisibility? Furthermore, does not the Word of God also teach that we shall see God face to face, I Corinth. 13:12 and I John 3:2?

As we mentioned already, this attribute stands closely connected with the truth that God is a Spirit. And not only does it mean that God is not material, like the visible creation, so that He is beyond the range of our earthly perception. But God is essentially invisible. In this respect He is distinguished also from the angels. The angels are heavenly spirits; and as such they are invisible to us who are on the earth now. But they are not absolutely invisible. They are merely invisible to our earthly and material vision. God, however, is pure and absolute spiritual Being. His attributes do not inhere in any substance; He is His attributes. And as pure Spirit, God is at once absolutely and essentially invisible. No man hath seen Him, nor can see Him. He can be known only by revelation. And while the mode of that revelation changes from the plane of the earthly to that of the heavenly, even as we shall be changed from the earthly to the heavenly, this can never mean that we shall see God in His Essence. In Himself God is the Invisible One. And that we shall see Him face to face never can mean that we shall see Him without revelation, but that we shall see Him always in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The significance of this attribute lies, first of all, in the prohibition of the second commandment, namely, that I shall in no wise represent the infinite and invisible God by images. And, positively, it implies, in the second place, that I shall humbly and submissively and joyfully inquire concerning Him in His own revelation and shall long for that perfection wherein I shall see Him face to face through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H.C.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Partaking At The Lord's Supper

According to our Church Order, one of the requirements for admission to the table of the Lord is that a confession of the Reformed religion be made by the applicant. This means that in Reformed Churches the principle of "closed communion" is maintained. Only those who are believers in confession and life have the right to the sacraments.

We added the words "and life" in the last sentence because Article 61 of our Church Order stipulates in addition to the aforementioned requirement, a second in the words, "besides being reputed to be of a godly walk." Confession and life are inseparable. When the consistory interrogates one who desires to make confession of faith, questions of a doctrinal and practical nature are asked. The reason for this should be evident. Doctrinal questions are necessary in order to make plain that the one making confession knows what he is confessing. To make confession of the Reformed religion necessitates that one is acquainted with and understands the Reformed Faith. However, a mere intellectual understanding of the doctrines of the church does not qualify one for a place at the table of the Lord. It must also be evident that one is resolved, by the grace of God, to conduct himself in all things in agreement with that faith.

Back in 1900 the Christian Reformed Churches established a synodical ruling that required every consistory to ask each person making confession of faith whether he or she is a member of any secret, oath-bound society. (Acts 1900, Art. 84, Schaver's Church Polity.) The *Church Order Commentary* points out that, "Those who are lodge members are not to be admitted. One main reason for withholding the Lord's Supper and membership rights from lodge-members is that the lodge is representative of a false, anti-Christian religion. The lodges teach that if a man is a good lodge member, even though he fails to believe in Jesus Christ as the only Savior, he will be saved. Consequently lodge-membership and Church-membership cannot go together." With this position we fully agree but it must be pointed out that this rule has become obsolete in the Christian Reformed Church today. Apart from whether lodge-membership is condoned (we believe there are instances where this is the case), the undeniable fact is that the church is full of members who belong to anti-christian, godless, oath-bound, worldly organizations such as the so-called neutral labor unions of our day. These too are representative of a false, anti-christian religion. Does not the Lord through His apostle remonstrate against such practices in I Corinthians 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils"?

Likewise in 1928 the Synod in Article 96 of its Acts

adopted the rule: "Consistories are instructed to inquire of those who ask to be examined previous to making public confession of their faith and partaking of the Lord's Supper as to their stand and conduct in the matter of worldly amusements, and if it appears that they are not minded to lead the life of Christian separation and consecration, not to permit their public confession." Although the Synod did not attempt to catalogue worldly amusements, it did single out at the time the familiar trio of theater-attendance, dancing, and card-playing. With Monsma and Van Dellen we agree when they write: "None of us would care to maintain that all amusements are in themselves evil. There are many forms of amusements which are wholesome and good. Neither would we care to claim that all amusements which are contaminated with sin, and which are used by the devil to further his cause, are in themselves altogether evil. But we do maintain that all amusements which clearly hurt our spiritual life and tend to stem normal, Biblical, spiritual devotion, and which break down the God-built barriers of spiritual separation between the Church and the world, should be left alone by all christians. (Cf. I Cor. 8:9, James 4:4, Col. 3:1, 2, Matt. 16:24, 18:8,9.)

"Anyone who desires to indulge in practices which have constituted a damaging, down-breaking force to spiritual living, and who is not ready to forsake these things after the sinfulness of these amusements and their evil influence has been clearly demonstrated to him, *by that very attitude gives just reasons to doubt the sincerity of his heart, and just reasons to question his spiritual fitness for admission to the Lord's Table.* Consequently, our Churches are right in not permitting to the Lord's Table those who do not intend to lead a life of christian separation."

This is all well-said. But why then are those members who openly admit attending the theatre (or imbibing the same filth of Hollywood via T.V.) not forbidden access to the Lord's Table? Why are not those who give preference to the ball games over an evening of catechetical instruction disciplined? What is the reason that society night in the church cannot be set on the same evening that is popularly designated bowling night?

To these and similar questions, several answers can be given. First of all, the cause can be found in that the anti-thetic note and emphasis in the preaching has been replaced by a social gospel that is conducive to church and world amalgamation rather than separation. Secondly, the discipline of the church has become weakened to the point where it is virtually non-existent. Only in extreme cases is the key-power exercised. Under the guise of a distorted conception of "individual liberty" and through an attempt to save the sinner in man's way instead of the only God-appointed way, the practice of tolerating evil in the church has become accepted. The Biblical examples in both the Old and New Testament as well as the practices of our Reformed fathers are a far cry from this. Indeed the church has fallen considerably and

is falling from her steadfastness in the truth. And, finally, it may be added that a large contributing factor in this decline is the fact that the parents of the present generation are leading the way in this mad-craze for fun and pleasure at the expense of the cultivation of spiritual life. This is a dangerous age and unless the tide is reversed the next generation will give evidence of still less spirituality. Through all these practices the table of the Lord not only becomes corrupted but, as the Form for the Lord's Supper clearly expresses, the judgment of God descends upon those who attempt to lead a double life; to serve God and Mammon; to have a place in church while living the life of the world.

It is, therefore, according to the answer of Question 82 of our Heidelberg Catechism, "the duty of the christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and the apostles, to exclude such persons (unbelieving and ungodly) from the table of the Lord lest the covenant of God be profaned and *His wrath kindled against the whole congregation.*" It cannot be emphasized too strongly that thorough and careful interrogation of those seeking admittance to the Lord's Supper in regard to matters of doctrine and life is imperative. And each preparatory service must bring these things before the consciousness of the congregation so that the privileges of saints be not abused.

Without this twofold testimonial, that is, concerning a confession of the Reformed religion and being reputed to be of a godly walk, Article 61 stipulates that "those who come from other churches shall not be admitted." This rule was first instituted to curtail an evil practice according to which unworthy persons, looking for money and support, would move from place to place and with pious talk gain admittance into the church. At that time they were simply accepted upon the basis of their own testimony. To prevent this Article 61 makes it mandatory that they receive a testimonial from the church they had left and this was to be presented to the church they sought to join. Today this is done by the issuance of the transfer of membership papers, a matter we will discuss in connection with another article of the Church Order. Although the rule of Article 61 historically applies to persons moving from one church to another within the same denomination, it also has force with respect to those who come from other churches. It stands to reason that if a Baptist or Methodist or Roman Catholic desires to affiliate with a Reformed church, he must comply with this two-fold requirement before he can be admitted and receive membership privileges in the church. There is here no difference. The fundamental principle of Article 61 is that it maintains "closed" communion which means that only those that agree in faith and life can commune together at the table of the Lord.

In this connection we must comment yet upon the practice of receiving visitors at the table of the Lord. It sometimes happens that on the Sunday that the Lord's Supper is being celebrated there are members from sister churches worship-

ing with the congregation. This is especially noticeable in a small church. Our observation is that such members, though they are sound in faith and upright in walk, do not request the right to exercise the privilege of partaking at the table of the Lord. We often wonder why this is so. Is it because they are too timid to approach the consistory with this request? In some cases this might be the case but not always. Is it perhaps, as is sometimes said, that they do not feel the need of the Lord's Supper because they either just had it a few weeks prior in their church or it will be celebrated in a short time? But, certainly there is no objection to partaking of the Supper of the Lord more frequently than at the four times stipulated annually if the occasion arises. The Lord's Supper is an instituted means by which the Lord feeds and nourishes His church in the blessings of His grace. One ought to join not only in the singing, praying and preaching of the church but also in the celebration of the sacrament if the opportunity is present.

To do this as a visitor in another church one must receive permission from the consistory. It is proper that if one knows they are going to be in a certain church on a Sunday when the Lord's Supper is to be served, they take with them a testimonial from their consistory. On the basis of this the consistory that is asked can readily grant the request. But this is not always possible. They may not know until they arrive at the church that the Lord's Supper is being celebrated. Even then, however, they can approach the consistory before the service and, if possible, take with them a witness who will testify concerning their sound faith and upright walk. Then, if the request is granted, an appropriate announcement is made informing the congregation that these members are to be received at the table of the Lord. Is such hesitancy perhaps due to the fact that we are not always prepared to come to the table of the Lord and since our Confession states that, "No one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself," we do not dare ask because we have not made the necessary self-examination. This, too, should not be the case. Preparatory self-examination is not a thing that must be practiced once in three months but a daily exercise of faith. Always we must be in readiness to commune at the table of our Lord for that fellowship with Him and His people is the essence of our life. Hungering and thirsting for the true meat and drink, we shall seek His table where we may exercise the privilege of grace and receive the blessings of salvation.

G.v.d.B.

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Again refresh us, Lord,  
 With Thy reviving love,  
 And be Thy blessing poured  
 In mercy from above;  
 By grace revive our hearts again,  
 As streams refreshed by copious rain.



## ALL AROUND US

### ON THE CONVENTION CIRCUIT

The summer months are the days for ecclesiastical assemblies. Synods, Conventions, Conferences, or whatever they may be called, have met throughout the country, have adopted their resolutions for good or for bad, and have gone home. Reading over the countless reports of all these ecclesiastical assemblies, one is struck by the fact that the main topic of discussion and resolution throughout practically all of them was the topic of church merger. There have been several important developments.

The United Church of Christ is a reality. This merger between the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches has been in the making now for several years; yet it was not until this summer that the final steps to realize union were accomplished. The new denomination numbers 6,422 congregations and 2 million members to constitute the seventh largest Protestant church in the United States. Elected as the new president is Rev. D. Ben M. Herbster of Norwood, Ohio. This man is a native of Prospect, Ohio, has been pastor of the Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church in Norwood for 30 years, and was active for some time in the National Council of Churches. He has already expressed himself on various issues which are currently being discussed in the new church — medical care for the aged through Social Security (he is in favor of it); right to work laws, (he is opposed to them); United States recognition of Red China in the United Nations, (he favors it). This new denomination has kept the wheels of merger turning by inviting the Disciples of Christ to join their denomination. If this should become a reality, the new denomination would number 14,000 congregations and 4 million members.

However, this same denomination is deeply involved in further merger plans with other denominations. We have reported more than once in this column on the plan advanced by Eugene Carson Blake to form a denomination of four major Protestant bodies in the United States. This proposal was first suggested by Dr. Blake in a sermon in the Cathedral of Bishop James Pike in San Francisco. It called for a merger of the Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and the Protestant Episcopal Church. This merger would unite almost 20,000,000 Protestants or 1/3 of the total Protestant population in this country into one large denomination. The United Presbyterian Church, of which Dr. Blake is Stated Clerk, has already decided favorably on this merger — deciding to invite “the Protestant Episcopal Church meeting in general convention in Detroit, Michigan, in this same year, to join with us in an invitation to the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to explore the establishment of a

united church truly Catholic, truly Reformed, and truly Evangelical.”

Although enthusiasm for the plan runs high in the United Presbyterian Church, there is considerable opposition to the plan in other circles.

Although the Protestant Episcopal Church will not receive this invitation officially till its convention in September, nevertheless several dioceses have already spoken out against the plan. The Diocese of Long Island, New York is afraid that such a proposal will undermine the confessional basis of their church; the diocese of Maine believes it would be more appropriate to seek affiliation with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Southern Presbyterians were also invited to discuss merger with the United Presbyterian Church. They turned down the invitation because the United Presbyterian Church was contemplating merger with denominations of different dogmas and church polity than that to which the Southern Church was committed. Others in the Southern Church have proposed that the liberals in their church get out to join the United Presbyterian Church, while the conservatives in the United Presbyterian Church get out of their denomination to join the more conservative church in the south.

All these mergers and merger discussions point to the trend, increasing daily in momentum, to unite all churches together into one denomination. This will have to be accomplished first of all among Protestants, but there are already those who are advocating affiliation or, at least, closer contact with the church of Rome. These churches, while succeeding in their efforts to grow to almost unbelievable sizes, nevertheless fail entirely to reveal the body of Christ upon earth. On the altar of merger they sacrifice the truth of the Word of God, in the lust for material and physical strength they prostitute their calling to represent God's cause in the world.

A little closer to home there is also talk of merger on a smaller scale. The Christian Reformed Church decided at their last Synod to seek closer affiliation with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These two denominations have had fraternal relations for several years already, but are seeking now a closer union with hopes of future denominational merger.

Also the Christian Reformed Church, in their Synodical sessions, responded to a request from the “De Wolf Synod” of last year which asked the Christian Reformed Synod to declare the three points non-binding. This the Synod refused to do; but guessing correctly that it would make very little difference anyway, they formulated steps to be followed for the “De Wolf Synod” to return to them.

The Synod of the former Protestant Reformed ministers and churches met this past week. Although the Christian Reformed Church had not heeded their request, this did not prevent them from passing a motion to return. The vote was 12-5.

This morning, while this article is being written (July 14), the schismatics are attending the “funeral” of their



denomination in the last session of their Synod. Somehow the whole thing fills one with sadness. Not because their decision affects our churches in any adverse way — we go on as Protestant Reformed Churches as we have in the past with vigor and zeal. But these men and the people they are supposed to represent once stood with us in the battle lines of faith. They have forsaken these lines to retreat to a church that no longer fights this battle with complete faithfulness and perseverance. Once with us, they are with us no longer. Rather than marching forward in our ranks, they have slipped backward where to fight the battle of faith becomes ever more hopeless. They have, by returning, adopted theological and doctrinal tenets which they know and once said were not Reformed. They have entered a denomination that has fervently denied the principles of Christian conduct and life. We are sorry to see them go, for we had hoped they would return.

Nevertheless, they have not all been in favor of returning, and are not today. Perhaps by this time, those who do not want to make the long and dark trip back will see that their calling is indeed to come to us. As their denomination fades away, may God grant that they see this and have the courage to act.

#### CARICATURES OF REFORMED TRUTH

There are many thousands and even millions of Protestants today who have severed the last ties which bound them to the Protestant Reformation. They are the ones who hate the Reformed truth and will have nothing of it. This is really not so strange, and in fact, is to be expected. When the fundamental truths of God's Word are emphasized, it stands to reason that there will be all kinds of opposition from those who have fallen into Arminianism and Modernism. Expecting this, it is not too difficult to put up with it.

But these same men who deny the fundamental truths of God's Word commit a more serious sin. They do not simply deny the truth of God's Word, but they make all kinds of caricatures of it. They slander the truth and describe Reformed believers as holding to truths which in fact they do not hold to at all. They do this sometimes out of ignorance no doubt, but oftener out of a desire to make the truth repugnant to others.

Such a caricature of the truth was recently made in *Time* in a lengthy discussion of church merger. Discussing the views of John Calvin, *Time* writes:

As a young man at the University of Paris, John Calvin caught the fervor and excitement of Luther's break with Rome and became one of the keenest theological thinkers Christianity has produced. Most of his body of thought, set forth in his book, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion," first written when he was only 26, has survived the passage of time. One major Calvinist tenet now generally discredited is the doctrine of predestination — which he himself called "the horrible decree."

Calvin founded this belief on the inexorable deterministic logic of Augustine in that saint's 5th century controversy with Pelagius, British heretic. Pelagius' heresy — too widespread in the modern world to raise an eyebrow — was that Adam's disobedience had affected no one but himself; all men are not born sinners, but free to opt for good or evil, salvation or hell. Standing firmly on Scripture, both Augustine and Calvin after him held that Adam's fall was man's; all men are born in sin and deserve damnation. God in his love sent men the means of salvation in Jesus Christ, but ob-

viously all do not repent and mend their ways and receive Christ; most go to the hell they merit.

Calvin postulated that since God as Creator of all things is omniscient, knowing the future and the past as one, he knows in advance who will be saved. And since God is omnipotent — able to save all men if he wills — the damned are damned by God's consent, damned eons before they were born, and there is nothing they can do about it.

To predestination Calvin added such corollary conclusions as "particular redemption" (God's picking and choosing the elect), "moral inability" (the impossibility of doing anything to save oneself), "invincible grace" (the impossibility of doing anything to damn oneself if God has decreed otherwise) and "final perseverance" (the guarantee that all the elect will reach heaven — no matter what).

It is interesting to note that at least *Time's* religious editor gives credit to Calvin for standing on Scripture in his defense of predestination. In some respects, his presentation of Calvinism is correct; in others it is a serious caricature bound to deceive. From the religious editor of *Time* such a caricature is somewhat to be expected, for he may not know exactly what Calvinism is. But when this happens also in a Christian Reformed periodical, that is quite a different story. Rev. Rolf L. Veenstra writes in a recent issue of *The Banner*:

Unhappily, it is to be feared that much of what passes for predestination in Reformed circles is little better than Mohammedan fatalism. Many people have the mistaken notion that the will of God is a cold and inflexible scheme that was completed before the beginning of the world, with which our prayers have little or nothing to do, and which God is as incapable of changing as the Medeo-Persian monarchs were the very laws that they themselves had made. We must not think of God in terms of human time, as though He finished His planning and thinking and willing on such and such a day in human history. The Bible gives the lie to that crude notion in describing God's response to human behavior and pious prayer as reported in Genesis 6:6, II Kings 20, Exodus 32:14, II Samuel 24:16, etc. God is the eternal Now, and His plan for our lives and the world does not exist apart from Him, the way an architect's blueprint does.

When it comes to the matter of personal salvation, let us be done once and for all with the idea that if we are elect we are going to be saved in spite of ourselves, and if we are not elect there is nothing that we can do about it. (This is a caricature of Scripture as much as the opposite Arminian error that God himself cannot save you unless you are willing.) The problem of predestination vs. free will, on which is spent so much time that could more profitably be given to other Scriptural subjects, is, like many of our problems, purely a theoretical one. That is, nobody ever wanted to become a Christian and couldn't: nobody in hell will deny that it was his free choice. The problem is real and practical only when predestination becomes, as it is in many minds, fatalism or determinism.

This certainly cannot be explained as ignorance. At least if it must be explained that way, it is a shame. Rev. Veenstra may have a certain group of people in mind when he writes this way — people who actually do make of predestination and God's counsel a certain fatalism; but it is obvious that he also refers to those Reformed people who still maintain the truth of God's Word. He himself slips into the worst sort of caricature of God's counsel when he obviously means to maintain that the counsel is flexible, adaptable to human responses and therefore changeable. All he writes is quite contrary to the Canons of Dordrecht which it would be advisable for him to read. In a truly Reformed community, a man would be censured for writing these things. Rev. Veenstra writes that too much time is being wasted on the problem of predestination vs. free will. It would be advisable for the brother to spend a little more time on the problem that he may learn the creedal position of his church on the matter.

H. Hanko

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

July 20, 1961

Report of Classis East meeting, July 5, at Hudsonville, Mich.: Rev. R. Veldman led in the opening devotions, and declared Classis properly constituted after the credentials of the delegates had been accepted. All the churches of Classis East were represented by two delegates except Creston, which had only one.

Rev. G. Vos, following the order of rotation, presided efficiently over this meeting. As usual, there was very little on the agenda of this July Classis, and Classis was finished with its work before noon. The routine reports of the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee were read and accepted. The Church Visitors gave a very favorable report of their visits to the churches of the Classis. The reports noted that there is a "strong bond of love and faith that unites us in the Lord."

Three churches were given Classical appointments as follows: *Grand Haven*: Aug. 13—G. Lanting, Aug. 20—R. Veldman, Aug. 27—H. Hanko, Sept. 3—G. Vos, Sept. 10—M. Schipper, Oct. 1—A. Mulder, Oct. 8—G. Vos. *Creston*: July 30—M. Schipper, Aug. 13—A. Mulder, Sept. 3—G. Lanting, Sept. 17—R. Veldman, Sept. 24—G. Vos, Oct. 1—C. Hanko, Oct. 8—H. Hanko. *Randolph*: July 30—R. Veldman, Aug. 20—C. Hanko, Aug. 27—C. Hanko, Sept. 10—A. Mulder, Sept. 17—H. Hanko, Oct. 1—G. Lanting, Oct. 8—M. Schipper.

Rev. H. Hanko was appointed to thank the ladies of our Hudsonville church for their excellent catering. Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily. Rev. H. Hanko closed this meeting of Classis with thanks to God.

Professor-Emeritus, Rev. G. M. Ophoff, has returned to his home at 1126 Eastern Ave., S. E., and seems to have completely recovered from the effects of his last stroke.

By the Program Comm. of the Reformed Witness Hour, we are informed that the Rev. J. A. Heys, minister of the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, has recorded four radio sermons which, D.V., are to be broadcast during the month of August. The titles of his radio messages are, "The God Whom I Confess," "The God Who Saveth Me," "The God To Whom I Pray," and "The God Whom I Serve." We urge the readers of this page to either listen to, or read these radio messages. Printed copies may be had by writing to The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

From the Newsletter for the 21st Convention of our Young People we re-print the following paragraph: "Because Loveland is small, and quite distant from our other

churches, a convention here presents financial problems. We hope that everyone will remember to send his (or her) donation in soon. If the donation envelopes provided for your church have all been used, just send your donation to Mr. Harlow Kuiper, 750 Jefferson Ave., Loveland, Colo. Thank you very much." *And we add*: have you heeded this plea, and so deserved those thanks? If not, you still have three weeks to speed your gift to Loveland before the convention is called.

Lynden's congregation was sorely disappointed in their plans to move the former "Gospel Hall Building" to the lots next to the parsonage. Because of neighborhood protest the city counsel decided to invoke an 11 year old city ordinance which prohibits the moving or erecting of any building not in harmony with the general character of the buildings in the vicinity of the intended site. This means for Lynden that in order to use their newly acquired building they will have to obtain other lots not in a "new home" area to which they may move this "old" building.

The appearance of the Oak Lawn's Church property was enhanced recently through the efforts of an individual who planted flowers, and trimmed and nursed the shrubbery in front of the church. The bulletin carried the thanks of the Consistory to Mr. S. Schaafsma for this kindness.

Another item in Oak Lawn's bulletin was a call for volunteer painters to ply their trade at their new school in South Holland. Additional assistance (ladies too) was solicited to prepare some used desks for re-finishing. We predict that those volunteer workers will feel a greater delight of ownership in the building than those who merely give of their abundance.

Hope's Pamphlet Comm., which publishes "The Covenant Witness" used a recent bulletin to quote excerpts of a couple of letters received from grateful recipients of their pamphlets. One was from a minister in Piedmont, S.C., who thanked them "for sending me the 'Covenant Witness.' The great truth of Sovereign grace is the great need of the age. In this so-called Christian belt, the Piedmont region is so filled with Arminianism it is hard to find one that believes these great truths . . . The God of Grace knows what a blessing the 'Covenant Witness' has been to me . . ."

From Doon's bulletin we learn that another issue of "The Reformed Witness" has been published. This one was written by Rev. G. Van Baren, and is a treatise on the subject, "God, Servant Or Sovereign?" This newest issue was distributed to 1852 addresses in the Menno-Tripp-Scotland area, 665 in Edgerton area, and 221 into miscellaneous areas. After having posited that God is not servant, but Sovereign, Rev. Van Baren rejoices with the Apostle Paul, as it is recorded in Romans 8:38, 39: "For nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." God is eternally God.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.