

THE STANDARD

Bearers

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MEDITATION

PENTECOST

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." — Acts 2:2-4, 11b.

Filled with the Holy Spirit!

Oh, that makes all the difference. If you are the happy recipient of that Holy Spirit, you are filled with the love of God; you are being purged of your sins; you are filled with the holy zeal of God; you are united to those that with you received like bounty; you are filled with rejoicing unto all eternity.

If not, you will mock at the holiest of all: you will say, they are full of sweet wine!

Listen to Paul: Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His! How utterly terrible! If you have not that Spirit, you call Jesus a curse. If you have that Spirit, you cry out: Jesus the Lord!

They!

Who are they?

They are the one hundred and twenty who stood gazing at the heavens, after the cloud took the Lover of their soul away from them. They are the same company of common fisherfolk from Galilee who had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are the witnesses of His resurrection. They are the church of the New Testament at its inception. They are all in heaven now where they continued their song of great rejoicing.

And they are waiting there for you.

But about two thousand years ago, this little company of plain, ordinary people were all with one accord in one

place. No, I do not know where that was. I have vacillated with respect to the question from the house of John Mark to the temple. But at present I am inclined to think that they were in a large upper room in the temple, and for the same reason that they had to go to Jerusalem to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. God was going to connect the Old with the New. And since the New Testament church is the spiritual counterpart of the city of God, and that therefore they might not go to Galilee to receive the Spirit, so the temple at Jerusalem is the type of the temple of God which is fulfilled in the church of the New Testament. Which is the very reason that Paul addresses the church of his day, saying, Ye are the temple of the living God! God will connect the hallowed temple of old with the spiritual counterpart, the Church of the New Testament. The temple always said: God dwells with men! Well, this day, this hallowed day of Pentecost, the speech of the Temple of God will resound so that all hear it.

And there they are: the one hundred and twenty. They are still waiting for the promise, for the Holy Ghost, and at Jerusalem, and in the temple of God.

* * * *

And suddenly, miraculously, they are being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Oh, that was an event of far reaching consequences. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

What does it mean?

No, it was not a limited and individual event of the day and on those one hundred and twenty persons. It would have a broader significance than that. It would mean that the Holy Ghost was come to stay in the Church!

He came upon the promise of Jesus: I will send you another Comforter, and He shall abide with you! It is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise: And lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

Who is this Holy Ghost?

O, He is the same Holy Ghost that visited God's people in the Old Testament, but there was a difference. The difference is so great that the Holy Spirit Himself said in

John 7: "for the Holy Spirit was not yet given since Jesus was not yet glorified."

It is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, there can be no question of that. But He was more now. He brings with Him the very flavor of Jesus Christ. He was the Third Person as given to Jesus at His glorification at the right hand of God.

When He was poured out on this glorious Pentecostal day He brought with Him Jesus Christ in all His accomplished work up to and including His sitting at the right hand of God, filled with all the blessings of salvation.

Then too, He came also as far as the quantity is concerned to this first New Testament Church. It was an outpouring upon them, instead of a trickling as in the Old Testament. Drops of that Spirit were upon Moses and David and Isaiah, and all the prophets and Kings of God. But now it was as a flood. And it touched the whole church, person for person and head for head; that is the difference.

And therefore, He is the Holy Ghost of God as given to Jesus, and therefore called: the Spirit of Christ.

And He brought with Him reconciliation, forgiveness, adoption, resurrection-life, access within the inner sanctuary, knowledge and wisdom of the mysteries of God's Kingdom, in short: the law written in our hearts. He was the entire realization of the great promise of God!

Study the signs which accompanied His coming and you will see the difference.

* * * *

They suddenly hear a sound from heaven, and what a sound. It sounded like a mighty rushing wind.

But how strange that must have been: the sound of a tornado, but not a thing stirred. I think that God so directed the weather that on that morning all was still. There was not a breeze stirring. And that terrible sound concentrated itself in the house where they sat. Therefore the mighty multitude unerringly goes to the upper room.

And then that phenomenon of the thing that was not fire but looked like a great column of fire, darting downward in fiery tongues and resting upon the head of each of them.

And then they began to speak, all of them. That too is significant. And watch the multitude: they are in a flux, a strange flux. They mill around, they separate themselves in definite groups, surrounding a certain speaker for each of these groups. One says: what? I hear my own dialect. And all those of the country of Elam grouped themselves about Peter, or Thomas, or some other fisherman.

All of a sudden the people that knew not how to speak in those strange languages are fully conversant in those several tongues with the proper pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, etc. You may safely believe that all these one hundred and twenty spoke fluently and easily, and with burning hearts, themselves wondering what was happening to them.

Oh yes, the Holy Spirit of Jesus was poured out. There is no doubt about that.

They were all filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

* * * *

But what was the meaning of these signs?

First, they all are from heaven. Make no mistake on that score. There is a humbling lesson in that. Learn that lesson and you are fortified against all heresy. It means that everything good and comely, everything holy and righteous, everything salutary (pick that word apart: the root of it means salvation) is from heaven. From that time until this evil day all salvation from the beginning to the end is wrapped up in the given Spirit of Christ.

Second, the sound of that tornado is the rushing God who is in a hurry to embrace His Church. The fulness of time had come when He would give Himself to His own people as never before. And then God is in a hurry. You see that same hurry when Jesus is taken back into heaven. Read it in that strange sign in heaven of the woman that gave birth to a man child. The devil stood ready to devour Him. But God snatched Him to heaven. God was in a hurry.

Why in a hurry? He loves you and me. Wind is irresistible: so is He.

A screaming and bleeding child is lying on the sidewalk: it is grievously hurt in great agony. The mother spies her crying and miserable child from afar. I ask you: is she going to saunter down to that dreadful spectacle? No, she will rush, she will run as fast, no, faster than she should run: she will overstrain herself.

God is in a hurry to enfold the church in arms of love, even the love which the Spirit brings. Read Romans 5:5.

The spectacle of fire?

It is the fire that burns and burns in the heart of God. He is going to give the church the zeal of His own love.

Henceforth you will note that zeal, that burning zeal of God.

Watch Stephen: he will be killed for his God. But he blesses as he expires. It is because of this fire that burns and burns.

And the tongues?

National Israel was at an end. The confusion of Babylon is healed. It matters not that you stand with a Phrygian soul in Jerusalem. You are going to understand the Gospel. God will accommodate Himself. He will heal the confusion you created while Nimrod spewed forth his pride of life.

Oh those tongues, those tongues. They sing the sweet song to me that the Promise of God is to all the elect in all nations.

* * * *

No, I have little more to say to you. My story is almost ended.

They all speak, the whole New Testament speaks. And what a speech!

They all speak the wonderful works of God.

My dear reader: Do you want to know whether or not the Pentecostal blessings found you?

Attend to this: if and when you are touched by the Pentecostal Spirit of Christ, you conclude the whole story by saying: How wonderful is my God!

I know it, I know it: you will be interrupted and you will interrupt yourself in that musing. But you will say it repeatedly, and when you die you will say it again in heaven. It is set on melodious music there.

David had a foretaste of Pentecost. Listen to him: "Oh that man would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

G. V.

REV. GERALD VANDEN BERG'S LECTURE

The Rev. G. Vanden Berg will lecture in Hudsonville next Friday evening, May 19, at 8:00 p. m., sponsored by Hudsonville's Men's Society. The topic:

"THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN"

We cordially invite you all to come and hear this interesting lecture.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 28, 1961, our dear parents,

MR. AND MRS. JOHN H. VANDER VENNEN

hope to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father, who has graciously seen fit to spare them for us and for each other these many years. It is our prayer that God may continue to bless them in their remaining years together.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Decker
Nancy and Walter

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vander Vennen
Linda and Sharon

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Mich., hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to Elder and Mrs. P. Schipper in the recent death of their daughter-in-law,

MRS. DONALD SCHIPPER

The Lord grant His sustaining grace in this their hour of sorrow.

Rev. G. Lanting, President
J. H. Kortering, Vice-President

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EDITORIALS

The Importance of Christian Discipline

As we might expect, also the Church Order speaks of Christian Discipline, and, in fact devotes several articles to this subject.

Thus in article 71:

"As Christian discipline is of a spiritual nature, and exempts no one from civil trial or punishment by the authorities, so also besides civil punishment there is need of ecclesiastical censures, to reconcile the sinner with the church and his neighbor and to remove the offense out of the church of Christ."

This article speaks of the difference between the sword and the key-power. And there is, indeed, a principal difference.

The sword-power is given to the civil authorities and is effective for all the subjects over whom they rule; the key-power is given from Christ to the apostles and through them to the church. The motive of the sword-power is or should be justice and righteousness; the motive of the key-power is or should be love, the love of God in Christ, the love of the church and the love of the sinner. One can approach the sword-power and say to them that exercise it: "Give me my right, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me, avenge me of my adversary"; but the motive of the key-power is love and is, therefore, much more difficult to exercise. One cannot go to the church and say: "Give me my right, my money, my honour, avenge me." All he can or ought to say is: "I am sorry for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the church's sake, for my brother's sake that he walks in sin." Any individual member or any church that is not motivated by love is totally unfit to exercise discipline.

Just as there is a difference in motive between the sword-power and the power of the keys, so there is also a difference in purpose. The sword-power aims at nothing but justice and revenge, but the purpose of the key-power is the glory of God in Christ, the well-being of the church and the salvation of the sinner. Hence, the article of the Church Order quoted above states that, by Christian Discipline, no one is exempted from civil trial or punishment. A clear example of this we have in the one murderer on the cross. He repented of his sins, as is evident from what he said to the other criminal that was crucified with him. And then he prayed to Jesus: "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." And the Lord, as we know, answered him: "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Evidently, the penitent thief or murderer was not excused from bearing his just punishment, although he was saved.

There is also a difference between the sword-power and the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven as far as the objects are concerned. The objects of the sword-power are simply those that are or are supposed to be guilty ac-

cording to the judgment of the worldly court. But the objects of the key-power are believers and their children. To them the kingdom of heaven is opened, for they all receive the sacraments: the sacrament of baptism when they are still infants, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper when they come to years of discretion and are able to make confession of their faith. All others are excluded. All that do not belong to believers and their children have no place in the kingdom of heaven.

This does not mean, however, that all sinners are excluded from the kingdom of God, for then no one would be included. We all are sinners. But it does signify that all *manifest unbelievers* are excluded even though they belong to the church on earth. We may say, therefore, that there is only one sin that excludes anyone from the kingdom of heaven and that is the sin of impenitence. No matter how great a sin anyone commits, whether it be the sin of adultery or even murder; and even no matter how frequently anyone sins, if he repents, the keys of the kingdom of heaven open the doors of that kingdom of God for him. On the other hand, no matter how small a sin anyone may commit, if he does not show repentance, the keys of the kingdom shut the doors of the kingdom of heaven for him.

This is the reason why repeated admonition is, also according to the Church Order, the first and necessary step in church discipline.

Article 72 of the Church Order states: "In case anyone errs in doctrine or offends in conduct as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense, the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matth. 18 shall be followed."

We are all well acquainted with the rule of Matthew 18. It requires first of all that the sin of the brother shall not be made public, but that it shall be kept as secret as, in its very nature, it is. If the offense is known to one person the latter must not tell others about it. Secondly, the one that knows the offense must tell the offender his fault between himself and the offender alone. He must, therefore, admonish him in love, which is the implication of the clause "tell him his fault." He may do this very well repeatedly. And if the offender hear him, repents and confesses his sin, he "has gained his brother." The offense still remains entirely secret. But if the offender does not hear him, does not repent and confess, he shall take along two or three witnesses. Also these witnesses must not make the offense public but admonish the offender and for the rest keep the matter secret. Only after all this has been done, the offended party may "tell it to the church" which is the consistory. All this shows clearly that, in the first place, the matter must be kept as secret as possible; secondly, that the nature of Christian discipline consists, primarily, in admonition; and, thirdly, that the motive is always love of God in Christ, love of the church, and love of the brother.

The Church Order continues:

Article 73. "Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after having been admonished by one person in private or in the

presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the consistory."

This article too expresses two ideas. The first is that any sin must be kept as secret as possible. And the second is that admonition is always one of the chief elements in Christian discipline.

The same is expressed in Article 74:

"If anyone, after having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the consistory."

Again, this mentions the same element of admonition, only now it adds to it that the admonition must be done in love. And as I said before, this element may never be ignored. No person or group of persons, not even a consistory is able to exercise discipline except in the spirit of love.

Article 75 reads as follows:

"The reconciliation of all sins as are of their nature of a public character, or have become public because the admonition of the church was despised, shall take place (after sufficient evidence of repentance) in such a manner as is conducive to the edification of each church. Whether in particular cases this shall take place in public, shall, when there is a difference of opinion about it in the consistory, be considered with the advice of two neighboring consistories or of the classis."

This article speaks of sins which are in their very nature public and which are, for that very reason known to the congregation. It also mentions sins that have become public "because the admonition of the church was despised." To the first belong, for instance, the sin of adultery which, particularly in small congregations, may easily be known to most of the members of the church. To the second belong such sins as those that are not only known to the consistory, but have also already been made known because the sin together with the name of the offender has been announced. In no other way can the church know the sin that was committed or the name of the offender. The sin itself was secret and must be kept secret as far as possible. No consistory member may "talk out of the consistory," even though this evil is not so very seldom practised.

Furthermore, the article speaks of a sinner that, at first, despised the admonition of the consistory but later repented and confessed his sin to the consistory. What now must be done? Must the consistory keep the matter still secret? This is, of course, impossible, for the whole congregation knows of the sin and of him that committed it. Besides, the whole congregation rejoices because the sinner repents and therefore ought to be informed of that fact. There are various ways which the consistory can follow in such cases. Either it can demand a public confession, or it can simply announce from the pulpit that N.N. repented and confessed his sin before the consistory. But whether the one or the other method is to be followed is left to the discretion of the consistory. Only, in case there should be difference of opinion

in the consistory on this matter, the consistory can seek the advice of two neighboring consistories or of the classis.

More on this matter next time, D.V.

H.H.

Not Separated But Deposed

I wish to thank Dr. Jerome De Jong for sending me, in exchange of *The Standard Bearer* the *Missionary Monthly*.

In the last copy I received there occurs an article under the title: "How Long Must I Be Faithful To My Church" written by Dr. De Jong.

In this article he tries to answer several questions which I asked him publicly in our *Standard Bearer* some time ago.

In our present issue I do not intend to go into the answers he gives to these questions. I may, however, do so in a future issue. I will, however, ask another question. It is this: does not Dr. De Jong agree with me, and, in fact, with our Reformed Confessions, that the marks of the true church are the pure preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline? And again, does not Dr. De Jong also agree with me when I say that if the exercise of Christian discipline is not maintained, not only in regard to individual members, but also in regard to office-bearers, and in respect to the broader gatherings, classes and synods, the pure preaching of the Word cannot possibly be maintained? And in connection with these questions, I must also ask Dr. De Jong whether what happened and is still happening in the eastern part of the church to which Dr. De Jong belongs does not bear the mark of the false rather than of the true church?

In closing this editorial I must make one remark. Dr. De Jong leaves the impression that, in 1924, I became sectarian and established a new denomination. This is not true. I never left or separated myself from the Christian Reformed Church. On the contrary, I was deposed from my office of the ministry of the Word simply because I could not and would not sign the notorious "Three Points" or promise to keep still about them.

H.H.

ASTO BOOKS

Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus (Herman Bavinck as Dogmatician), published by J. H. Kok, N.V. Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 18.75.

This is, for me, a very interesting book, not only because the author, Dr. R. H. Bremmer, evidently made a very thorough study of the subject he develops in this book, but even more because he compares Bavinck with others and by doing so he goes into the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands of the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century. At the time I was a child and a young man and at an early age I became interested in that history. I was a son of the *Afscheiding*

(Separation) but at the same time I was very much interested in the "Doleantie," that is, the group of Reformed Churches which, under the leadership of Dr. A. Kuyper, expressed their grief about the condition of the State Church and organized a separate group of churches. Later (1892) these two groups of churches were united under the name "Gereformeerde Kerken." However, although these churches were synodically united, locally they were not. Especially in the city in which I lived they were not really one as was evident from the fact that they were designated as the Gereformeerde Kerken A (the churches of the "Afscheiding") and B (the churches of the "Doleantie"). Interesting for me is also the long correspondence that is quoted in the book between Bavinck and Ten Hoor on the question whether Theology is the queen of sciences (Kampen) or must be placed on a par with the other sciences (Amsterdam, the Free University). When I came to America I attended the Theological School in Grand Rapids where Ten Hoor was professor at the time. He was still full of the question above mentioned and maintained that Theology was the queen of sciences. He was a very keen mind and well able to defend his position.

However, this is not the sole reason why I was interested in the book by Dr. Bremmer. The author, to my mind, also ably develops the subject on which he is writing: "Bavinck as Dogmatician." I recommend this book especially to all students of Dogmatics. H.H.

Barth, by Dr. A. D. R. Polman, translated from the Dutch by Calvin D. Freeman. Published by the Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

This book or booklet (68 pages) is one of a series of "An International Library of Philosophy and Theology." Anyone that is interested in Barth, as no theologian can afford not to be, will do well to obtain and read this book by Dr. Polman. The writer, after a general introduction, discusses Barth's view on Scripture, on Predestination, and on Creation. Barth is a very voluminous writer. His Dogmatics alone covers thus far ten volumes, each volume hundreds of pages, much of it in small print. Secondly, Barth is a writer that is difficult to read. He does not mind to write all kinds of contradictions. Besides, his language, German, is often dark and ambiguous and, personally, I often wondered whether this ambiguity is not intentional. Thus, for instance, although Barth does not believe that Scripture is the written Word of God, yet he often quotes it as if it were. The same is true in regard to his conception of the doctrine of predestination: although his development of that doctrine leaves the impression that he believes in universal salvation (Christ being the sole reprobate), yet he denies that this is his conception. His so-called commentary on Paul's epistle to the Romans, which is probably the most widely read of all his books, is no commentary at all. He merely expresses his own views and uses the text as a pretext.

However, it is not difficult to read Dr. Polman's book on Barth. Hence, I gladly recommend this book to all theologians who are interested in the study of Barth. I am not

inclined to agree with the author in the praise he bestows on Barth in an introduction to the chapter that discusses Barth's conception of predestination which is developed in the third volume of his dogmatics. He, Dr. Polman, speaks of his increasing admiration of Barth's originality and genius as he repeatedly read the monumental volume of his Church Dogmatics concerning election. I, too, studied that volume, but I cannot subscribe to this praise. For fact is that Barth denies election and reprobation. H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER XIX

Revelation 20:1-10

The Binding of Satan With a View to Gog and Magog

But this is not the end. For "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and destroyed them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

What is here presented in a separate vision had partly been pictured in a different setting in preceding chapters. We may gather from chapter 16:12-16 that this deception of the nations that live on the four quarters of the earth by the devil, to gather them together for battle, will be realized in the period of the sixth vial. This is also in harmony with the statement in Revelation 20:3 that "he must be loosed for a little season." Shortly before the end of this world this final deception of the nations shall take place. In Chapter 16 we read this: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." In this passage the reference is evidently to the same going forth of the devils to the nations

that live on the four quarters of the earth, the kings of the whole world, to deceive them and gather them for battle. And we learn besides that this deception of the nations through the devil shall proceed immediately from the anti-christian kingdom. Unclean spirits shall proceed from the center of the antichristian world, and they shall have their influence upon the nations that live on the four corners of the earth. It matters not now what is presented by these unclean spirits. They certainly signify a three-fold influence of the antichristian civilization. And the final result of this three-fold antichristian influence will be that the nations thus affected will unite their forces for war, the last war, that shall ever be fought on earth.

Again, a similar presentation of the same period of history we find in Chapter 17:12-17. There mention is made of ten kings that as yet have received no kingdom, but shall receive power as kings one hour with the beast. The fact that they are kings in distinction from the anti-christian power proper, as well as the fact that their dominion shall last but one hour with the beast, that is, "a little season," suggests that these ten kings are again the same as the power of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20, and as the kings of the whole world and the kings of the east that are mentioned in Revelation 16. If this is correct, then we learn from the passage in Revelation 17 that the first result of the deceptive influence of the devil through the medium of the three-fold antichristian influence will be that the heathen nations of Gog and Magog shall join into one great world-power with the central antichristian dominion. For one hour, for a little season, the world-power shall realize its greatest ambition, and a strictly universal empire shall be established, of which also the heathen but civilized nations form an integral part. However, this cannot last. For ultimately the ten kings shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Rev. 17:16. The ultimate result, therefore, of the deception of the devil through the antichristian influences upon the heathen nations shall be that they shall be gathered for battle against the very center of the antichristian dominion.

If we combine these different elements, which undoubtedly have bearing upon the same historic event of the future, we may come to the following conception. In the nominally Christian world shall ultimately be realized the final consummation of the antichristian world-power, the power of the beast and the false prophet. It will be an empire in which shall be represented the highest ambitions of man; and they shall be realized to the utmost. From a purely humanistic viewpoint, it will be a glorious kingdom. And thoroughly humanistic it will surely be: religiously, scientifically, socially, industrially, and politically. But it will be anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-church. The saints that refuse to receive the mark of the beast shall have no place in that kingdom. In the meantime, influences shall issue forth from that central realization of the antichristian kingdom upon the nations

that live on the four corners of the earth. And these nations shall be civilized. They shall become conscious of their power. And they shall for a time join forces with the beast and the false prophet to form one great world-empire. But under the influence of the so-called mission work of the anti-christian unclean spirits, they were indeed awakened out of their prolonged slumber, became conscious of their power, and quickly adopted the antichristian civilization. Nevertheless, they remained pagan in every respect. Though they give their power to the beast for one hour, for a little season, this cannot possibly last. The deception of the devil must work out till the bitter end. And they will ultimately gather as separate forces for the last war, which will be a world war in the strictest sense of the word. Looking upon the nominally Christian world—which will in fact be antichristian, though the church will still exist in her midst—as the real Christian nations, as the church of Christ indeed, they shall do as the nations of the old dispensation did with respect to Jerusalem, and shall say: "Let us go up to Jerusalem; let Zion be defiled; let our eye look upon Zion!" This shall be their guilt; for their purpose shall be to fight against the camp of the saints and the beloved city, against God and His Christ and against the church. But it will also be their deception. For, as in the old dispensation God used the nations in their hatred against the Holy City to chasten and destroy a Jerusalem that had actually become Sodom, so He will use the hostile spirit of the heathen nations to destroy the antichristian power and eat the flesh of the great whore. The camp of the saints they will never touch. The people of God shall look for the coming redemption, which shall then be very nigh. For it will be upon this final scene of confusion and iniquity that the Lord will appear in judgment to destroy His enemies and to deliver His saints, in order to give them the victory forever.

If we thus conceive of the end of Gog and Magog, it is needless to conclude that we are living in significant times. A humanistic modernism claims the right and title to the name of Christianity—a religion without the Christ of the Scriptures, without the incarnation of the Son of God, without the cross, without the resurrection, a religion of this world, based on human imagination rather than on the Word of God in the Scriptures. In the meantime, the power of men develops with tremendous strides in every sphere of life. And the influence of this modern spirit is felt far outside of the Christian world. For modernism has its missionaries. The nations on the four corners of the earth are waking up. The millions upon millions in China and Japan clamor for their own place in the midst of the nations of the world. No, we do not mean to speak of the day and the hour when Christ shall come. But we do emphasize that God's people must not be deceived. They must know the times and know what Israel ought to do at all times and seasons. They must above all watch, and keep the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God; and they must steadfastly refuse to worship the beast and the image of the beast.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Preparing the Passover

And when I see the blood, I will pass over you . . .
Exodus 12:13

The last meeting between Moses and Pharaoh had taken place. It had been a tense, troubled affair. How Pharaoh had learned to hate these visits from Moses. Moses represented the God of Israel who now for many months had been ravaging his land. In his presence Pharaoh was torn between pride and fear; but pride had won out. Vainly he had sought a compromise, finally offering that all of Israel might go to worship Jehovah except for the cattle and sheep. But the God of Moses would not compromise. He demanded absolute obedience to his command. In spite of his inward fear, this Pharaoh would not give. His pride had broken forth in anger until he fairly shouted at Moses, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die."

Moses answered, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

It was as Moses was turning to leave that God came and spoke to him. He said, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether."

Turning once again to Pharaoh, Moses spoke his parting message. "Thus saith Jehovah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jehovah doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out."

While anger still contorted the face of Pharaoh, fear laid its cold grip upon his heart. Through bitter experience he had learned that the warnings of Moses were not to be taken lightly. The firstborn of Egypt were the strength of the land, and now their death had been foretold. He had tried to break the strength of Israel, and now that very destruction had turned back upon himself. But Pharaoh's pride would not allow him to submit. His hatred for Jehovah would carry him with hardened heart to the very end. For a moment the two men stared at each other in bitter hatred and anger until Moses at last turned and went.

Leaving the palace of Pharaoh, Moses went immediately

to speak to the children of Israel. With humble fear and wonderment, they received the news. The time for deliverance had come. They were to leave the land of their affliction, not just for three days as might have been expected, but forever. Pharaoh would thrust them out and tell them never to return. Nor would their departure be in poverty. They were to demand (not just "borrow") everyone jewels of silver and gold from their Egyptian neighbors in payment for the labor which they as free sons of Abraham had expended. In that hour the Egyptians, humbled by the judgment of Jehovah, would be more than willing to comply. The children of Israel would go forth in power and glory on the tide of Jehovah's strength. In the Name of their God, they would conquer.

Yet, such was the Word of God unto Israel that not one reason was left for anyone to become lifted up with personal pride or boasting. Israel was to be delivered indeed, but this deliverance was to be through judgment. The angel of God's judgment would visit the land, and not one household that was yet guilty of sin would be spared. The firstborn, the strength of every such household would be destroyed. Could anyone of Israel forget that in the first three plagues of Egypt they had not been spared? Could anyone honestly say that his household was free from all sin and guilt? Could anyone be sure that in this final day of visitation his household would be worthy of being spared?

With careful attention the children of Israel listened as Moses explained to them the way of deliverance. This was not going to be merely a national emigration, nor the mere conquest of one nation over another. The Lord God of heaven and earth was going to visit the land and the things which would transpire would be of importance for the well-being of their souls. His presence would work judgment upon all who were not found dwelling in His favor.

"In the tenth day of this month," said Moses, "take every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." The children of Israel knew well what was the meaning of the lamb. From the time that the Protevangel had been spoken in Paradise, it had been known. The lamb was a sign of the promised seed of the woman that would crush the head of the serpent; it was a sign of the seed of Abraham in which they and their children would be blessed; it was a sign of the seed of Judah from whom the sceptre would never depart; it was a sign of the promised Redeemer that would save His people from the guilt and curse of their sin. Every time a lamb was brought to the altar by a believing child of God's covenant, it was thereby confessed that this believer looked in faith to the promise of God as the only redemption from his sin.

Now as Moses proceeded with his instructions, it became evident to every believer that this long familiar type of revelation was taking on a new dimension of meaning. The judgment of God was impending in Egypt, and, though in itself also only a figure and type, only through a confession of faith would anyone escape. As this way of redemption was

unfolded, it brought new depth of understanding to those who trusted in the promise of God.

The lamb which was taken should be without blemish. Although this had also been known in the past, it emphasized for Israel again that redemption could come only through one that was perfect. The lamb to be slain must bear the believer's sins, and thus it could not be marred and in itself unworthy to live. The lamb in its earthly perfection must serve to foreshadow the promised seed who only in being perfect before the sight of God could be a substitute for Israel's sin.

It was the blood of that lamb which would be of utmost importance to the children of Israel in the midst of the judgment of Egypt. The blood was to be struck upon the two side posts and on the upper post of every door behind which dwelt the believing children of God. It was an open sign for all to see that this household felt a need of a covering for its sins; it was a public confession of guilt in the presence of man and of God. When God in judgment drew nigh, His promise would be faithful and true, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

Furthermore, the lamb whose blood would serve as a atonement to turn aside the judgment of God from the households of Israel was to be taken and roasted in the fire. It was not to be left raw, nor even boiled in water; the very body of the lamb had to pass through the fire. And this was to be done while the body was yet whole, un mutilated with a knife, and while the bones were yet unbroken. The fire symbolized the righteousness and justice of God through which the lamb of atonement had to pass. It did this in the stead of the sinners for which it was offered. The lamb had to pass through the fire of God's justice, and it had to do this, as closely as was possible in mere symbolism, while still whole and un mutilated, in the strength of its being. Only in this way could it fulfill the demands of substitution for sin.

It was at this point that this new form of atoning sacrifice took on an even richer and deeper meaning. The body of the lamb which was slain was given to the people of God for food. Through the events of the approaching judgment, Israel was to be saved to the uttermost. Not only were the children of God to be saved negatively from the stroke of the angel of judgment, they were also to be led forth out of the land of bondage into the Canaan of promise. As Israel went forth the very body of the lamb whose blood had redeemed them would supply the nourishment and strength in which they would go. The flesh of the lamb was a heavenly meal instituted and given by God. In the lamb that was slain was the fulness of Israel's redemption. This lamb was to be eaten completely, and should any of it be left over it was to be burned. The nourishment of its body was only for those who were covered by the atonement, and none might be left for those to whom it did not belong. The benefits of salvation are only for the children of God.

The meal surrounding the lamb was full of rich significance. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Leaven was the old dough which was kept from one baking to another; a small bit of it used in a new baking of bread would serve to make the new bread rise. Because it was saved from week to week and because but a small bit of it would permeate a whole loaf of bread to make it rise, leaven served well to symbolize the old way of life which in the redemption of Egypt had to be left behind. But a small bit of the old life of Egypt taken along could corrupt the whole life of Israel. The bitter herbs reminded Israel that the way of redemption would not be pleasant for the flesh. The way of God's people must pass through bitter hardships.

Finally, even the manner in which this meal was to be eaten was prescribed with careful instructions. "Thus shall ye eat," Jehovah commanded, "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover." Israel must be ready to go, prepared to leave the land of bondage and sin. Even more, Israel must be willing and eager. There should be no desire to loiter. It was to be the deliverance of the Lord; it should fill the whole will and desire of His people.

Great and unusual was the activity that filled the land of Goshen. The atmosphere was filled with the feelings of eager anticipation. With great fear and reverence, the children of Israel went about their preparations. As they looked upon the ceremonial preparations, it was almost as though they looked directly into the face of God. The true believing Israelite, though only vaguely through type and shadow, looked ahead through the ages and saw the promised Redeemer offering Himself as the Lamb on Calvary's hill that at the sign of His blood the people of God might be redeemed.

The Egyptians too could not help but note the great activity in Goshen. The plague of darkness had departed, but its shadows still seemed to cling to their hearts. They saw the lambs being gathered and slain, and it was an abomination to their eyes. They saw the preparations for journey, and hateful anger burned within their hearts. But none dared to try to make the Israelites stop. They had tasted the power of Israel's God; it had ruined their land. Bitterly they watched the Hebrews work. Paralyzed with fear, they dared not interfere.

B.W.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Protestant Reformed Church extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. John Holleman in the death of her brother,

MR. WILLIAM KUIPER

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."
Romans 14:7.

Rev. J. A. Heys, President
Mrs. F. Van Baren, Secretary

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 1:12-17)

c.

That salvation is by grace alone, through faith, is the great theme of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God in Christ Jesus. It is God's honor and glory, which He gives to none other, to save the *sinner*. For God commendeth his love in this that Christ died for us, in due time, when we were yet sinners; it is for the godless, the weak, the enemy that Christ died. Oh, to be sure, Christ died for the elect, and only for the elect! But even so it was for sinners that he died. For the elect are by nature children of wrath even as the others. But God being rich in mercy, for his great love, made us alive in Christ Jesus; he raised us out of sin and death. He regenerates the dead sinner, and incorporates him into Christ. All of the work of salvation must be to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Compare Ephesians 1:6. Such is the aim of God's elective love in Christ before the foundation of the earth!

All the blessings which Christ bestows upon us are the spiritual blessings in heavenly places. And for these blessings we can only exclaim with great joy and gratitude, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, even as he elected us from before the foundations of the earth, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love." Eph. 1:3, 4.

It is this truth that Paul touches upon in this first Chapter of I Timothy in regard to the truth of the gospel, and that, too, overagainst some who would teach a *different* doctrine. This different doctrine is that teaching which makes the "law" something which man must perform as the *basis* of salvation. That is false teaching. It intends to rob God of His glory and it would take away from the true believer his boast in Christ and sovereign mercy!

It is in this sovereign *mercy* that Paul makes his boast in I Timothy 1:12-17. First Paul magnifies this mercy as God has so singularly shown this in His calling him into the office of an Apostle. God found him in mercy; Christ accounted him faithful. And this accounting was not according to the rule of works and merit; it was solely based upon the foreknowledge of God in sovereign mercy. God made Paul an Apostle. It was the grace which he received. He works more abundantly than all the other Apostles, yet not he, but the grace of God which he received. **Secondly**, Paul sees this great mercy in his own personal faith and salvation. He is the chief of sinners. But that is no obstacle in the way.

It was even for this very purpose that Christ came into the world, into this Cosmos to save it. He came to save sinners. Did Jesus not repeatedly assert overagainst all self-righteous and Pharisaical pretense: for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost??! Is He not the good Shepherd who came to seek his sheep and lay down His life for them, that might take up His life again, so that none might pluck these sheep out of his hand?

This gospel truth Christ would "show forth" in the case of Paul, the chief of sinners. He persecuted the church of God even unto death; he blasphemed the Christ of the Scriptures and rejoiced in the death of the saints. He beat up the very children of God for whom Christ had died. And thus the measure of the suffering of Christ was filled up in them. Col. 1:24. Does not Christ say to Paul on the way to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?" And now, *in* this very *persecutor*, Christ is going to *demonstrate* His mercy. What He performs in every sinner that is saved He will show so very clearly and indisputably in Paul. None will henceforth have any reason to doubt that "where sin abounded grace doth much more abound." Rom. 5:20b. And Paul is not an exception to the rule of salvation; his case is an extreme example, a "case study" of the great principle of salvation by sovereignly free grace and love and mercy. It shows, that, if God can and will save *such* a sinner, there is hope for any "sinner," who is "about to believe unto salvation"! See verse 16.

There can be no doubt exegetically that the term "long-suffering" as here employed by Paul refers to an aspect of the love and mercy of God as this efficaciously brings the "sinner," even the chief of sinners, to salvation and final glory.

The term "longsuffering" is a composite noun, composed of two parts in the term used in the Greek. It is the term "makro-thumia." The term "thumia" is a word meaning: wrath, anger. It is really the explosive anger in man when his nostrils quiver with fury and, if it is not withheld, there will be dire effects. Applied to God it refers to the vengeance of God in retributive and punishing justice. It would mean in the case of Paul that Christ would have come to destroy him with the breath of His mouth. Now this "thumos" is long. The term for "long" in Greek is "makro." Instead of this wrath and indignation being poured forth upon the head of Paul, God is merciful to him. God loves him. He loves him *while* he is persecuting the Church. He loves him from eternity, and loves him even from his mother's womb, when he was born and conceived in Tarsus. And as Paul persecutes the church, the darling of God, God holds back His wrath and indignation in love in Christ, seeing what Christ "finished" for Paul upon the Cross of Calvary.

Such is the longsuffering of Christ. Christ remembers Paul in love, in His great love wherewith He loves all His *own* even to the end. John 13:1b. Did He not love all His own as "enemies"? Were they not all "children of wrath"?

Behold, then, a demonstration of this love and longsuffering in the case of Paul, the chief of sinners!

Small wonder that Paul tells us, that, in his case, the "longsuffering" of Christ was *fully revealed*. The text says: "that Christ Jesus might demonstrate in me first all the longsuffering." The Greek text literally reads: "The all (whole) longsuffering"! The term "all" in Greek is "hapasan," meaning, "*quite* all," that is, altogether. A good example of this term we have in Eph. 6:13, where we read: "and having done all to stand."

We see the entire inexhaustible longsuffering of Christ displayed toward Paul. However, it was not simply for Paul's sake that such a great and merciful longsuffering is displayed. It was the design and purpose of God that "all who are about to believe upon him [Christ] unto life eternal" might be encouraged. They should see how great the love of God is. Forever the myths of salvation by works of law must be dispelled. And Paul as a preacher must be an "example" in his own person of the power of free mercy and loving longsuffering of Christ.

Should anyone, looking at the greatness of his sin, have "honest" doubts about the faithfulness and true nature of grace, Paul can and does say: Look at me! It is as if one steps into a hospital of spiritually (mentally) disturbed people, who complain of the hopelessness of salvation. In comes one who has been such a "patient" himself. What an advantage for such a spiritual counselor and advisor and "preacher" to be able to say to such a one: look what Christ did for me! He lifted me out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a Rock. What can a preacher really believe concerning his message if he does not himself know that he is a poor sinner; that he comforts others with the comfort wherewith he himself is comforted? Paul says, quoting David, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." He believed and it was counted to him for righteousness. And now he has boast, yet not in the flesh. He that glories let him glory in the Lord, his Righteousness, be he preacher or hearer of the Word!

God is faithful who has promised!

Wherefore this great Apostle, this redeemed sinner, upon whom so much mercy and longsuffering is bestowed breaks forth into singing. He utters a most sublime doxology to God. It is the thankfulness of a redeemed sinner who has received mercy. He has had much forgiven him and he is thankful for much.

The doxology which Paul utters here reads as follows: "Now unto the King of the ages, incorruptible (immortal, King James Version), invisible, only God, be honor and glory unto the ages of ages!"

There are many names which God gives Himself in Scripture by which we may speak to Him and about Him in adoring worship and praise. That Paul chooses the term "King" must be because he has in mind the dominion of God over all things in the Cosmos into which He sent His Son to save

sinners! His is the kingdom, the power and glory forever; for His sake all things are and were created. Thus John writes in the book of Revelation 4:11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

That God is called King of "the ages" is also significant. This does not simply refer to God's eternity per se, God's unchangeableness within the ontological Trinity, but refers to the revelation of God's Kingship in and upon the Cosmos from the viewpoint of time, history in its great epochs. He determines the times and bounds of the nations, numbering them according to the number of the children of Israel. Acts 17:26; Deut. 32:8. He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will. Eph. 1:11. And He will presently "in the ages to come" exhibit the exceeding greatness of His goodness over His own, in a new heaven and new earth where righteousness shall dwell. Eph. 2:7; II Pet. 3:13. And in this dominion of grace of the King of the "ages" we see the multiplicity of the manifestation of the great longsuffering of mercy, not willing that any of His people perish, but that they are all brought to salvation. II Peter 3:9.

Highly exalted in serene majesty, this "King of the ages" performs His sovereign will in saving His church by grace, according to the glory of the blessed God. All things are out of Him and through Him and unto Him!

To Him be "honor." Honor is the rightful esteem accorded God by His subordinates, the subjects of His kingdom. This is a loving service in those in whom the "end" of the commandment is wrought. It is only in those who are righteous in faith. These serve God, the King, in a good conscience and in pure hearts and in faith unfeigned. On the part of Paul this is a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of the lips; only such praise and honor is well-pleasing and an acceptable sacrifice to God. And thus it must be in all the church, and from all the angels in all the heavens.

To Him be also the "glory." Glory is really the divine excellence of all His perfections, His love and mercy, His power and wisdom, His truth and faithfulness, His longsuffering and tender compassion. Such is His glory in the church; such is His glory demonstrated in Paul the chief of sinners, and such is His praise and glory in "all who are about to believe upon Christ" unto everlasting life!

It shall thus certainly be. Hence, Paul adds the little but significant "Amen." That it will be thus in all the "ages of ages," what we might call in "time and eternity," is due to God's being the King of the ages! And it will be thus far more sure than what we feel in our hearts that this shall come to pass, or even desire it!

Well may Timothy and all who read this letter take this tremendous gospel truth to heart, preaching it and believing it!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

God's Royal Priesthood

(6)

It is wonderful the way God works in our children.

Sinful parents that we are, weak in the faith ourselves and prone by nature to seek the world and its lusts, God still uses us to train His covenant children, and through our feeble efforts He makes sons and daughters of Zion grow in grace and in knowledge. Stammering prophets, tongue-tied because of our own shallow insight into the wonders of His Word, He still uses us to teach our children the everlasting things of His kingdom. From age to age, from Paradise till this very day God has been gathering His Church and calling His children out of the children of believers. It has not failed.

False prophets have risen during all these times. Men have striven to wipe out faith in Christ. Violent and brutal even have the attempts been whereby the adversary has sought to kill off the Church of God and prevent the spread of the truth. And yet that Church has continued to press forward and has been a living testimony in the midst of all this opposition of the power of the Living God to gather His Church. And the present generation speaks the same language of faith that the last generation of believers spoke. It is indeed wonderful how our God works in us and in our children.

However that does not excuse you and me of our calling to provide our children with the truth and to fight an unrelenting battle to preserve the truth for them. In the prophetic phase of our office as God's royal priesthood we must reveal to them the things God has revealed to us; and we must see to it that they are taught the *truth*.

As we wrote above, false prophets have arisen throughout the ages. And they have been a plague upon God's royal priesthood and their spiritual seed. We may not keep from this spiritual seed the truth which we know and believe. But we likewise may not allow those who pervert the truth to try to poison their minds. If we bring them up, as we ought, in His fear, we will to the utmost of our power keep them from embracing the lie and strive to teach them the truth.

The true prophet will always be concerned with the truth. And he can never enjoy or condone the philosophies of the false prophets. He may be called narrow-minded, old-fashioned, a miserable critic, a chronic fault-finder or the like. But even that is nothing strange or new. From the mouth of the prophet Micah we learn that the true prophets are hated of those who love the lie. We read in Micah 2:6, "Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame." Paul

likewise speaks of men who clamor for the lie and insist that their instructors and educators satisfy the lust of man rather than to feed them with spiritual food. In II Timothy 4:3 we read, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." And it is exactly in that connection that Paul first in the preceding verse warns Timothy to "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." And if Timothy needed to be warned that in *his* time yet these men with itching ears would appear, what are we to expect in these days of the end of the age?

Sound doctrine is rejected. As Paul continues to write to Timothy in the very next verse, men shall "turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables." The prophet of God who searches His Word and from the mountain top of revelation speaks sound doctrine is called the false prophet. And men think that they do God a pleasure by heaping ridicule and scorn upon those who speak the truth. These are persecuted as the false teachers because they do not satisfy the itching ears of fable lovers. Departures from the truth are condoned. Men see them. They know that they are wrong. And yet they defend the right of such who teach these heresies to remain in their circles and spread their pernicious doctrines. Prophets who know the truth keep silent before those who they know speak as the false prophets do.

This carries down also to the prophet in the pew. Where there is laxity in the officially ordained and called prophet in the pulpit, where there are those instructed to teach God's people and to train them to praise Him as the sovereign and glorious God that He is, who fail to stem the tide of false doctrine, the congregation all too soon becomes indifferent to the things spiritual. There is such a lethargy. No, perhaps that is not the word even. Men are not simply drowsy and not alert to the things that are transpiring, they just do not care. They are indifferent. It makes little difference to them what is taught in their hearing. And it disturbs them even less what their children are taught. A little humanism, a little man-centered, social-improvement-gospel, a little spiritual pep-talk, a few little stories about "famous" men among men and their philosophical writings, and for the rest, Why bother with sound doctrine? Those things are all right for preachers! Election and reprobation, total depravity, limited atonement, justification by faith, God's sovereign counsel and means of grace are all fine subjects for a ministers' conference; but on Sunday, please!, give us a little moral talk on how to clean up the social evils in our community (only not those which we ourselves commit) and, please!, do not always remind us that we are conceived and born in sin, prone to hate God and the neighbor. Please, do not always speak about the cross! Tell us about glory, about the street of gold, the pearly gates, the nightless day, the water of life and that we are such nice people that we surely will one day enjoy

all these things. Remind us that OUR country is the kingdom of God and that we ought to be thankful God did not place us somewhere else. Please, do not shatter our dreams with talk about an antichrist! Do not throw in our faces the cold water of an idea of a false prophet who serves him. Be careful that you do not influence the minds of our children with the (Scriptural) idea that this antichrist and his false prophet come out of the so-called Christian nations rather than from the professed out-and-out godless and atheistic nations. Leave me alone. Let me dream. And let my children look out for themselves.

My brethren and sisters in the Lord, this is not serving as a prophet of God's royal priesthood!

In His fear God's prophet will affiliate with that church which maintains the truth and will seek it for his own spiritual joy and for the faith of his children. It is not a question of leaving the study of the truth and the examination of doctrinal matters to a few leaders in the church or congregation. It is not faith, and it is not in His fear to say, "My minister thinks this to be the truth, and my parents think so as well, and they are smarter than I am. I leave it to them. What they say and decide is good enough for me." Then you refuse to function in your office as prophet; and then you are in absolutely no position to "show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." YOU must turn to that revelation which we have in God's Word, and YOU must not repeat as a machine the words of other prophets (and surely not of the false prophets), but you must enter into that Word yourself and see for yourself those praises of God. Then you will be able to show forth His praises and will reveal yourself as a prophet of God's royal priesthood. Only what YOU see can YOU show forth!

Nor is it a question of loyalty to a church. It is a question of being loyal to God as His royal priesthood. To be sure, when our parents are aged and feeble, we must not leave them alone, run away from them and let them struggle along in want and misery. But let us not be so foolish as to call false doctrines and evil practices nothing more than weakness and old age. When mother and father are rich in gold and silver, spread far and wide over a vast continent, able to boast of beautiful buildings and numerous institutions, when mother and father are still able to beget many, many children and the family is growing fast in number, it is a rather difficult thing to get across one's conscience to say that mother and father are getting old and feeble with age, and that son and daughter ought to stay home and help these feeble old souls in the declining days of their life.

But even then, when father and mother are actually feeble and in need of physical, material help and a little tender love in their childishness of old age, it will not quite do to tell the grandchildren that their grandfather's and grandmother's sins are quite all right in God's sight, and that grandfather's and grandmother's denial of the truth must be tolerated and

go unchallenged because we must be loyal to grandpa and grandma rather than loyal to God. The little prophets like that kind of training. And soon enough they sing, "It was good enough for mother. It was good enough for grandpa and grandma. It was good enough for pastor Tolerant. And (with an increasing crescendo) it is good enough for me!"

Indeed, but is it good enough for God? He has, you know, a way of being very intolerant. He has a way of insisting that every *i* be dotted and every *t* crossed. He is a perfectionist. And He says, Be ye holy even as I am holy. He says not only that we are His royal priesthood. He says also that we must show forth His praises. And the lie, no matter how small a departure it may seem to us to be from the line of the truth, always denies Him His praise. Always it ascribes it to the creature. And our loyalty first, last and always must be to God.

For your own sake. For the sake of your children's faith. For God's sake, search the Scripture! Study to determine the truth of the Word of God as His prophets that you may speak His praises. Shudder at the very thought of being a false prophet who ascribes to the creature that which belongs only to the Living God. Never mind the praise of men, of church leaders, of friends in the church, of a denomination or sect. As God's prophet you are to show forth *His* praises. Study then His Word. Flee from all departures from the truth. Condemn them in no uncertain terms. Speak up as a prophet ought. And in His fear sing aloud of His divine majesty as the only true God. Let mind and tongue be joined in His praise.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

On April 13, 1961, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our dear wife, mother and grandmother,

MRS. GILBERT VAN BAREN (nee Anna Holleman)
at the age of 60 years.

May the God of all consolation comfort our hearts in these days of sorrow and direct our eyes to the glorious resurrection.

Mr. Gilbert Van Baren
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Zandstra
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony De Young
Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Vroegh
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. George Vroom
Mr. and Mrs. Gise Van Baren
Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Hugen
Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Van Baren Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Van Baren
Miss Anna Mae Van Baren
Mother of the Late Mrs. Joan Vroom
12 grandchildren

South Holland, Illinois

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

MATERIAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

CHAPTER XVI

On The Fruit Of Justification, That Is, On The Merit Of Good Works, And On The Nature Of That Merit

Continuing with our quotations from the Sixth Session of the Roman Catholic Council of Trent, devoted to the subject of Justification, we now quote the sixteenth chapter: "Before men, therefore, who have been justified in this manner — whether they have preserved uninterruptedly the grace received, or whether they have recovered it when lost — are to be set the words of the Apostle: *Abound in every good work, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord; for God is not unjust, that He should forget your work, and the love which you have shown in His name; and, do not lose your confidence, which hath a great reward.* And, for this cause, life eternal is to be proposed to those working well *unto the end*, and hoping in God, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward which is according to the promise of God Himself, to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits. For this is that *crown of justice* which the Apostle declared was, after his *fight and course, laid up for him, to be rendered to him by the just Judge, and not only to him, but also to all that love his coming.* For, whereas Jesus Christ himself continually infuses his virtue into the said justified — as the head into the members, and the vine into the branches — and this virtue always precedes and accompanies and follows their good works, which without it could not in any wise be pleasing and meritorious before God — we must believe that nothing further is wanting to the justified, to prevent their being accounted to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life, to be obtained also in its (due) time, if so be, however, that they depart in grace: seeing that Christ, our Saviour, saith: *If any one shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst forever; but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.* Thus, neither is our own justice established as our own as from ourselves; nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated: for that justice which is called ours, because that we are justified from its being inherent in us, that same is (the justice) of God, because that it is infused into us of God, through the merit of Christ. Neither is this

to be omitted — that although, in the sacred writings, so much is attributed to good works, that Christ promises, that even *he that shall give a drink of cold water to one of his least ones, shall not lose his reward*; and the Apostle testifies, *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*; nevertheless God forbid that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose bounty towards all men is so great, that he will have the things which are his own gifts be their merits. And forasmuch as *in many things we all offend*, each one ought to have before his eyes, as well the severity and judgment, as the mercy and goodness (of God); neither ought any one *to judge himself, even though he be not conscious to himself of anything*; because the whole life of man is to be examined and judged, not by the judgment of man, but of God, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God, who, as it is written, will render to every man according to his works.*"

In this sixteenth article, the Romish Church emphasizes the good works which the Christian is called to perform in the midst of the world, that he must fight the good fight, etc., declaring of the apostle that he receive the crown of justice AFTER his fight and course have been completed in the midst of this world. To this, of course, there can be no objection as such. It is certainly true that the child of God must perform good works, and that he must fight even unto the end. Of this the Scriptures testify abundantly. But it is quite another thing to say that our good works are meritorious, that the Lord's bounty towards all men is so great, that He will have the things which are His own be *their merits*.

Of interest in this connection are also the Canons which the Romish Council adopted at this same Council of Trent. We are now primarily interested in the Romish doctrine that our justification is also by works. Indeed, the Romish Church is also pelagian in its conception of the grace of God and the free will of man. This, too, is evident in these canons, articles in which the Romish Church anathematizes all those who do not agree with its doctrine. For example, we read in Canon III: "If any one saith, that without the prevenient ("prevenient" means: that which precedes, goes before — H.V.) inspiration of the Holy Ghost and without his help, man can believe, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought, so that the grace of Justification may be bestowed upon him: let him be anathema." Notice, please, that the Romish Church in this article speaks of the help of the Holy Spirit. And that the Romish Church defends the doctrine of the free will of the sinner, is evident from Canon IV: "If any one saith, that man's free will moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise cooperates towards disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of Justification; that it can not refuse its consent, if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever

and is merely passive: let him be anathema." Of course, we do not believe that the sinner is inanimate, merely passive. We do not believe that the sinner is a stock and block. But in the article just quoted the Romish Church states very emphatically that the sinner can also refuse the consent to the grace of Justification, and this Church strongly advocates the position of the free will of the sinner. However, at present we are primarily interested in the Romish position that man's justification is also by works. And we will now proceed to quote several of the canons of the Council of Trent.

Canon IX: "If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema."

Canon X: "If any one saith, that men are just without the justice of Christ, whereby he merited for us to be justified; or that it is by that justice itself that they are formally just: let him be anathema." Notice, please that the Romish Church in this canon declares that the sinner is not formally just by the justice of Christ itself.

Canon XI: "If any one saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and *the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost*, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favor of God: let him be anathema." In this canon it is evident that the Romish Church confuses justification with sanctification. And the Romish Church declares in this canon that it is not true that man is justified solely by the imputation of the justice of God, and that it is also untrue that he is justified solely by the favor of God.

Canon XII: "If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema." Notice, please, that the Roman Church in this canon denies that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the Divine mercy which remits sins solely for Christ's sake. One may well stand aghast that a Church has the boldness to anathematize anyone whose sole confidence is in the cross and blood of the Man of Sorrows of Calvary.

Canons XIII-XV: "If any one saith, that it is necessary for every one, for the obtaining the remission of sins, that he believe for certain, and without any wavering arising from his own infirmity and indisposition, that his sins are forgiven him: let him be anathema . . . If any one saith that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are

effected: let him be anathema." In this fourteenth canon the Romish Church denies that a man can be completely sure of his justification in this life. And in Canon XV we read: "If any one saith, that a man, who is born again and justified, is bound of faith to believe that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate: let him be anathema." In this canon this church denies that a child of God can have the assurance of his election. In this that church clearly opposes the admonition of the apostle Peter when he admonishes the Church of God to make its calling and election sure.

Canon XVII: "If any one saith, that the grace of Justification is only attained to by those who are predestined unto life; but that all others who are called, are called indeed, but receive not grace, as being, by the divine power, predestined unto evil: let him be anathema." This is a most interesting canon. Here the Romish Church maintains that not only the elect of God receive God's grace, anathematizes all those who declare that the reprobate (those who are predestined unto evil) do not receive grace. We must understand in this connection that the Romish Church, when speaking of those who are predestined unto evil, does not in these words give expression to its own doctrine. That Church denies the truth of Reprobation. But it is surely true that the Christian Reformed Church, and other churches, who maintain that also the reprobates receive grace, here finds itself in the company of the Roman Catholic Church.

Canon XVIII: "If any one saith, that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to keep: let him be anathema." Here the Romish Church would lead the way to its conception that we are able to keep the commandments of God, and that our keeping of these commandments is meritorious.

Canon XXI: "If any one saith, that Christ Jesus was given of God to men, as a redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a legislator whom to obey: let him be anathema." This is surely an ambiguous article. The Protestant Church surely does not deny that we must also do the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again and again our Lord admonishes to keep His commandments. But we must bear in mind that the Romish Church would advocate the position that our doing of these commandments is meritorious, that our obeying of these precepts merits in the sight of God. And in this canon this Church anathematizes all those who would maintain that Jesus Christ was given us of God only as a redeemer and not also as a legislator who gives us His precepts that we may walk in them and thereby merit justification in the sight of God.

H.V.

Bulletin Quote (Loveland's): All successful prayer is a prompting from the Father. My prayer does not change His mind; it is His Mind that dictates my prayer. Efficacious prayer is not so much a petition as a prophecy. It is my Father saying to me, "This is my will — ask THIS."

— Matheson

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Belgic Confession

ARTICLE I (continued)

God's oneness is that perfection of God whereby He is distinguished from all other being(s), so that no one and nothing is to be compared with Him. God does not belong to a certain class of beings, of which He is one among many. He is not God in competition with many others who also claim to be gods or who are acknowledged as gods. He is not even to be acknowledged as the god who is supreme among all gods. Scripture, and the Christian faith in obedience thereto, is absolutely intolerant. God is God, and there is none beside Him. There is no being beside Him, above Him, next to Him, or even under Him that is in any way to be acknowledged as God. He is the one Lord, the only Creator and Proprietor of all things. His is the sole authority in the entire universe. He is the only Law-giver; and He alone is Judge. His is all the power and the sovereignty. "The Lord our God is one Lord." A very cursory consideration of this perfection of our God will cause us to see also the relationship of this and the other perfections of God. That God is One implies that He is Self-existent, independent, eternal, and absolutely sovereign. More than one self-existent and independent being, and more than one eternal and absolutely sovereign Lord are inconceivable. And to maintain, to contrive, to have any other object instead of, or besides this one true God, Who has manifested Himself in His Word, is idolatry (*Heid. Catechism*, Qu. 95).

The practical significance of our faith that God is one, therefore, is clear and simple; and it has its ramifications for all of life. It is this: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.

2. God is Simple.

The truth of God's simplicity means, negatively, that God is not divided and is not made up of parts, and, positively, that God *is* His virtues, and that all God's virtues are perfectly one in Him. Of the creature we commonly say that he possesses certain attributes. He possesses strength. He has the virtue of righteousness, or of mercy, or of longsuffering and patience. But God *is* pure perfection. His very Being is virtue. And all the manifold virtues of God are one in Himself. God is righteousness, holiness, justice, power, might, love, mercy, grace. These are His very Being. And all the virtues of God are one. There is no division and no conflict in God and in His perfections. Just as God is love, light, life, holiness and righteousness, grace and mercy, truth and justice, so His righteousness is His love, His justice is His mercy, His holiness is His grace. In God there is most perfect harmony and unity.

If you inquire after Scriptural proof for this perfection of God, a passage such as I John 1:5 may be cited: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare

unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Or, with special reference to single virtue of God's love, we may mention I John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." This same truth is implied when our Lord Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life," identifying the divine nature with the life itself. John 11:25. Or again, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

Also this perfection of God has its practical significance for the believer. In the first place, the simplicity of God requires that we shall never think or speak of God's virtues in separation from one another. We must not conceive of God's mercy and His justice, for example, as being mutually exclusive, and say, "God is merciful; but He is also just." God's justice is a merciful justice; and His mercy is a just mercy. We must not drive a wedge between God's love and His wrath, but instead understand that just because God is love, therefore he is filled with wrath against the wicked. We must remember too that there is never any conflict between God's virtues and His works, or between the works of God themselves. God's works are the manifestation of His manifold virtues. And also in His works, therefore, there is perfect unity. To teach, for example, that God blesses in time the same men whom He curses for eternity is a contradiction of God's simplicity. In the second place, the Christian who understands that God *is* His virtues will see at once that such expressions as "Goodness! Gracious! Mercy!" are tantamount to taking God's name in vain, and should have no place in a Christian's speech.

3. God is a spiritual Being.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. In this passage God's spirituality is directly taught. This perfection of God is also indirectly taught in various passages of Holy Writ which emphasize that God is invisible, since the invisibility of God follows from the truth that He is a Spirit. Thus, when the second commandment prohibits the making of any graven image or of any likeness of God, this is based upon God's spirituality.

Negatively, we may say, in the first place, that this divine perfection does not have reference to the personal subsistence of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. This is a perfection of God's Being, and therefore has reference to the Triune God, not merely to one of the three Persons. In the second place, that God is a Spirit implies that He is not material, as is the visible creation, and is not limited by form or extent. From a positive point of view, the spirituality of God is closely related to the attribute of His simplicity. God's perfections do not subsist, inhere, in some other substance, as is the case with the creature. But God is pure Spirit. Man's strength, for example, subsists in his flesh, in his arm. God *is* power. He *is* His virtues. Even, therefore, when Scripture speaks of God in terms which seem to indicate that God has form and material substance, we

must remember that God is nevertheless a Spirit, that we must not think of Him as a creature and as having limited form and conceive of Him materially, but are to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

God is the one only and simple and spiritual Being!

God's Attributes

This first article of the *Belgic Confession* now makes mention of what are called the *attributes* of God. Before treating these various attributes one by one, a few remarks must be made. In the first place, we may notice that our confession only mentions *some* of God's attributes. It makes no special mention, for example, of God's omnipresence or of God's knowledge or of God's holiness. Nor does it itemize the various virtues of God which are included in His goodness. This does not mean that our creed intends to single out certain of God's attributes as being outstanding and more important than others. For this would certainly be contrary to the truth of God's simplicity. But we may remember, first of all, that the very truth of God's simplicity implies that those attributes of God which are not specifically mentioned here are nevertheless included in those that are mentioned. Secondly, the Confession does not mean to be exhaustive. Rather do we have in this article a very warm expression of faith designed to emphasize that He Who is for us the "overflowing fountain of all good" is the infinitely great and perfect God, Who is really God! And, in the third place, we may also bear in mind that others of God's attributes come into focus in later articles of our Confession. Our second observation is that the article makes no classification of these attributes of God. Various such classifications have been made by theologians, none of which is without its defect. One of the most common is the distinction between the communicable and incommunicable attributes. God's communicable attributes, as the name implies, are those which can be communicated, imparted to the creature, or, those attributes of God of which there is a reflection in creaturely measure in man. And the incommunicable attributes are those of which there is no such creaturely reflection in man. Among the attributes mentioned in this article, then, we could classify as incommunicable God's eternity, incomprehensibility, invisibility, immutability, and infinity. And the communicable attributes would include God's power, wisdom, justice and goodness. We say once more that the article does not make this distinction even though it mentions the communicable attributes last. More than a convenient and working distinction, however, this cannot be. And the same is true of various other classifications which have been attempted. Generally speaking, they all encounter the difficulty that God's simplicity would seem to prohibit any such classification. Scripture itself, of course, does not classify God's perfections, as might be expected. Our third observation concerns the absence of any mention of God's names. It is to be questioned whether the article even intends to use the name "God" in the sense of the Old Testament "Elohim," which is trans-

lated by "God" in our English Bible, or whether here the name "God" is used in the general sense of "Deity." But certainly no further mention is made of the various proper names of God which the Scriptures give us. We may mention, however, that in Scripture the various attributes of God are directly connected with one or another of these proper names of God very frequently, so that in these names — Jehovah, Lord, Most High, Almighty, etc. — certain of the attributes are in each case put on the foreground. And thus it is also possible to classify the attributes of God, with no small degree of success, in connection with the divine names. Even here, however, the truth of God's simplicity limits the success of the classification. Hence, while dogmatically we would attempt a certain classification of God's infinite perfections, we need not do so in our treatment of this article, but simply give a few words of explanation of each attribute as it is mentioned by our creed.

1. God is Eternal.

Beautifully and concretely the Scriptures set forth the eternity of God in the well-known words of Psalm 90: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God . . . For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Vss. 1, 2, 4. Again, closely associating God's immutability and His eternity, the Scriptures state: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Psalm 102:25-27. And yet there is something paradoxical about these expressions as they describe eternity really in terms of time, emphasizing that it is really impossible for creatures of time and in the language of creatures of time fully to express God's eternity. For eternity is not time. It is not even time without beginning and without end. To be sure, the Eternal One is without beginning and without end, and He is not at all subject to a succession of moments, days, years, centuries. But more than this, we must remember that time itself is a creature, and it is the very form of life for every creature. The creature exists only at the moment. He is ever moving out of the future into the past. What he was yesterday he is no more today, and he shall not be any more tomorrow. But time is not for God's Being and life. God is not bound to any time. God is the eternal I AM. With infinite and constant and unceasing fulness God is all that He is and unceasingly lives His infinitely perfect life with perfect consciousness. He is the uncaused, independent, unchangeable, incorruptible Jehovah! Comprehend Him in His eternity we cannot. Confess Him with a deep sense of humble dependence, and completely trust in Him and hope for eternal glory according to His eternal promises we by His grace in Christ Jesus may.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

Baptismal Records

(Continued)

In our last article we stated that Article 60 of the Church Order requires the recording of four things in connection with baptism. These are: (1) the name of the one baptized, (2) the names of the parents, (3) the birthdate of the one baptized and, (4) the date of baptism. We also gave the reasons, according to Rev. G. M. Ophoff, that the recording of this data is important. To these reasons we will now add a few others.

During the post-reformation years prior to the nineteenth century the church kept these records not only for itself but also to assist the civil government. The relation between church and state was very close during this time and since the government kept no birth records it depended upon the church to furnish these whenever occasion arose that one needed a verification of his birthdate or parentage. It was in part, therefore, to aid the government that Article 60 of our Church Order was enacted.

But the church also needs these records for her own use. She must know who her members are for she must know which persons are under her jurisdiction and care. She must have the names of the parents (or in previous times the names of the sponsors in baptism) in order that she may know whom to hold responsible for the training and instruction of the children that are baptized. The date of birth and baptism are important to the church because those children who have received baptism and do not seek admission to the Table of the Lord when they reach the years of discretion have to be admonished and labored with by the church. To do this the office-bearers must have accessible to them the ages of non-professing members of the church and this information will always be available if proper baptismal records are kept. Then, too, when a family leaves a congregation and moves into another community, all of this information should be transferred to the church with which they there affiliate. This certification is necessary and could not possibly take place unless good records are kept by the church.

To this may be added that these records of the church are also of significance for the individual members of the church. This significance is not to be found in the fact that these records are available and, therefore, as occasion may require they can be used by individuals to receive a certification of their date of birth, baptism, etc. Sometimes this is done when one makes application for a certain job and has no birth certificate. An official statement by the church will usually suffice. And, of course, such use of the records is also proper but it is not what we have in mind. We are thinking now of the parents of the children whose baptism is recorded

by the church. Article 60 of the Church Order is meaningful to them and that because:

First of all it is the parents who make request at the consistory for the baptism of their children. This means that they desire that their children are received as members of the church through baptism and that this membership is recorded.

In the second place, as the Form for Baptism stresses, baptism is not *a mere custom or superstition but an ordinance of God to seal unto us and our seed His covenant*. This is very serious. Parents request and express the desire that this holy ordinance of God be administered to their children. This, too, is recorded. What we mean by this is that the recording of the baptism data does not simply mean that on a certain date certain children of certain parents were received into the church through a mere custom but that they received the sign and seal of the covenant of grace upon request of their parents and according to the ordinance of God!

Therefore, in the third place, that parents may evidence that they are thus minded they are asked upon the occasion of baptism to answer in the hearing of the church certain important questions. Our readers are undoubtedly acquainted with these questions and since our purpose is not to discuss these questions at this time we will not quote them. We want only to point out that when the baptism is recorded by the church, this official recording is also the record before God of the vows the parents speak when they present their children for baptism. Although we are prone to forget what we have solemnly confessed and promised before God and His church after the ceremony is finished, there is a permanent record between us and God, preserved in the church, and for which we are accountable. No action on our part can erase this responsibility as some seem to think. The record stands as soon as the baptism has been administered and that record does not simply intend to register the name, birthdate, and baptism date of the child together with the names of the parents but it expresses that the parents, whose names are recorded, on the date recorded, promise and oblige themselves to fulfill to the utmost of their power all the baptismal obligations with respect to the child whose name and birthdate are also recorded on this record.

In light of this we would digress a moment to point out a serious sin of no small consequences. I refer to the sin of parents who promise before God and His church "*to instruct and bring up their children in the aforesaid doctrine (which is taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches) or help or cause them to be instructed therein to the utmost of their power*," and refuse to cooperate in the establishment of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools where possible and when such schools are established, refuse to have their children instructed in them. There can be no justification for such a breach of promise and if any of our readers are of a different mind, I would like to hear how such conduct can be made to harmonize with the recorded vow of baptism. Whatever

reasons may be given must be so cogent that they would compel God Himself to release us from the obligation of our promise which we have seriously made in the hearing of His church.

Of equally serious consequence is the sin of parents who make confession of their faith, subscribe to the doctrines of Holy Writ as taught in the church, and without ever protesting or attempting to show that their confession was made on the basis of misinformation concerning those doctrines, they will at a later date forsake the church (for fleshly and material reasons) and have their children baptized in a church that teaches diametrically opposite doctrines. This leads to the most glaring inconsistency where parents oblige themselves to teach their children and rear them according to doctrines which they themselves do not believe. Or it must bring us to the inevitable conclusion that such people do not believe what they themselves confess. This is trifling with holy things. With God, however, we cannot do this with impunity. Our sins always find us out. God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children in generations. He Who requires integrity of heart, truth in the inward parts, honesty in all our confession and life, cannot be mocked.

The matter, therefore, of baptism must be taken in all its seriousness. It is not a matter of a day or an hour or a ceremony. It is a matter of permanent record and responsibility. When then we inscribe our vows upon that record and assume that responsibility we must answer—not to men—but to God!

Several other matters of a sundry nature are sometimes discussed in connection with Article 60. Two of these we shall mention here. Firstly there is the matter of the naming of the children, and, secondly, the question whether only the given name or both the given and family name should be mentioned in baptism?

Concerning the first we are agreed with the comments found in *The Church Order Commentary*. We quote from page 248.

“The naming of a child has rightly always been left to the parents. It is their privilege to name their children and not that of the state or the church or any other agency. But this does not mean that Christian parents are not prevented by the very Christianity which they profess from giving certain names to their children. For example, no child should be called by the names of God. In the past some parents have used names as follows: Divine, Jesus, Immanuel. No one should consent to baptize a child by one of these names. Parents should also be discouraged from naming their children after angels inasmuch as these names are borrowed from a sinless domain, the sacredness of which would not be enhanced in our estimation and thought if its names were given to sinful beings. Nor would a Christian parent think of calling his child Cain, Judas, Jezebel, etc.

“Years ago, particularly among the Puritans of New England, many parents named their children after Bible

characters such as Abraham, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Paul, etc., or after certain Christian virtues as Charity, Love, Grace, Temperance, Hope. Some of these names are still very common. Selecting names from the Bible is certainly a great deal better than the choosing of names from present day novels or even from among movie stars as many are inclined to do in our day. It is also far better to name our children after Bible characters than to name them after outstanding men of unbelief such as Darwin, Marx, etc. For the rest the Bible permits parents to choose names as they see fit. Many New Testament believers had pagan names but the Bible nowhere urges these converts to adopt new names. We should never become overly scrupulous on this score.”

Concerning the second question we may say that the common practice of using only the given name in baptism stems from the historical fact that years ago people had no family names. When family names were introduced this custom continued. Again we concur in the opinion of the *Church Order Commentary* when it states, “But we know of no serious argument by reason of which the complete name should not be pronounced at the time of baptism.” In favor of this practice is this that, especially in larger churches, the entire congregation then knows the parents of the children who are being baptized. Another way of attaining this same objective, however, is to have the minister announce the names of the parents who are presenting their children for baptism just before the Form is read. If more than one child is to receive baptism, he would do this in the order they are to be baptized. We are of the opinion that whichever method is followed has little if any bearing upon the significance of the sacrament.

G.v.d.B.

CONTRIBUTIONS

THE SOUTH HOLLAND LAW CASE CONCLUDED

Following is a copy of the Final Decree (a consent decree) resolving the issues of the Bill of Complaint that was brought against our South Holland Protestant Reformed Church by the schismatic group in South Holland as instigated by the Rev. B. Kok, their erstwhile moderator and pastor.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)	
)	SS
COUNTY OF COOK)	
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF COOK COUNTY,		
ILLINOIS		
PROTESTANT REFORMED)	
CHURCH OF SOUTH HOLLAND,)	
A RELIGIOUS CORPORATION,)	
and BERNARD KOK)	
)	PLAINTIFFS

-vs-) NO. 58S17915
 HOMER C. HOEKSEMA, JOHN)
 VAN BAREN, WILLIAM T.)
 TERPSTRA, PETER POORTENGA,)
 ANDREW LENTING, ARTHUR)
 ZANDSTRA and EDWARD)
 BRUINSMA)
 DEFENDANTS)

FINAL DECREE

This cause coming on to be heard on the bill of complaint filed in said cause, the answer of the defendants thereto and the reply of the complainants to said answer, and the proofs oral, documentary and written, taken and filed in said cause, and after argument and filing of briefs by the respective parties but before the filing of a Masters Report; and all parties having this day appeared in court either in person or by counsel and having consented to the entry of this decree, said consent being signified by the written approval of all of the parties hereto by their respective attorneys, and the court being fully advised in the premises doth find!

1. It has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this cause and the parties thereto and that all court costs and Master's fees have been paid in full.

2. The Protestant Reformed Church in the United States has a Presbyterian form of church government wherein each church has a consistory consisting of ministers and members who are either elders or elders and deacons chosen by the communion members of the church.

3. That there are two classis in the denomination, Classis East and Classis West. Each consistory send two delegates to the Classis under which it resorts.

4. That the highest assembly of said church is the Synod, which consists of eight delegates from each classis, four ministers and four elders.

5. That the defendants and their duly elected successors constitute the true and lawful consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, a religious corporation, and they, together with the congregation they represent, are entitled to the ownership, possession, use and control of all of the property, both real and personal, of said Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

6. That the defendants and the consistory which they constitute are recognized by the true and lawful Classis West and Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America.

7. That the defendants, their duly elected successors and the congregation they represent are entitled to sole use of the name "Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois" and to sole use and ownership of the corporate name, "Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, a religious corporation."

8. That only the defendant HOMER C. HOEKSEMA,

or his duly elected successors are entitled to represent themselves as ministers of the Gospel of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

9. The Court further finds that the Plaintiffs have not maintained the allegations in their bill of complaint contained.

It is therefore ordered, adjudged and decreed that the bill of complaint in this cause be and the same is hereby dismissed for want of equity.

ENTER: (was signed) Samuel B. Epstein

Judge

Approved this 17th day of April, 1961.

Examined and Approved:

Llewellyn A. Wescott

Master in Chancery of the
Superior Court of Cook
County, Illinois

Lyle, Havey & Gager

By: Edward T. Havey

Attorney for Plaintiff

Orval A. Larson and John J. Moran

By: John J. Moran

Attorney for Defendant

Explanation and Comment

A word of explanation is first of all in order so that this chronicle may be completed.

This law case began in the fall of 1958 when a complaint was brought against our South Holland Church, or rather against the consistory members, by the schismatic group in the name of "The Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, and Bernard Kok." This was a small group of families who had formally requested dismissal papers in early 1955 and had been organized into a schismatic congregation. Upon organization these resigned members turned around and took the name of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. Later, after having been warned, they changed this to "Orthodox Protestant Reformed Church," and even so informed their classis. In 1958 they suddenly were sending out letters again under our name. And when their letters, in which they avowed that they did not want court action but were gracious enough to divide our property with us, had no effect, Kok, who became their pastor in August, 1958, with his consistory brought a Bill of Complaint against us, in which they sought to deprive us of our name and property and even of the right to use the denominational name "Protestant Reformed" at all. The sole ground of this case—brought, mind you, by the same Kok who had under oath so vehemently tried to be congregationalistic in the First

Church case — was the Court decision in the well-known Second Church case.

Because of the crowded court docket in Cook County, our case was heard by a Master in Chancery, a qualified attorney appointed by the court to conduct the hearing and file a report with the court. Our case was heard in 1959 and early 1960, and briefs were filed in the spring of 1960, our brief being a very detailed account and thorough-going treatment of the issues of the case. And since that time we had been waiting for a Master's report, hopeful that it would be favorable.

Before a report was issued, however, events took a new turn. The schismatic congregation ceased holding services after the first of the year, Kok joined the Christian Reformed Church of Munster, Indiana, and sought admittance to the Christian Reformed ministry at the January session of Classis Chicago South. This had led us to make preparations for re-opening the hearing and introducing new evidence. But before such a new hearing could be held, our opposition initiated negotiations for a settlement of the case. Such a settlement was possible if reached before the Master's report was filed. This would not be what is known as an "out-of-court" settlement. But this would be a settlement agreed upon by both parties and officially affirmed by the court. The form of settlement upon which we insisted was this consent decree, which deals with all the issues raised by the complaint and which has the force of a final court decree.

After lengthy negotiations, which centered particularly on the issue of classis and synod (cf. paragraph 6 of the decree) the opposition finally agreed to the above decree, which is substantially what we had demanded from the beginning, and which justifies not only the local consistory but also Classis West and our Synod.

Thus ends the chronicle of the South Holland case. Needless to say, the congregation there is happy and thankful that at long last their name and church property are no longer in jeopardy. Never has there been a doubt among them as to what was right and proper before God in this case. Nor, generally speaking, was there doubt in the community as a whole as to who actually constituted the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois. The only question was what the civil court would decide. The congregation may now go forward without this cloud of doubt hanging over their life.

And thus has ended also another of these dissident schismatic groups, founded on no principle but that of error, conceived in rebellion, and doomed beforehand to disintegrate because of the very seeds of error and revolution inherent in them.

And what of the chief instigator of this court action, the Reverend Bernard Kok?

This is a shameful story. But the facts are incontrovertible, and they should be known by all concerned.

I will not go back to the beginning even of the South

Holland case. For then pages would have to be written. Let me merely relate the facts in connection with Kok's return to the Christian Reformed Church, and then, too, not as they pertain to his doctrinal examination, but as they pertain to his ethical conduct. As far as doctrine is concerned, we all have known for a long time that the schismatic movement (I do not say all their members) is principally Christian Reformed in doctrine. But the ethical conduct of Kok has been a disgrace to the ministry of any church.

First of all, in general, would it not have been simple moral honesty if Kok had withdrawn his lawsuit and expressed sorrow for ever having attempted to take Protestant Reformed name and property the moment he had any intention of joining the Christian Reformed Church?

Secondly, the reader ought to know that partly because of a letter sent by our South Holland Consistory to Classis Chicago South, Kok promised to have his name withdrawn from the Bill of Complaint immediately. Not only did he not do this; but he continued to meddle in the negotiations for a Consent Decree almost to the very end, and long after the classis had accepted him.

In the third place, *after* joining the Christian Reformed Church and *after* being admitted to the ministry, he still continued to act as president of the schismatic consistory, and even signed dismissal papers as president as late as February 15.

Such lawlessness we have learned to expect from the schismatic movement. And we can only feel sorry for their membership, which must suffer from such inept, corrupt, and unethical leadership.

But from the Christian Reformed Church, in spite of the differences we have with them, we do not really expect that they will tolerate actions of this kind. We had expected that there was more genuine ecclesiastical dignity and respect for the "ecclesiastical manner" and desire to keep unprofaned the sacred ministry than this. I say this not with a kind of unholy glee, but in all love. Brethren, investigate: you will find the facts as I presented them. And then undo the wrong. For you can only reap for your own denomination an evil harvest from this ministry begun in falsehood.

And to those earnest-minded souls of the De Wolf group that are disturbed by the recent turn of events and who may have their eyes opened when they see the end of the way on which they began in 1953, I would still say: Come back! Come back *in the proper way*, that is, the way of open-hearted repentance and confession before God and His church.

H.C.H.

Bulletin Quote (Lynden's): Religion germinates only when it attains unto that which is written of Enoch, viz., that *he walked with God*. Neither knowledge nor pious feeling by themselves can ever be called religion. Only when your God and you have met each other and associate and walk together, does religion *live* in your heart.

— Abraham Kuyper

ALL AROUND US

THE IMPORTANCE OF MIRACLES

The miracles of Scripture and faith in them are always of essential importance for the believer. This is because the central miracle of all time is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. All the other miracles from the original creation of the heaven and earth, through the many miracles recorded in Scripture, on to the miracle of regeneration—the regeneration of the elect and of the whole creation, the new heavens and the new earth, are so many manifestations of the power of grace in the incarnation of our Lord. Miracles are the essence of the faith of the child of God. The faith of a Christian can very well be summed up in the words, “I believe in miracles.”

It is for this reason that it is always the miracles of Scripture that are attacked by unbelievers. They may attack the miracles recorded on the pages of Holy Writ as incredible to the enlightened mind. But in doing so they naturally also spurn the wonder of regeneration and the miracle of grace in the lives of God’s people. The result of this is necessarily that they also discredit the miraculous and virgin birth of Christ, the blood of atonement shed on the cross, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, His final coming in judgment at the end of the ages—all miracles. This is always the spirit of Antichrist. One cannot deny a single miracle of Scripture without denying them all. And denying them all involves a denial of Christ. That is why the apostle John says in his first epistle: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” I John 4:1-3.

It is for this reason also that the Antichrist himself attempts to imitate the miracles of Scripture to try to deceive people into believing that he is indeed a prophet. The same apostle John informs us in his vivid description of Antichrist in Rev. 13:14: “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

Sometimes these attempts to deny miracles are blatant and coarse; more often they are subtle attempts to explain the miracles in a natural way. There is a good illustration of the latter in a recent issue of *The Baptist Bible Tribune* which quotes from the *Jewish Chronicle*.

A natural explanation for the miraculous escape of the children of Israel, when the waters of the Red Sea divided to let them through to dry land and then closed again to drown “all

the host of Pharaoh,” was offered in the religious programme “Viewpoint” on BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) television last week.

According to this explanation all the details of the Red Sea crossing, as described in the Book of Exodus, are accurate, except that the event actually took place not in the Red Sea itself but in the Wadi El Arish, on the northern coast of the Sinai Peninsula.

The theory advanced by Mr. W. R. Todd, whose arguments were based, first, on the fact that the rendering of the Biblical words “yam suf” into Red Sea was mistaken, since they actually meant “reed sea”; and, secondly, on an incident which occurred to British troops who were chasing the Turks in the Wadi El Arish in 1916.

Mr. Todd showed a map of the area and pointed out a lagoon called Bardwil Fisheries. He said that what was really a dried mud pan, six to ten feet below sea-level, was nowadays kept flooded to form a mullet fishery. But in its natural state it was filled with sea water only when the rare gales flooded the whole depression. In between storms the water evaporated in the hot sun.

When a British mounted force entered the wadi in 1916 and rode across the mud pan to bathe in the sea, a wind suddenly arose, clouds appeared, and the horses showed a strange reluctance to move on. A torrential rain broke, the troops reached a sand bar, where they spent the whole night. “The next morning they saw that the sea had broken through, flooding the mud pan with water all around them, only the sand bar remaining dry.”

This, claimed Mr. Todd, was exactly what happened when the children of Israel fled from the Egyptians.

Moses, who had shepherded his father-in-law’s flock for 20 years, he argued, would have known that the mud pan was liable to sudden flooding. “To place it between the people and their pursuers would be sound tactics.”

What happened, then, was this: while the Israelites were on the dry sand bar (which is what the Bible meant by saying they were “in the midst of the sea”), the pursuing Egyptians, unaware of the danger, entered what looked to them like a dry mud pan. But underneath there was “a tremendous bog, in which they were caught.” As the Bible explained: it “took off their chariot wheels.”

In the meantime the sea waters were breaking in and raising the level of the lagoon. “And the water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh... there remained not so much as one of them.”

This is not by any means an isolated case; but it is an illustration of how the miracles of Scripture are denied under the guise of faithfulness to the record of Holy Writ. Against this we must ever be on our guard. The denial of the miracle of creation through an attempt to explain it in a natural way is equally as dangerous and as wrong.

ONCE A SAINT, NOT ALWAYS A SAINT

The intricacies of Roman Catholic theology are not always easy to follow. Sometimes the absurdity of claims of the church is brought sharply into the light. This was the case with a recent decision of the Vatican to de-canonicalize a saint as reported in *Time*.

Archbishop Richard Cardinal Cushing was travelling in his chauffeur-driven limousine on the way to the town of Dover in Massachusetts to dedicate a church which had recently been completed, and which was to be named St. Philomena’s. Imagine his consternation when, as he was travelling along reading a newspaper, an item informed him that St. Philomena had recently been stricken from the roster of saints by the Vatican’s Sacred Congregation of Rites. St. Philomena was discovered in 1802 in a catacomb in Rome. It was the skeleton of a young teen-age girl with a fractured skull that was found. On the basis of an apparent inscription on her grave, a glass phial containing what was thought to

be blood and a few symbols (two anchors, three arrows, a palm and a flower or torch) she was declared to be a saint that had no need of formal canonization for she had evidently been a martyr. Her bones were turned over to a priest and enshrined in a church near Naples where these bones promptly produced a flood of miracles and special favors. A nun later claimed to have had a series of revelations concerning Philomena's life and martyrdom and wrote a biography of this youthful martyr. She was canonized by Pope Gregory XVI in 1837 and several years later her feast day was set for August 11.

Pope John XXIII has issued orders to tidy up the liturgical calendar of the church and strike from the rolls certain saints about whom so little is known that their existence may be doubted. Philomena was the first to go.

Her de-canonization had rather wide-sweeping effects. Archbishop Cushing was especially on the spot and had to change the name of the church he was about to dedicate to "the Church of the Most Precious Blood" during the ceremonies to the utter astonishment of the parishioners who knew nothing about it all. The trouble was that he had also distributed about 800 statuettes of St. Philomena to the Catholics of his arch-diocese, and the new church he dedicated would have to obtain a new stained glass window since she also appeared in it.

There was equally great consternation elsewhere. Sister Marie Helene had devoted 45 years of her life to the cause of St. Philomena, had written a book about her and had raised \$10,000 to erect a shrine to her on the campus of Greensburg's Seton Hill College. 300,000 tourists had visited the shrine of her bones each year and countless churches had been dedicated to her—more than 100 in the United States alone. But to those people who had faithfully prayed to her all these years, now in vain, there were some words of comfort in the current edition of "Butler's Lives of the Saints": "We do not know certainly whether she was in fact named Philomena in her earthly life, whether she was a martyr, whether her relics now rest at Mugano or in some place unknown. And these questions are only of relative importance: the spiritual influence of her whom we call St. Philomena is what really matters; . . . in the words of our Lord: 'Is not the life more than meat and the body more than the raiment?'"

How far from the truth and into what silly absurdities has the Roman Catholic Church led her members through the truth-denying doctrine of the saints!

TRANS WORLD RADIO

Our *Reformed Witness Hour* has been transmitted for almost a year now over Trans World Radio. This is our foreign broadcast in Europe which reaches throughout a big part of the continent, but is beamed especially to the British Isles. In a recent issue of *Time* magazine, there is some information about this station which may be of interest to our people.

The radio station had its beginning in Interlaken, Swit-

zerland where a group of Protestant evangelicals including Billy Graham and Dr. Harold Ockenga decided to begin religious broadcasting in Europe. Rev. Paul E. Freed, a Baptist minister, was assigned the task of starting a religious broadcasting station to cover Europe. Before this time there had been no Protestant station in all of Europe although 3/4 of the world's receivers outside the United States were in this continent. The station was originally built in Tangier, but was forced to move from the north coast of Africa in 1959 when Morocco decided to incorporate the free port of Tangier. There were broadcasting facilities in Monaco which were built by Adolph Hitler for propaganda purposes, and were leased by Trans World Radio from Radio Monte Carlo on a ten-year lease, automatically renewable.

Five giant antennas already carry the station's programs across Asia to the Pacific and to Spain and Latin America. The programs are carried in Russian, Spanish, Latvian, Hebrew, Arabic, Swedish, Portugese, French, English, Italian and German. Within three months Armenian, Georgian and Uzbek will be added; within a year, Chinese and Hindustani. The group operating the station are now primarily interested in reaching inside Russia. Already they have a half hour program in Russian, soon to be increased to an hour. There are regular listeners behind the iron curtain as far away as Siberia, and a steady stream of letters arrives out of the U.S.S.R. speaking highly of Trans World Radio.

NEWS FROM ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

There is some news from various evangelical and ecumenical councils that have met or will meet in the near future.

April 10-14 was the date of the 19th annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) which met in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The actions of the Convention are included in a brief quote in *Christianity Today*.

Delegates to the National Association of Evangelicals adopted a resolution urging the organization to make a positive approach to the problem of Communism with a "dynamic presentation of the Gospel rather than engage in the investigation and exposure of individual Communists." Support was given governmental investigatory functions as necessary for national security.

Other resolutions endorsed (1) tax exemption for church and institutional activities provided such were not of a secular enterprise nature, (2) an appeal to the National Association of Broadcasters to clean up TV films, and (3) church efforts to accelerate educational information on the evils of liquor traffic.

The convention created a new NAE organization post, that of director of information . . .

Building of a new headquarters building in Wheaton, Illinois, at a cost of \$100,000 was approved. It is to be ready for use early in 1962.

The World Council of Churches (WCC), another large group of churches throughout the world, is scheduled to meet in New Delhi, India, this fall. One of the major questions before this assembly will be whether to incorporate into the World Council the International Missionary Council, an organization of missionary societies and mission boards who cooperate in world-wide mission work. It will be interesting to follow developments of this meeting.

Currently attracting a lot of attention is a new Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII to meet in the near

future. There have been many of these councils in the past, the most well-known being the Council of Trent which drew up the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent in 1563 as part of the counter-Reformation. The Reformation had gained such sweeping victories on the continent of Europe that the Roman Catholic Church called this council into being as part of its attempt to define Roman Catholic dogma and purify the church in the hopes of stemming the tide of the Reformation.

To the newest council several Protestant and non-Catholic bodies have been invited. The Greek Orthodox Church has been asked to come as well as the Anglican Church and representatives from the World Council of Churches. They will not participate, but come as observers. Many students of ecumenicism view this coming council as a giant step towards healing the breach struck between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism by the Reformation. It is important to watch closely events leading up to and development of the meeting.

H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

May 5, 1961

The Adams St. School Spring Concert, sponsored by the ninth grade, was given April 27 at First Church. The program featured the school choir under the direction of Miss Hulda Kuiper, accompanied by Miss Lois Schipper at the piano. The audience was welcomed by a very young duo, Debra DeVries and James Kuiper. Between groupings the choir was assisted by a brass quintette which rendered two numbers, and by an acrostic presented by children from grades 3 to 6, and by an organ solo, Handel's Largo, by Don Moelker. One does not go to school programs expecting the robust singing of adults, but rather comes to enjoy the fresh young voices of praise-singing youngsters — reminding one of the children who met Jesus at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The last number of the choir, "Open the Gates of the Temple," was accompanied by piano and organ, with trumpeter Dan Swart playing the antiphonal responses. The entire program was an unfolding of the theme that Spring is a picture of the Resurrection as it has been revealed to us in the glorious resurrection of our Lord. Truly, a wonderful evening of spiritual joy and worship!

The concert of the Hope Heralds, scheduled for April 16, but snow-cancelled, was held April 30 at Southeast Church. Under the direction of Mr. Gerald Kuiper and accompanied by Miss Lois Schipper, the men's group gave an excellent program well pleasing to the audience, and because it was God-praising we may believe that it was also God-pleasing. The program was in three groupings with an organ solo, by

Miss Bonnie Bylsma, and an offertory song selection between them. "The Lord's Prayer" was an arrangement by Rev. J. A. Heys of our South Holland Church, and, "Leaning On His Everlasting Arms" was a delightful arrangement by James Jonker, of First Church. This *Beacon Lights* sponsored concert was very worthwhile to all those who were able to come out to it.

The announced topic of Doon's Sunday afternoon sermon, April 30, suggests that Rev. Van Baren intends to preach a series of sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians. The first chapter alone, with its 23 verses wrapped up in 5 sentences, contains a wealth of doctrinal truths concerning election and adoption. Surely the congregation and its pastor will benefit from a study of that Spirit-written letter to the church at Ephesus.

The Hope School Ladies' Circle entertained a capacity audience in the Hudsonville Church auditorium, May 4, with a Stereophonic program with slides. Mr. Brower, the producer has recorded many fine songs upon his stereo tape recorder which accompanies the projection of beautiful slides showing the marvelous creation in which God has placed us. And, as Rev. H. Hanko confessed in the closing prayer, when we see the beauty which still remains in this sin-cursed world we eagerly await the unimaginable beauty which will be ours to enjoy in the New Heavens and the New Earth which we shall inherit after our Lord's Coming.

The individual members of Hope's congregation were taught to judge whether they were loved of God as delineated in 2nd Cor. 9:7, for their pastor preached on that text in the evening service of April 16, under the theme, "God loveth a cheerful giver." Well may we all examine our own giving whether it be "grudgingly or of necessity" heeding the promise given in the preceding verse: "he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully."

All of the Western bulletins remind the people to send their donations for the Young People's Convention to the Loveland Prot. Ref. Young People's Society, 750 Jefferson Ave., Loveland, Colorado. Surely this plea will be met with warm response for all who want to help make this convention a success — one which will serve to bring awareness of their covenant responsibilities and privileges to our sons and daughters. The Convention theme has been announced as, "The Beauty of Holiness."

Rev. R. C. Harbach and Rev. J. A. Heys served as Church Visitors in Loveland, April 25. The same evening Rev. Harbach gave a lecture on the topic, "An Evaluation of the Modern Educational Process" sponsored by the Loveland Prot. Ref. School Society. And in reciprocation, Rev. Heys and Rev. Kuiper were given opportunity to preach in Lynden, April 30, on their Church Visitation tour.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.