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MEDITATION

ENMITY BETWEEN SEED AND SEED

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Genesis 3:15

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed!"

That, beloved reader, is the everlasting Gospel of our Covenant God! Look at the picture of the erstwhile harmonious Paradise, after the devil has done his hellish work! Man, created in God's image and likeness, placed into covenant communion of friendship and love with his God, is fallen away from Him, who is the Source of heavenly glee and jubilation.

Neither is he neutral with respect to God. He has made a very careful covenant with hell and the devil. His slave he is and will be after the successful temptation. He is an enemy of God, and his seed will be the same. And we note the enmity at once. When God comes to him in His great mercy, and says: Where art thou? he crawls away into the underbrush and hides himself from the light and the love of God. When God takes him to task for his disobedience, he accuses God: the woman *whom Thou gavest to be with me!* When the woman is addressed and accused of her evil, she says: The serpent beguiled me! There is no honesty or uprightness left in their inmost heart. Instead, they should have said: We have sinned against Thee! We are guilty and we have deserved nothing but to be cast away forever from Thy love and from Thy grace!

But they are filled with enmity against God.

They are of the party of the devil, and have become his spiritual children. And from that time on, all they can do is produce offspring of the same kind, with this difference that they will make it worse from year to year and from generation to generation, until the wholly logical seed will be produced in the end of the ages: the Antichrist! The foul seed of sin which our first parents sowed calls for the fouler

fruit of the Man of sin who will sit in the temple of God in the end of the ages, proudly proclaiming that he is God!

Indeed, there is enmity in the heart of man, but it is enmity against God!

* * * *

But God said: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman!"

That means that Eve went to heaven. If you ever are required to produce proof for the contention that Eve is saved, you will find it here. God placed enmity against the devil in the heart of the woman, and that is Eve, our first mother. And to hate the devil is principally to love God. You cannot love God and not hate the devil, and conversely, you cannot hate the devil and not love God. The one postulates the other. The service of God is antithetical.

And if you ask me how the Lord put enmity in the heart of Eve against the devil, then the answer is easy: God put the love of God in her heart through His Word and His Holy Spirit.

And that results in two things.

First, if you have the love of God in your heart, you will hate all that is evil. And, remember, that is so in the absolute sense of the word: *all* evil. There is no evil which a man loves who has the love of God in his heart. And the reason is clear. God hates all evil, and so His child hates all evil. There is no exception to the rule that God hates evil, is there? At once your heart and mind answers: No! The same holds true of the child of God who has the love of God spread abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost that is given unto him or her. And, incidentally, that is the reason why John says that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for he cannot sin.

Second, if you have the love of God in your heart, the devil will hate you. And the reason is clear: the devil hates goodness. And also here, there are no exceptions to the rule. Are you a child of God? Then the devil hates you with a cruel hatred. And he hates you, not so much because you are you, but only because he smells God in you, he tastes God in you, he hears and sees and feels God in you. And God he hates, and God he would like to murder, and God he will murder on the cruel cross in the fulness of time.

Hence, to have enmity put in your heart by God is the most blessed Gospel of God. I am glad I hate the devil, and that he hates me. For it is proof that I have the love of God in my heart, and that I hate evil, even the devil, who is the very embodiment of evil.

Oh, the boon of having enmity against the devil divinely put into one's heart!

* * * *

"And between thy seed and her seed!"

"Thy seed" refers to the children of the devil.

You ask: how can the devil have offspring? Well, he cannot have real, natural offspring, for he is a spirit, and spirits do not marry and have sexual life.

But the Lord God here speaks of spiritual children. And Jesus affirms it. Said He: "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it." This Scripture is very illuminating with respect to the subject matter at hand. If you are a natural son or daughter of Eve, you are conceived of the devil, and the sphere of that conception is the sphere of the lie. So that the product is the foul product of the lie.

And that is true of all of us, as we are by nature. Can anyone produce the clean out of the unclean? No, not one. We are all children of the devil by nature, and therefore we are all liars from our birth. And the principal lie is this: God is no God! There is no God. But to the contrary: I am God and there is no other God besides me. But the seed of the woman receive the love of God in their heart, become regenerated and converted, receive the image of the heavenly in their heart and mind and soul, become in a sense God-like, certainly the sons of God! There is all the difference.

Incidentally, note that the seed of the woman receive the enmity against the evil in their heart, put there of God! Later, people would quarrel about what the seed receive. Some say: God offers to put the enmity there. Others say: God promises to put the enmity there. Still others: you may put it there yourself. But the text says: And I will put enmity between . . . thy seed and her seed! Here is the only warranted conclusion: if you want to put content into the phrase: the seed of the woman, you will have to say: those that are or will be regenerated, in other words, the elect. I am curious to know what could ever be said against this. God simply says: I will put enmity between thy seed, that is, the devil's children, and her seed, that is, God's children who receive the love of God in their heart. God does not say: I will put that blessed enmity against the devil in your heart, provided you believe on Me or on Christ! But He says: I will put enmity in your heart, and therefore you

believe! Believing on God in Christ is the proof that the enmity is put there. Wonderfully comfortable doctrine!

* * * *

". . . and her seed."

Yes, that is the offspring of God throughout all the ages. That is the Church of God, the number of the elect unto eternal life. But they have a core, a center, a common origin in the one Seed of all seeds of God. Principally, the seed here is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Paul is our instructor here. Said he in Gal. 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Oh yes, Christ is the Seed of God. He has the love of God and therefore the enmity against the devil in His heart as no other son or daughter of Adam. He is the beginning of the creation of God, the Firstborn of all the creatures. He is the Firstbegotten of the dead and the Image of the invisible God. It all turns around Him. It was not God's purpose to unite Himself with all created things unto the everlasting joys of His covenant through Adam and Eve and their posterity. He wanted to unite all things in Christ, the Seed of all seeds.

And so the Lord God placed enmity in Jesus' heart against the devil like in no other. And how He hated the devil. Wherever He smelled him, Jesus said: Get thee behind me, Satan!

Blessed enmity against the devil. It spells the love of God. In Christ Jesus the Lord!

* * * *

"It shall bruise thy head!"

Yes, that means historically first of all that we hate the whole race of snakes and that we crush their heads. But its fulfilment came in the fulness of time. Hatred against the devil was never revealed as when Jesus took the devil and crushed his head on Calvary.

The head is representative of the mind, the counsel, the planning brain. And the plan of the devil is known to us. He would remove God from His Throne and put himself in His place. And, consequently, he would destroy God's kingdom on earth; he would replace God as the King of His created people, and become in His stead the Prince of this world.

But Jesus breaks this head, crushes this counsel of the devil, and brings it to nought. First, He restores and exalts the revealed covenant communion between God and man to heavenly heights. He does so by taking the sin of Adam and of the seed of the woman on His own head and pays for it. And further He fulfills the law of God, and does it so intensively that they for whom He labored are brought very closely to the heart of God.

Second, He earns the right of the judgment of the devil

and of all his seed. The Lord God told Him this: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I shall make Thy enemies Thy footstool. Oh yes, the head of the Serpent is crushed.

* * * *

"... and thou shalt bruise his heel."

And how the devil has bruised us! Principally, this refers to all the anguish and pain and horror which Jesus suffered of man and of devils. But it also refers to the suffering which the seed of the woman received from man inspired by the devil and devils, as well as the suffering which we endured immediately from the hand of the devil and his demons. There is temptation and doubt which he always will try to sow in our hearts. And he sometimes, no, often succeeds. But we have the victory.

The bruising of our heel is only a "light affliction which is but for a moment," and here is the joy in the midst of the tribulations of the devil: they work an exceeding weight of glory.

Blessed enmity! Blessed love of God which is spread abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto us! G.V.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself in the morning of March 27, our beloved Wife, Mother, and Grandmother,

MRS. ANNA VAN ALTEN—nee ZUIDEMA

at the age of 63 years.

That God was her portion is our great consolation.

Mr. Daniel Van Alten
Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd Van Alten
Dr. and Mrs. Pierson J. Van Alten
3 granddaughters

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of one of its faithful members,

MRS. ANNA VAN ALTEN

whom the Lord took unto Himself. May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved and sustain them in their sorrow.

Psalm 91:1, 2. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."

Mrs. H. Hoeksema, President
Mrs. J. Newhouse, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Eunice Society of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Peter Offringa, in the loss of her brother,

MR. HENRY MORREN

May the Lord grant her comfort with His Word and Spirit.

Rev. M. Schipper, President
Mrs. Rex Clawson, Secretary

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EDITORIALS

Presbyterian Laymen On Predestination

Another copy of the paper of *Presbyterian Laymen* was published and sent to me.

It contains especially three items: Divorce and Marriage, Predestination, and The Directory of Worship.

We are especially interested in the question of predestination.

The matter of divorce and marriage is, of course, also important. But, in the first place, it seems that the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church already made a decision on this matter and I do not have a copy of that decision so that it is impossible for me to discuss it. And, in the second place, I do not agree with the Westminster Confession on this matter. This Confession states the following:

"Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead." Chapter XXIV, 5.

With the last part of this article of the Westminster Confession I do not agree. It is true that, in the case of adultery after marriage, the innocent party may sue for a divorce, although this is not necessary. But if that innocent party obtains a legal divorce, he or she may not remarry. This, to my mind, the Lord teaches rather clearly in Matt. 19:9. No one may marry the innocent party.

But let this be. I am rather interested in the question of predestination. About this doctrine the *Presbyterian Laymen* writes:

"At the present time a committee of our General Assembly is studying Chapter III of the Confession with a likelihood of suggesting a change in that chapter's doctrine of predestination and, in particular, with the aspect of that Biblical doctrine of the election of some to salvation and thereby determined to pass others by . . ."

And further:

"We confess that we do not necessarily like the doctrine of predestination [why not? I certainly do. H.H.] and that we certainly do not fully understand it, but the doctrine of the election of some and the passing over of others is surely taught in the Word of God. The proof-texts are sufficiently clear and substantial. As we read the paragraphs of the Confession dealing with these subjects, we are impressed with the care and clarity with which the authors of the Confession framed these doctrines. They teach what the Bible teaches in Biblical proportions, and that is absolutely what a Confession of Faith should do! We frankly question whether this matter can be stated better than it is already done in the Westminster Confession as it now stands. We

would oppose therefore any change that would in any way make this matter less clear or less Biblical."

The paper further states that as early as 1938-39 a majority of the presbyteries wanted to change the Confession with regard to the doctrine of predestination. At that time, however, the General Assembly did not adopt an overture on the matter because it failed to get the required three-fourths' majority.

But in 1958, twenty years later, therefore, the General Assembly considered another overture from one of the presbyteries proposing to delete from Chapter III of the Westminster Confession articles or paragraphs 3, 4 and 7. These articles read as follows:

"3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death.

"4. These men and angels, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished.

"7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

These are the articles to which the overture mentioned above raised objections and it proposed to be deleted from the Confession.

We may notice that these articles definitely mention the truth of reprobation. The other articles mention election but not reprobation, even though article 6 presupposes and negatively mentions it. Article 5 reads:

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes, moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace."

In this article reprobation is not mentioned as it was in the articles to which the overture raised objections.

Nor is it definitely mentioned in Art. 6, although, as I said, it rather strongly suggests and presupposes it. I quote it here:

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other

redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

The last part of this article certainly presupposes reprobation but does not speak of it positively and directly, while the articles to which objections are raised speak of being "foreordained to everlasting death"; and "to ordain them to dishonor and wrath" art. 3, 7. And art. 4 states that their number, i.e., of the elect and reprobate, is so definitely fixed by the decree of predestination that it can neither be increased nor diminished.

It would appear, therefore, that the objections of the overture are especially directed against those parts of the Confession that speak of reprobation.

And this I fail to understand.

How is it possible to believe in election without, at the same time, believing in reprobation?

Of course, if one holds the Arminian view, this might be possible. The Arminian view is that election has its ground in foreseen faith and, therefore, reprobation is based on foreseen unbelief. The Arminians do not believe in *sovereign* election and reprobation. And, therefore, the objectors to chapter III of the Westminster Confession, according to the overture mentioned above, might probably object to the language in articles 3, 4, and 7 which speak of being "foreordained to everlasting death" and of being ordained to "dishonor and wrath." They might prefer the Arminian conception of reprobation.

But if this were the case, they must necessarily also adopt the Arminian view of election. Then they must object, not only to III, 3, 4, and 7, but also to the rest of the chapter. For, articles 5 and 6 of chapter III speak in rather strong and definite language of the doctrine of election as absolutely *sovereign*. Thus in art. 5 it confesses that God has chosen the elect "according to his eternal and immutable purpose," that He has chosen them to everlasting glory "out of his mere free grace, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes, moving him thereunto." And in art. 6 of the same chapter the Westminster confesses that the elect are redeemed, effectually called, etc. and then closes the article by saying: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

Now, then, what about "the rest"? Let us say that God "passed them by," as also our Canons of Dordrecht express it, and as in one place (art. 7) the Westminster has it too. Does this make any difference? Is it not true that God sovereignly passed them by? Does it not remain true that God, in His sovereign good pleasure, wants to save the elect only and that, in the same sovereign good pleasure, does not want to save the reprobate?

Hence, I maintain that you cannot possibly believe in sovereign election without, at the same time, believing in equally sovereign reprobation. And the objectors to articles 3, 4, and 7, must raise objections to the whole of chapter III.

But let me quote once more from the *Presbyterian Laymen*: "The Assembly said 'no' to the overture [i.e., to the overture mentioned before in this editorial, H.H.], but the answer was no indication that the Church still stood by the doctrine that her Confession teaches. In 1958 there were hardly any voices raised to advocate the Confession's full teaching on predestination. Many speakers at the Assembly admitted that they no longer believed or taught the doctrine, but they said they were opposed to deletion or revision on the grounds that the doctrine is so deeply embedded within and throughout the Confession as to make removal impossible by eliminating only parts of one chapter. The idea largely expressed was to retain the Confession as it is, until a thoroughgoing revision can take place or a new creed substituted for the present Confession."

On this I wish to make two remarks.

In the first place, as I wrote before, there is, as is evident from the above quotation, a sad lack of discipline in the Southern Presbyterian Church. If ministers of the Word can openly, on the floor of the General Assembly, state that they no longer believe and teach the doctrine of election, there is abundant reason to apply the keys of the kingdom of heaven to them. This is also clearly expressed in the Westminster Confession. In chapter XXX, the third paragraph of that Confession we read:

"Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming or gaining of offending brethren; for the deterring of others from the like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders."

The *Presbyterian Laymen* cannot expect purity of doctrine and the maintenance of the Westminster Confession in their Church as long as this part of that Confession is ignored. No writing of pamphlets, no matter how good and sound they may be, can take the place of Christian discipline. The marks of the Church are: the pure preaching of the Word, the proper celebration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. Without the last the former two will soon prove to be impossible. I must, therefore, advise the brethren of the *Presbyterian Laymen* to insist that those who openly announced on the floor of the General Assembly that they no longer believe and teach the doctrine of predestination be properly disciplined.

In the second place, I agree with the opponents that stated that they no longer believed and taught the doctrine of predestination, when they state that "they were opposed to deletion or revision on the grounds that the doctrine is so deeply embedded within and throughout the Confession as to make removal impossible by eliminating only parts of one chapter." This is correct, because the doctrine of predestination, election and reprobation is the very heart of the Confession and also of the Gospel.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER XIX

Revelation 19:11-21

The Final Victory of the Lamb Over Antichrist

The victory of the One that is mounted on the white horse is first of all announced by the angel that stands in the sun. That he stands in the sun is symbolic of his task. He is to call the fowls of the heaven together to partake of the supper of the great God. The meaning of this passage is plain. It symbolizes the complete victory of Him that sits on the white horse and the shameful defeat of the enemy. As we know from the Old Testament, to give one's flesh to the birds of heaven for meat is expressive of the most complete defeat and shameful subjection of the enemy conceivable. So here, the Lord is to have the victory, complete and final victory. And the birds of heaven are called together to partake of the flesh of the vanquished hosts of the enemy.

But also in actual fact the victory is assured. And the victory is pictured as belonging only to Him that sits on the white horse. We read, first of all, of the beast and the false prophet that they are cast alive into the lake of fire. There is no question of the fact that they are here represented as very concrete and individual persons. But this does not necessarily indicate that there shall be but one person that is the Antichrist and another individual that is the false prophet. It denotes rather, in the first place, that here we have the end of all the devilry and rebellion and antichristian power. Without any form of trial they are destroyed forever. From the lake of fire there is no return. But besides, among this host of the Antichrist there are leaders and followers. The great and the powerful and the wise of this world lead, and the great masses follow them and their power and counsel. So also in this case: no doubt there is a difference indicated in our text between those that led and deceived the whole world—the preachers and the great and the wise and the giants of thought and science—and those that followed, the masses of the earth that wondered after the tremendous system of the antichristian power. This difference also becomes plain in their punishment. Even as there shall be degrees of glory, so there shall be various shades of punishment. Not all have sinned in like degree, and not all shall be punished with like measure. The leaders are cast alive into hell; but the rest are killed there and then, to await the final day of judgment, with the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Him that cometh.

And thus we have arrived once more at the very end of

history. It is at this moment that all the powers of iniquity are vanquished. At this moment it is that Antichrist and all his host perish, that the heavens and the earth are set afire in order to make room for the new heavens and the new earth that are to come. It is the end of this dispensation, to be followed by nothing else than the eternal glory in the new creation. Nothing shall take place in history after this. This must be kept in mind, now and in the future. In the second place, let us also not forget that here we have the climax and a clear picture of the climax of the coming of our Lord in glory. Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him! Here we see no continuing city. Let us be ready for His coming, when the continuing city shall be created in the new heavens and the new earth.

The Binding of Satan With a View to Gog and Magog

Revelation 20:1-10

1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.
3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.
4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.
6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
8. 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.
9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.
10. 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.

Before we enter into the interpretation of these verses from the book of Revelation, we wish to make a few preliminary remarks. First of all, it should be observed that Scripture knows of only one coming of the Lord, and that this coming marks the end of this world, and that too, by way of a universal catastrophe, as well as by the inauguration of the world to come, the new heavens and the new earth.

This observation precludes the view of the premillennarians, who speak of two comings of Christ. The one is called the rapture, the other the revelation. The former will take place some time before the great tribulation, the latter after that tribulation. At the former will take place the resurrection of the just and the change of those believers that are faithful and look for His coming; the latter will witness the resurrection of the tribulation-saints and the inauguration of the millennium. In the rapture the Lord will come *for* His saints, to take them with Him in the air; in the revelation He will come *with* His saints, destroy Antichrist, and with His people reign over the nations. But even in both these comings the end of the world is not realized. They will mark the end of this "age," but they inaugurate another age, that of the millennium. Only after the millennium is the last enemy, death, destroyed and eternity, or "the ages of ages," ushered in. When therefore the premillennarians speak of the coming of the Lord, they have in mind especially the "rapture" and the "first resurrection." This may be expected momentarily, may come at any time. The blessedness of that rapture is that those who are deemed worthy of it shall escape the great tribulation under Antichrist and have part in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We cannot possibly agree with this view or with the interpretation of Scripture generally and with the interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 specifically.

First of all, it is an essential element in this view that it is based upon an erroneous interpretation of the Old Testament, which leads to a separation of Israel and the church as if they were two separate peoples. The former, Israel, is the kingdom people; the latter, the church, is the body of Christ. A correct interpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the New will lead to the conclusion that Israel and the church are not two peoples, but one.

Then too, the view of the two comings, the rapture and the revelation, is based on a wrong interpretation of several passages of Holy Writ. An outstanding example of this wrong interpretation is that of the passage in I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." It is claimed that this passage of Scripture plainly teaches what the premillennialist terms "the first resurrection," that is, the resurrection of the just in distinction from the resurrection of the wicked, which is supposed to take place after

the millennium. Further, it is claimed that the word used in vs. 17, "to meet," means, according to the original, "a going forth in order to return with." The meaning accordingly is that we shall be caught up with Christ in the air in order to return with Him later. But all this is quite arbitrary, and certainly is not the correct interpretation of the text in I Thessalonians 4. As to this "first resurrection," anyone who reads the text without prejudice, without millennially colored glasses, can readily see that it makes no distinction between the dead in Christ that shall be raised first and the dead outside of Christ that shall be raised later. But the distinction is between the *dead* in Christ, that is, those that have died before His coming, and the *living* in Christ, that is, those believers that shall be alive at the parousia. The resurrection of the former shall occur before the change of the latter. That is the meaning of the text. And so they shall meet the Lord together in the air. And the interpretation given of the word "to meet" as if it should imply the idea of a returning with Christ is a pure invention. The Greek term does not even remotely suggest this notion. Nor does the rest of the passage harmonize with the premillennial conception of the rapture. The text quite clearly refers to a public and universally announced coming of the Lord. The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. If this means anything at all, it certainly means that there will be nothing private or secret about this coming, but it will be loudly proclaimed to all the world. But according to the millennial view, this will be a coming only for the church, only for the faithful believers. The world will not even notice this private coming of the Lord, except that certain persons will suddenly be strangely missed. And while the millennial view emphasizes that there will be a return from this rapture and that it will last only during the years of the great tribulation in the world, the text, on the contrary, emphasizes that it will be *forever*: "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Then, too, the idea that believers must look forward to their final redemption through the coming of the Lord *before the great tribulation* is contrary to all the current teaching of Holy Writ, which not only warns us to expect tribulation, but also, rather than exhorting us to rejoice in the idea of escaping it, emphasizes that we shall consider it a great honor and privilege to suffer with Christ. To suffer in behalf of Christ is given us of grace. Phil. 2:29. The millennium hope of escaping the tribulation is not spiritual, but carnal. And it is as dangerous as it is false, because it fills its followers with a false hope that will leave them unprepared in the evil day.

In the fourth place, the Bible throughout clearly connects with the one and only coming of the Lord the end of this world, the final salvation of the whole church, the last judgment, and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. Consider, for instance, Matthew 24:29-31: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the

stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And thus, in Matthew 25:31, ff., we read: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." And once more, consider the Lord's own interpretation of the parable of the tares: "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13:39-43.

Finally, this view is based on an interpretation of the book of Revelation that is neither in accord with the highly apocalyptic contents of the whole book nor with the evidently symbolic presentation of Chapter 20 itself. It is quite impossible to read this 20th chapter of the book of Revelation as if it recorded a simple historical event that will take place some time in the future, an event that will follow in time upon what was revealed in Chapter 19 of the same book. Such an interpretation is quite impossible.

These are the preliminary remarks which I wanted to make before entering into the interpretation of the text itself. And this is certainly evident, that Scripture teaches not all kinds of different comings of the Lord, but only one coming.

* * * *

And now we will interpret the text itself.

John writes that he "saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." It is very evident that in these words the Seer of Patmos describes not what he saw happening historically, but what he beheld in a vision. A strictly literal interpretation of the text, therefore, is not in harmony with the nature of the passage. Nor is it possible. No one thinks of the possibility of a literal interpretation when in Revelation 13:1 the prophet tells us that "he stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten

horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." It is understood without difficulty that all this was seen by John in a vision. And the same is true of the entire passage of the book of Revelation which we are now discussing. It is not contradicting, but a correct interpretation of Scripture when we say that John did not actually see an angel come down with a great chain in his hand and the key of the bottomless pit, and that he did not actually see that the devil was bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, but that he saw all this as it was represented to him in a vision. Neither must a vision be interpreted as if it were a mere and direct foretelling of events as they shall actually happen. It would not be interpreting but doing violence to Scripture and also to this particular passage of Scripture if we should paraphrase these verses in the following fashion: "Then shall an angel come down from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he shall lay hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and shall bind him a thousand years." Such a paraphrasing of the text completely disregards the fact that the passage speaks of a vision. The question is rather: what is the central idea of the vision? What fact does John here behold as being realized before his eyes? And the answer to this question is readily given: that the devil is bound by a divine decree, so that he is prevented from accomplishing his purpose. The angel coming down from God to carry out this decree, the key of the bottomless pit, the great chain, the shutting and the sealing — all these may be regarded as belonging to the form of the vision only. But they all serve to emphasize the fact that Satan is bound by the divine decree securely and effectively, so that during the period of his confinement he cannot carry out his evil purposes.

We must also understand, for a correct interpretation of this widely discussed part of the book of Revelation, that it is extremely important that we conceive of it in its true light, that is, merely as another apocalyptic picture of some phase of the "day of the Lord." Any attempt to carry into this prophecy the time element and interpret it as if the events here foretold follow in time upon those referred to in Chapter 19, 11-21, must fail. In 19:17, ff., we have the picture of the destruction of all nations. Yet here we still meet with those very nations that live on the four corners of the earth. This can be understood only if we take the stand that in Revelation 20:1-10 a new aspect of the same "day of the Lord," other phases of which have been pictured before, is presented here. This particular vision presents to us the aspect of the judgment upon Gog and Magog, together with an explanation of the fact that these nations appear upon the scene last, and of the final judgment of the dragon, the devil. Hence, we may not read as if John had written, "And after this shall the devil be bound a thousand years, etc.," as all the premillennialists must needs do. But we must leave the text as it stands: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, etc." The angel has "the key of the bottomless

pit and a great chain in his hand." Evidently John beholds the angel in some human, physical form. For "the key of the bottomless pit" confer Chapter 9, verse 1. The bottomless pit is the proper temporary abode of the devil and his angels. Cf. II Peter 2:4. The key and the chain are not to be allegorized. In the picture they are just that, and nothing else. They represent the power of the angel to open and shut the pit and to bind Satan.

Before we go farther, we must ask the question not only, but also very definitely answer it, whether this imprisonment of Satan, this secure confinement of the devil, must be regarded as absolute and complete, so that he is restrained in all his activity, or as relative and in part, so that the restraint placed upon him limits him in part, only in a certain direction, and dooms him to partial inactivity only. This question is answered in the text. And the text replies to this question without a doubt that the restraint is partial and with a view to a certain sphere of action. For the purpose of the binding of Satan is designated in verse 3 as being "that he should deceive the nations no more." And in verse 8 we are informed still more definitely that when he shall be loosed for a little season, he "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." If we take these two passages in connection with each other, it may be regarded as established, in the first place, that the binding of Satan is limited to certain nations which are called Gog and Magog; and, secondly, that this confinement prevents him from deceiving those nations; and, in the third place, that the deception which by his imprisonment, or the restraint that is put upon him, he is prevented from realizing is what would otherwise cause these nations to gather for battle against the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Of Gog and Magog we read in Ezekiel 38:2, ff., and Ezekiel 39:1-16. There Gog is the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, of the land of Magog. They constitute a vast horde that descend upon Israel from the north, even from the limit of the horizon, to make a final onslaught on the people of God. But hailstones, fire, and brimstone from heaven cause their utter destruction. In the passage of Revelation which we are now discussing these same hordes are simply called Gog and Magog, and now they are described as living on the four corners of the earth and as coming on the camp of saints from every direction. Israel here is to be taken, in harmony with all Scripture, in the New Testament sense of the word. The vision of the restored Israel of which Ezekiel 38 and 39 speak has been realized in the church of the new dispensation. It is "the camp of the saints" and it is "the beloved city." That is Christianity in its widest sense, as it exists and develops in the new dispensation and corresponds to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. It is represented in the text as being situated in the center of the earth. Around it, on the four quarters of the earth, that is, outside of the pale of history, are nations that remain pagan. Although also from them

the elect are gathered into the church, as nations they remain distinctly heathen. Gog and Magog, therefore, are heathen nations in distinction from nominal Christendom.

We may note here that the dragon, the devil, upon which the angel lays hold is described in all his evil powers. He represents the prince of this world as the spiritual power behind all the antichristian forces of opposition to Christ and His church. Cf. Chapter 12:3, 4. Moreover, he is described here in all his evil purposes and power of deceit. He is the old serpent, referring, of course, to the temptation in paradise. He is called the devil, that is, the liar and deceiver, mud-slinger, accuser of the brethren. And he is described, or named, as Satan, the opponent, the adversary of Christ and of the cause of God in the world. In the vision the angel overpowers the devil and securely binds him with the chain, casts him into the bottomless pit, locks the pit, and sets a seal upon him, that is, seals the pit against all violation.

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to extend its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Henry Kuiper and Mrs. Clarence Klein in the death of their husband and father.

May our Triune God comfort and sustain them in their sorrow.

Rev. G. Van Baren, President

Mrs. P. Van Den Top, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

Our Society would like to express its sympathy with our brethren John and Hilbert Kuiper in the loss of their Father,

HENRY KUIPER Sr.

who was taken home recently. May the God of all grace comfort the hearts of the bereaved family.

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville
Protestant Reformed Church:

Rev. Gerrit Vos, President

Harry Zwak, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society extends herewith its condolences to our fellow member, Mrs. William Lems, who lost her Father,

HENRY KUIPER Sr.

aged 79 years, at Doon, Iowa.

May the Lord God comfort the hearts of the bereaved, and give them the patience of faith to wait for the blessed day of the resurrection.

The Ladies' Society:

Rev. G. Vos, President

Mrs. Bert Maring, Secretary

Hudsonville, Mich.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Calling of the Gospel

A small group of people stood one day before an open tomb just outside Bethany of Judea. Their eyes were on the man who had commanded that the grave should be opened even though it was all of four days since the body of his friend had been laid to rest. It was a strange command, for in that hot climate putrefaction would be well progressed. Then the man spoke. He said, "Lazarus, come forth." Before their very eyes, they saw the corpse that was in the grave arise and come forth. Even today, we look back upon this event and marvel.

This event, together with many others, served to demonstrate the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was more than just a man; He is also the Son of God. To His voice belongs the very authority and power of God. It is able to produce its own effect. Man with his words must depend for influence upon his uncertain powers of persuasion, and always the results are very temporary. God speaks and it is done (Ps. 33:9). As He said to Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). Nor is there any limit to the working of God's Word of power. It has gone out through all the earth and even unto the ends of the world (Ps. 19:4).

As we consider the working of this Word of God, we can distinguish it into four different aspects.

1. First, there is the Word of God as it called the creation into being. In the beginning all things were created by the Word of God (John 1:1-3). Into the emptiness before time when no material being existed, God spoke and called forth the things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). He said, "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen. 1:3). He stretched forth the heavens above and spread the earth beneath and gave breath unto man (Isa. 42:5). "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ex. 20:11). The mind of man can not understand it. Only faith can believe it (Heb. 11:3).

2. Secondly, there is the Word of God in His providence. Having created the universe, He would not leave it to go on by itself. Rather He remains very close to it so that there is nowhere that one can go and escape from His presence (Ps. 139:7-12), and the apostle Paul could say, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). By the Word of God all things are preserved and held in existence (Neh. 9:6), and they are guided according to His counsel (Isa. 46:10). He rules over the brute creation (Ps. 104), but also over the ways of man (Jer. 10:23.) He has called forth a nation and a people unto Himself (Isa.

43:1), and has given others for its service (Isa. 43:3, 4). Even the king's heart is in His hand, and He turns it whithersoever He will (Prov. 21:1).

3. Thirdly, there is the calling of God's Word in His justice. All men have sinned and have come short of the glory of God; they have rebelled against their Maker (Rom. 3:10-23). But God is a God of justice and concerning this sin He will not remain silent (Ps. 50:3). He testifies against it. He has done so through the curse which He laid upon the earth, the thorns and thistles, the storms and pestilence and famines (Gen. 3:17-19). Now He does this even more clearly through the Word of His Gospel commanding all men everywhere to repent of their sin (Acts 17:30).

4. Finally, there is the Word of God which goes forth as a calling of grace. Grace is an attribute of God. God is a gracious God (Ex. 34:6), which means, He is a God of ethical pleasantness and beauty. This grace God has determined to make known through His Word among men. Gracious is this Word of God as it goes forth in power unto man. It calls him forth out of darkness into God's marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). It renews man after the very image of God (Col. 3:10). It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth (Rom. 1:16). In the Word of the Gospel is the grace of God revealed through Jesus Christ His Son (Rom. 5:15).

It is especially with these latter two elements of the Word of God that we are concerned. They constitute what we know as the Gospel. This Gospel, Jesus Christ has given unto His Church to be proclaimed unto the ends of the world (Mark 16:15). The same power is still contained in that Gospel as when it was spoken by Jesus Himself. Shortly after the raising of Lazarus, He said to His disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12). Not so much as though the work of the Church is to call forth the physically dead, although also this was done by the apostles, but the greater work of the Church is to call forth the spiritually dead unto eternal life. This can be done because the Gospel, when faithfully proclaimed, does not become the word of man; it remains the word of God.

The first element of the Gospel, as we have seen, is the call to repentance. Jesus expressly commanded that this should be proclaimed unto all nations (Luke 24:47). This is a very important part of the Gospel. It is to be found throughout the pages of Scripture. Again and again it echoed from the lips of the prophets throughout the old dispensation; it went forth as a cry in the wilderness from the mouth of John the Baptist standing on the bank of the Jordan; the apostles carried it throughout the borders of the Roman Empire; and even Jesus gave as the purpose of His coming, to call sinners to repentance. It is the revelation of God's justice, and God's justice will not remain silent. No man has a right to sin against God. This the Gospel tells

all men everywhere. It commands them to repent (Acts 17:30). This command must be preached to all men, but never may it be changed. It may not be presented as a mere plea or invitation. It may not be brought down to the level of the word of man which must depend upon uncertain powers of persuasion. God does not plead or beg; He commands. He tells all men everywhere that He has no pleasure in sin. Only this is acceptable to Him that the wicked turn from his sin and repent (Ezek. 33:11).

When this call to repentance is faithfully proclaimed, it is always powerful to produce an effect, although that effect may not always be what we might expect.

In some this call of the Gospel brings forth fruits of repentance. It illuminates their minds so that they recognize themselves for what they really are, sinners incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. It pricks them in the heart so that in misery for their sins they cry out like the multitude on Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The reason why they so respond is that God has prepared their hearts for the Gospel. He has taken out their old heart of stone and given them a new heart that is soft and receptive to His Word (Ezekiel 11:19, 20). He has given them ears to hear His Word, eyes to see, and hearts to understand that it is true (Isa. 35:5). They are born again by the Spirit that they may see the kingdom of God and through repentance enter in (John 3:3, 5). They are the sheep given of the Father who hear the voice of the shepherd and repent (John 10:27).

The rest who hear the call to repentance respond too, but in quite a different way. They reject the Word of God and turn from it in derision. In their pride they are become fools and refuse to acknowledge that they are sinners. They are that rebellious people who have eyes to see and see not, ears to hear and hear not (Ezek. 12:2). Nor need we be surprised at this. It does not mean that the Word has proved ineffective. God has told us that it must be so (Isa. 6:9, 10). The Gospel is a two-edged sword cutting both ways (Heb. 4:12, 13). It is a savour of life unto life, but also of death unto death (II Cor. 2:15, 16). It is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (II Peter 2:8). Thus when Moses called Pharaoh to repentance, he hardened his heart because it was the will of the Lord (Ex. 4:21). Jesus purposely spoke in parables so that the wicked might clearly be shown the will of the Lord and turn from that which they hated (Mark 4:11, 12).

It is exactly as Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14).

The second element of the Gospel is the calling of grace. It is from this element especially that the Gospel derives its name, meaning, the good news. Like the call to repentance, it is to be preached throughout all the world. The two must always be preached together. But unlike the call to repent-

ance, the call of grace is very particularly addressed. It speaks only to those who have heard the call to repentance with their hearts and have obeyed it. They are variously distinguished in Scripture. They are called the laboring and heavy-laden (Matt. 11:28), the thirsty (John 7:37; Isa. 55:1), the meek (Matt. 5:5; Zeph. 2:3), the mourning (Matt. 5:4), they that hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), the willing (Rev. 22:19), and the believing (John 3:16). These are spiritual characteristics and can be found only in those who have been touched by an awareness of their sins. This sin weighs upon their hearts as a burden of which they long to be relieved; it causes them to be meek and mourning under the sorrow of their guilt; it makes them to hunger and thirst for the righteousness of the kingdom of God. They are the blind to whom Christ comes to give sight (John 9:39). They are the sick to whom Christ appears as a physician (Matt. 9:12). They are the sinners who are called by the Savior (Mark 2:17). They are the sheep that hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him (John 10:26, 27).

The reason why this call of grace is so particularly addressed is that God is always serious in the speaking of His Word. God does not lie. He is serious when He tells all men that it is their duty to repent from their sins, and that only such repentance is pleasing in His eyes. So also He is serious when He calls only those who have the marks of spiritual life unto salvation. It is only for them that He has provided salvation, and only to them can it be given. The Scriptures clearly teach that God has made a distinction between men in His eternal counsel (Rom. 9; Eph. 1; Jude 4; I Peter 2:8, 9). There are those who shall not come to salvation and this the Gospel serves to reveal (Mark 4:11, 12). The Gospel offends them and drives them away (John 6:66). The reason is that grace is not given them of the Father (John 6:65). It is those who are ordained to eternal life that are called by grace, not according to works, but according to God's purpose of grace (Rom. 2:28-30; II Tim. 3:9). The hearts of such God opens that they may attend to the Words of eternal life (Acts 16:14). They are the sheep given unto Jesus who hear the voice of the shepherd (John 10:27-29). Being ordained to eternal life, they believe and are saved (Acts 13:48).

Thus the Word of God's grace is a powerful means unto salvation. It draws the elect unto salvation, without which no one can be saved (John 6:44). It brings the thirsty to drink of the waters of life. It brings the hungry to eat of the bread of life. It brings the weary to rest, and speaks peace to those who mourn. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1:16). Having heard it, every child of God is sure to echo the confession of the apostle, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 1:12-17)

a.

It is with a great deal of spiritual joy that I pen these lines in attempting to give some explanation of this beautiful section from this first Chapter of first Timothy.

The reason?

It is simply this: here Paul shows us how in his own life the great truth of the gospel of free and sovereign grace is exemplified! Salvation is not of works. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God who *showeth mercy*. Rom. 9:16. Paul is a vessel of mercy, and, as such, a chosen vessel of God, formed by God's grace alone, to be a ground-type of all who would afterwards believe. God chose the chief of sinners to show, to demonstrate clearly, once and for all, the greatness of his matchless grace and longsuffering.

That is a powerful argument against those who would be "teachers of law," and who confidently affirm that of which they know really nothing.

I am glad with this truth of the gospel; it gives hope also to me, poor sinner that I am. This is not a terrifying theme concerning which to write. It is full of that so often repeated assurance of Jesus, "fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified." Matthew 28:5.

Paul speaks here of the grace of God as it was experienced by him. And what Paul has experienced is the death-blow to all attempts to be justified by works of law. The great apostle evidently never grows weary of speaking of this great mercy of God to him; the mercies of Christ are his all in all. It is because of the mercy of God that Paul is accounted faithful. Nothing else makes man faithful; old things then pass away and all things become new, and all things come to stand in their proper God-ordained place and relationship.

Let us then attend to what Paul here tells Timothy and through him to the church of the ages.

Concerning this entire section, verses 12-17, we may state the following:

1. That it is a description of the great grace of God, by which Paul is *enabled*; and for this alone Christ, the Lord, must receive all the recognition. Paul evidently refers to all that he has received from Christ, both in his personal subjective life as a believer and as an office-bearer in the church, apostle to the Gentiles.

2. Special attention is called by Paul to the divine purpose of God in empowering a man like Paul to preach the

gospel, and, in fact, to write a great share of the New Testament Scriptures. God chooses the worst possible specimen to show the real nature of salvation, namely, that the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost.

3. Small wonder that Paul ends in a grand doxology, which reads: "Now unto the king eternal, the immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever." Verse 16.

4. And Timothy must take this all to heart as a young preacher. Only thus shall he be able to fight the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, so that the end of the law is realized in him. Verse 18.

Permit us to say just a few things about the verses 12-14 in this essay, which read as follows: "*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*"

We would call attention to the following salient points:

In the first place, Paul says that he thanks Christ Jesus our Lord. The construction in the Greek text is peculiar. Literally he says: "I have thanks, or grace" to Christ Jesus our Lord. This is for him a conscious and an ever-present reality. See for this also II Tim. 1:3. Never was there a time when Paul was not filled with the beauty of gracious thanks to Christ. Him he worships and before him he labor as a servant of loving gratitude. For gratitude in Scripture is more than a "feeling," a sentiment. It is composed of both justice and truth. It is "justice" in that it gives honor where honor is due. It recognizes Christ, the Lord, as being worthy of this honor for what he has performed in Paul and through him. On the other hand it is also truthfulness; it also expresses what Christ in justice has coming to him. That such is the nature of "thanks" here is evident from the doxology in verse 17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever, Amen." Well may one have a continuous and ever-present thanks to such a God in Christ Jesus.

In the second place, it should be noticed that Paul's thanks is to Christ from the viewpoint of his being the one "who has empowered me." He is the "me-having-empowered-one." Thus the Greek. Did not Jesus say to his disciples on the mount of Olives that "the *power* of the Holy Ghost shall come upon you"? Acts 1:8. And this power is really "ability," that which makes one able. It is not simply the power of "right," authority, but it is the inner ability in the inward man which is from Christ, making the helpless strong and able. And for this once-and-for-all enabling gift of Christ Paul has thanks in justice and in truth.

In the third place, we should notice that Christ has a good reason for empowering Paul, and placing him into the ministry in the church. He "accounted me faithful, placing

me into the ministry." Christ had confidence in Paul. Now Christ certainly could not have had confidence in Christ in his church based upon his past record. That was very bad prior to Paul's conversion from being a Pharisee to a humble penitent at Christ's feet. Yet, the text says that Christ counted him faithful and this trust is evidenced by placing him into the ministry. Now how are we to understand this? We believe that this either refers to the divine reckoning of Paul's qualities, a preordained vessel, destined to the ministry from his mother's womb, Gal. 1:15, or that in God's divine reckoning he saw that Paul would be faithful by God's grace. I Cor. 15:10. Possibly Paul does not exclude either one of these alternatives. Looking back Paul sees that it was all divine reckoning of grace. And this was not based upon works of law which he had performed.

In the fourth place, it is emphatically a matter of pure mercy when Paul is empowered both to faith and to the ministry. These two, faith and the ministry, cannot be separated. For it is a historical fact that when Paul is called to the ministry he is also called to faith; he is baptized in Damascus. It was here that God revealed His Son in Paul. Acts 9:18; Gal. 1:15, 16. And what a man in whom to reveal His Son! Did not Ananias say: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to the saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name"? Of this conduct during that time Paul says of himself in Acts 22:4: "And I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering unto prisons both men and women, as also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished." And in Gal. 1:13 Paul writes concerning his former conduct toward the church: "For ye have heard of my conduct in times past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it," and in Gal. 1:23 he writes: "But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me."

In this passage here in I Tim. 1:12-14 Paul speaks of himself as having been placed in this ministry and accounted faithful *notwithstanding* that he was a *blasphemer*, a *persecutor* and an *insolent man*. Paul did not simply speak evil of the Christians, but he spoke evil of the way of faith, attempting to uphold salvation by works. Compare Phil. 3:4-7. He had been more confident concerning salvation by the law than any teacher of law could ever be. He rang the bell one hundred percent in that respect. He was second to none; he needed not to be outdone by anyone in blasphemous and calumniating speech. See Gal. 1:14. Paul had pressed forward beyond many in his day in the Jew's religion. Then he is arrested by Jesus Christ. In the midst of his persecution he is stopped in his very tracks. He an *insolent man* is converted by Christ. It gave him pleasure to see a Stephen

stoned. It was the mere pleasure of seeing the believers wince under his dominion. And to this one mercy is accorded. He is delivered from all his helpless self-righteousness, and placed in the service of Christ as a thankful, redeemed believer.

In the fifth place, we should notice the reason why Paul received mercy. The reason is: *ignorant unbelief*! Says Paul: "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Paul had a zeal for God when he persecuted the Christians. It was "sincere" misplaced zeal. It was an attempt to maintain the necessity of keeping the law perfectly to be justified. It conceived of God's covenant as a contract; a pay as you go proposition. It was the Pelagianistic conception of salvation: the free-will of man. And attempting to maintain that status quo of Jewish religion in the synagogue he was ignorant of the true faith. He did not willfully sin against God. He did it ignorantly. In his ignorance he subjectively was sincere. Truly this was unbelief, that is, it was *not*-believing. It was unbelief evidently in the negative sense: not knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection, being conformed unto his death. All he knew was law; he did not know that the end of the law is love from a pure heart, good conscience and faith unfeigned! And so Paul fell in the category of those who receive mercy, the thousands of generations of those who love God and keep his commandments. He is not in the class of those of whom Heb. 6:4 speaks: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and having tasted the heavenly gift . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance."

In the sixth place, we should notice that, therefore, the grace of God is magnified exceedingly in the case of Paul. What a faith and love this grace wrought in Paul. It was a faith working by love. And so the end of the law truly is attained in Paul, the law of God written in his heart. Gone is all his self-righteousness. He died. Sin revived. And what he now lives he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved and gave His life for him.

Such is the grace of God. Where sin abounds grace does much more abound.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

G.L.

Christian School Teachers and Teachers-To-Be:

Whereas the Loveland Prot. Ref. Christian School Society plans, D.V., to open its own school in Sept. of 1961, the Board encourages ALL interested teachers and teachers-to-be to inquire for further details. It is requested that applicants include name, credits or degree, experience, if any, and expected salary. Contact:

Gilbert Griess, Secretary
Route 1, Box 282
Loveland, Colorado

IN HIS FEAR

God's Royal Priesthood

(4)

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

Thus we sing.

But just what do we mean by that?

Do we mean by this to exhort others to praise God? Or is there implied in these words the thought, "I will praise God from Whom all blessings flow"? It does make a great deal of difference.

It is, in fact, a rather stirring and vigorous hymn which we sing as a doxology to God. It has power, and it ought to be sung as a song of praise and not as a wail of complaint. How pathetic it sounds when a congregation drags this song of praise along, sings listlessly and with little enthusiasm. There is something wrong, radically wrong, when that is the case. Listen to the singing in your church this coming Sunday. Is it sung as a song of praise? Is there a vibrant sound of joy and enthusiastic faith in it? It makes no difference whether the congregation sings it at the beginning of the service in anticipation of the message of the glorious gospel of Christ or afterward. It makes no difference whether we begin our worship of God with these words or bring our worship service to a close with this song of adoration to God: lift it up and sing it from the regenerated heart.

"Praise Him all creatures here below."

Indeed, but then do it yourself likewise. For as God's royal priesthood your calling is to show forth His praises. Let no church choir rob you of this wonderful experience and joyous calling of praising that God from Whom all the blessings you enjoy also flow. You sing it! Sing it in anticipation of the day when in the Hallelujah Chorus of heaven you will lift it up in the new creation with perfect pitch and rich harmony with those whose sanctified tongues and pure hearts shall vibrate and throb with love and adoration to this thrice Holy God. Never mind the fact that now your voiced is cracked and unmusical as far as the judgments of men are concerned. You sing to God and not to men. And He hears the song of the heart. Because He forms a people unto Himself to show forth His praises, He will one day give you a beautiful voice and a perfect sense of pitch in order that the new creation may echo and re-echo His praises from east to west and north to south and reach into the highest heavens. But today, you do that with the voice and talents He has given you!

Praise to God is your calling as His prophet.

But do we praise Him? We ought to look a little closer at the matter. After all, singing His praises — wonderful and pleasant though it may also be for the regenerated believer — is only a part of that whole prophetic phase of our threefold office. We will have more to say of that presently when we

consider also that confession of Him before men with word that is not song, and that speech unto God Himself in prayer which also is praise. But at the moment we wish to point out that behind all this singing, praying and confessing is our calling ever to be learning. O, indeed, the prophet in this life must ever be learning, learning to know this God Whom he is to praise. How could Moses ever speak to Israel and teach God's people His ways in the wilderness if he had not been called to the burning bush and on top of Mt. Sinai to learn from the mouth of God the truth which he was to teach unto God's people? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and all the minor prophets had to learn the truth themselves before they could impart it to the Church. God comes to His people through the minds, the tongues and the hands of these men even today. They first learned the truth from the mouth of God in direct revelation. Only that which they learned could they speak at that time to the Church and write by infallible guidance for the Church of God throughout the ages. They could not be prophets to teach and praise God except in the way of listening to God speak. And no different it is with you and me. Because our fathers and mothers from our early infancy, because our former pastors and Christian school teachers taught us from the Word of God, we know this God from Whom all blessings flow, and we know Him as the One from Whom ALL blessings flow. We are able in principle to praise Him now in this life in the measure that we listened to this truth concerning God when we were taught in ages past. The prophet in the Old Testament was not a know-it-all. He knew much. But he knew nothing of himself. He had to listen carefully and faithfully to the Word of God. And you and I in our prophetic phase of our threefold office of being God's royal priesthood likewise had better listen carefully.

That means first of all that we are faithful in our church attendance and attention. Attention without attendance is impossible; but attendance without attention is worse than foolish. Woe unto Moses if at God's command he does not climb Mt. Sinai to receive revelation from the living God! But woe unto today's prophet also, if he turns a deaf ear to the God of heaven and earth when He begins to speak, or else if he sets himself in a comfortable position to sleep before the face of God! We want to begin here because these are some of the most glaring and serious defections to be found in the flesh of God's royal priesthood.

We find all kinds of excuses for not attending the divine worship services and deliberately fail to prepare for it already on Saturday evening. We wear ourselves out, stay up unusually late — after all we do not have to go to work tomorrow — and either oversleep, feel too tired to get up, have a self-inflicted throbbing head, are "under the weather" or a host of other Sunday ailments which cure very rapidly as soon as the Sabbath sun sets in the west, or divine worship services are over. Shame on us! Let us hear the words of Jesus, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:21. Do not argue with Him. What is your chief

interest will also receive your chief attention. Acknowledge then the fact that the world means much more to you than the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Do not add to your sin by hypocritical denial of what is so obvious to man and crystal clear to the allwise and all seeing God!

That means also our youth!

With all the freedoms and facilities of roaming around and speeding here and there on Saturday night, they are ill fit for giving attention to the Word of God on the Sabbath, even if they are robust enough and physically competent to attend divine worship services. What a tragedy! What a shameful picture to see strong, vigorous young men and women, the youth of God's Church, children of the King, His royal priesthood with clear minds and many talents, *sleeping before His face!!* Moses was told at the burning bush to take off his shoes for he was on holy ground. We call our places of divine worship God's House, and we confess that we are before His presence. For us it is holy ground. And dare we sleep? Are we not rather afraid that the very holy ground will open up and swallow us up in a moment?

Nay, Wake Up! Listen to that which the Spirit hath to say unto the churches. And by all means go to bed exceptionally early then on Saturday night to be able to stay awake. You are His prophet. Listen to the revelation He has given of Himself, that consciously and willingly with a heart of joy you may praise this God from Whom all blessings flow.

And then, too, there are those other things of the flesh that we deliberately seek before the kingdom of God. To such a great extent we also go out from the principle of our flesh, which is part of the world, that says, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." One of the family has to stay home Sunday morning so that we may have a delicious meal prepared when we get home. Surely with a "pious" face we dare to say, Yes, but the services are so close together, and we have to travel quite a distance to and from church. We do not have much time between services, and I like a warm meal. This I cannot get during the week and this is the only time I can have it. Indeed, and so there must be the denying of God His demand that on the Sabbath we worship Him. He had better not be so exacting with us! At least we are bold enough to tell him—by our actions, of course, not with our lips—His worship and His service better suffer a little bit too. However, we wish to add, do not be surprised if He does not agree with you. Because He IS God, He has a way of being very unyielding and of insisting that He is sovereign in all His ways. Get you up to Mt. Sinai to hear what He has to say! Get you with your whole family to the holy ground where He will reveal Himself in the Son of His love! And be sure that HE does not want you there because He has been pleased to make it *impossible*, before you come to the conclusion that your place as His prophet is not the sanctuary where He will speak through His servant. There are, of course, legitimate reasons for remaining home. But they are then reasons that are rooted

in the fact that God makes it impossible and not that man finds it inconvenient.

Nor is this all. Besides attending and paying attention to this official preaching of the Word of God, the prophet of God will have his own private devotions, reading of the Scriptures, study of the truth, reading of religious material. He will shut off his TV set and cancel his bowling alley reservations and open his Bible to see what God has revealed therein. In order as prophet to be able to say to his children and to the gainsayers, "Thus saith the Lord," he will first study to find out, What saith the Lord? How little of that there is today. The world crowds in upon our lives, and there is so little interest to learn the truth and to delve more deeply into it. Societies for the study of God's Word have only a skeleton membership of the congregation.

Something is wrong! My brethren, these things ought not so to be! Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together for the study of God's Word. The day will soon be here when we will be denied this privilege. And then God's prophets who will have to speak, will feel greatly disqualified to oppose the wicked world.

And remember that there is profit in being God's prophet. By His grace He will reward in the life to come those who praise Him and testify of Him. And in this life there is also profit. The comfort, the joy and peace of salvation, tasting and seeing that God is good is the reward in this life for those who listen to Him and receive into their minds the truth which He speaks. There is indeed profit to the prophet who walks in His fear.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby expresses our hearty sympathy with Elder G. Bylsma and his family in the loss of his brother,

MR. DAVE BYLSMA

May our God comfort them in the assurance that death is deprived of its sting and the grave of its victory through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who shares with us His victory over sin and death.

The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan

Rev. C. Hanko, President

Mr. P. Decker, Jr., Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to two of its members, Mr. D. Van Alten in the loss of his wife,

MRS. ANNA VAN ALTEN

and to Mr. G. Bylsma in the loss of his brother,

MR. DAVID BYLSMA

May our God comfort the bereaved families.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, President
Mr. S. Beiboer, Secretary

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

MATERIAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that the fundamental principle, as within the German Reformer, was this: Justification by faith and completely without works. This is also the fundamental principle of justification which prompted the movement of the Reformation. Now it is a striking phenomenon that Roman Catholic scholars today boldly declare that this fundamental principle: justification by faith and completely without works, no longer characterizes the Protestantism of today, that the Protestantism of today has repudiated the teachings of Luther and Calvin. And we are of the conviction that this charge of Roman Catholicism is true. However, we must immediately add that the Protestantism which has repudiated this fundamental principle is not true Protestantism but a false caricature of the same. True Protestantism, also today, continues to maintain the fundamental principle that justification is by faith and completely without works. However, before we present this fundamental principle, as voiced and expressed by Calvin and also by our Confessions, we must present the presentation of Rome, namely: justification by works. And then we will quote, first of all, from the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, as set forth in its sixth session, January 13, 1547.

CHAPTER I

On The Inability Of Nature And Of The Law To Justify Man

"The holy Synod declares first, that, for the correct and sound understanding of the doctrine of Justification, it is necessary that each one recognize and confess, that, whereas all men had lost their innocence in the prevarication of Adam—having become unclean, and, as the apostle says, *by nature children of wrath*, as (this Synod) has set forth in the decree on original sin—they were so far *the servants of sin*, and under the power of the devil and of death, that not the Gentiles only by the force of nature, but not even the Jews by the very letter itself of the law of Moses, were able to be liberated, or to arise, therefrom; although freewill, attenuated as it was in its powers, and bent down, was by no means extinguished in them."

We merely wish to call attention to the fact that, already in this first chapter on Justification, Rome sets forth its

pelagian conception of the free will of man. This freewill was bent down in its powers but by no means extinguished.

CHAPTER III

Who Are Justified Through Christ

"But, though *He died for all*, yet do not all receive the benefit of his death, but those only unto whom the merit of his passion is communicated. For as in truth men, if they were not born propagated of the seed of Adam, would not be born unjust—seeing that, by that propagation, they contract through him, when they are conceived, injustice as their own—so, if they were not born again in Christ, they never would be justified; seeing that, in that new birth, there is bestowed upon them, through the merit of his passion, the grace whereby they are made just. For this benefit the apostle exhorts us, evermore *to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, and hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption, and remission of sins.*"

In connection with this quotation of Rome we wish to make two observations. Notice, in the first place, that already in this article Rome advocated universal atonement, declaring that Jesus died for all. And, in the second place, also already in this article Rome gives expression to its conception of justification. Rome practically identified justification with sanctification. Here we read that a person would never be justified if he were not born again in Christ; and we also read that, in that new birth there is bestowed upon us, through the merit of Christ's passion, the grace whereby they are made just.

CHAPTER V

On The Necessity, In Adults, Of Preparation For Justification, And Whence It Proceeds

The Synod furthermore declares, that, in adults, the beginning of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from his vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their parts, they are called; that so they, who by sins were alienated from God, may be disposed through his quickening and assisting grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and co-operating with that said grace: in such sort that, while God touches the heart of man by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, neither is man himself utterly inactive while he received that inspiration, forasmuch as he is also able to reject it; yet is he not able, by his own free will, without the grace of God, to move himself unto justice in his sight. Whence, when it is said in the sacred writings: *Turn ye to me, and I will turn to you*, we are admonished of our liberty; and when we answer: *Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted*, we confess that we are prevented (anticipated) by the grace of God."

In the article the Romanists speak of the prevenient grace of God, the grace of the Lord that goes before, precedes. They also speak of this grace as assisting grace whereby we are able to convert ourselves unto our own justification, by freely assenting to and cooperating with the same. Besides, while this grace is described as a work of God's Spirit whereby the Lord touches the heart of man, this work of the Lord is irresistible and can be rejected. This is Rome's pelagian conception of the free will of man. And so man is prepared for his justification, by cooperating with this grace of God whereby the sinner prepares himself for his justification.

CHAPTER VI

The Manner Of Preparation

"Now they (adults) are disposed unto the said justice, when, excited and assisted by divine grace, conceiving *faith by hearing*, they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which God has revealed and promised — and this especially, that God justifies the impious *by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*; and when, understanding themselves to be sinners, they, by turning themselves, from the fear of divine justice whereby they are profitably agitated, to consider the mercy of God, are raised unto hope, confiding that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake; and they begin to love him as the fountain of all justice; and are therefore moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation, to wit, by that penitence which must be performed before baptism: lastly, when they purpose to receive baptism, to begin a new life, and to *keep the commandments* of God. Concerning this disposition it is written: *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him*; and, *Be of good faith, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*; and, *The fear of the Lord driveth out sin*; and, *Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*; and, *Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; finally, *Prepare your hearts unto the Lord*."

In this article Rome continues to speak of God's assisting grace. They also speak here of "faith by hearing," and Rome's conception of faith is that it is assent to the truth, simply believing those things to be true which the Lord has revealed and promised. So, assisted by the grace, and accepting as true what God has revealed and promised, the sinner now considers the mercy of God, believes that God will be propitious to him for Christ's sake, and begins to love him as the fountain of all justice.

However, he must be moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation and reveal this by that penitence which must be performed before baptism. Notice, too, that this article, when quoting Acts 2:38, translates: "Do penance." This word, however, does not mean, "Do penance," as Rome translates, but it is the word which means "a change of the

mind," and it simply means: Repent. It may also be in order at this time to say a few words about Rome's conception of baptism. According to Rome the sacrament of baptism effects justification, the remission of sin; this forgiveness of sin does not merely refer to the pardon of sin but also to the removal of sin. However, baptism does not only avail for the remission of sin and its removal, but also for the inward sanctification of the soul. Baptism, according to Rome, is the sacrament of regeneration. And, water is absolutely necessary for the administration of this sacrament. In the case of infants the word of regeneration is always effective. However, in the case of adults, it is not always effective. The adult can gratefully accept and use the grace of regeneration, but he can also resist it and make it ineffective. And, it is always possible that they who have appropriated it will lose it again. The Roman Catholic Church anathematizes those who teach that Christian baptism has no superior efficacy to that of John the Baptist; that true, natural water is not essential in the administration of this sacrament, or that the language of our Lord in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water," etc., is to be understood metaphorically. And it is also the conception of Rome that baptism delivers from the guilt of original sin and of all actual sins committed up to the time of baptism.

CHAPTER VII

What The Justification Of The Impious Is, And What Are The Causes Thereof

"This disposition, or preparation, is followed by Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just, and of an enemy a friend, that so he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting."

The Lord willing, we will continue with the quotation of the seventh article on the Romish Council of Trent of Justification. But one may note from what we have quoted that Rome, when speaking of Justification, does not refer to the remission of sins merely, but also to sanctification and renewal of the inward man. And we may again point to the fact that also in the article, Rome, true to its pelagian conception of sin and grace, speaks of the voluntary reception of the grace of God, and we should bear in mind that, according to Rome, this grace of God can also be rejected. In our following article we will continue with this seventh article and also continue with other articles as adopted by the Roman Catholic Council of Trent. H.V.

Ladies' League Meeting

The Eastern Ladies' League will hold their Spring meeting April 20, at Southeast Church at 8 o'clock. Rev. Herman Hanko will speak on "The Women of the Bible." All ladies of the denomination are invited to come and spend an evening of Christian fellowship with us.

Ruth H. Bylsma, Vice-Secretary

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Belgic Confession

ARTICLE I

(continued)

What then is this subjective principle of faith?

It is the principle of regeneration implanted in the heart by the indwelling and quickening Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The natural man is a fool, and as such he says in his *heart*, "There is no God." The divine wisdom, spoken in a mystery by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consisting of things which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," which "God hath prepared for them that love him," and which "God hath revealed" unto them "by his Spirit" — that wisdom the natural man receiveth not. Those things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto him. He cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But Christ Jesus our Lord has received the Spirit. And He is Himself become the quickening Spirit. Through that Spirit He takes up His abode in the church, in the hearts of His own. And dwelling in His church, He imparts Himself and all His benefits of light and life, of wisdom and knowledge, to all His people. Thus He produces "spiritual men," who are able to distinguish and discern and judge of spiritual things, the things of the Spirit of God, the things of the hidden mystery of God, of His revelation. This, therefore, is a spiritual, ethical change. As such, it is a change of the heart, the spiritual center of a man's being, from which are all the issues of his life from a moral, spiritual point of view. When that heart is thus changed, the issues of a man's life are changed. As long as that heart is under the power and dominion of sin, man is a fool. From that corrupt heart the issues of his mind and will, his speech and his actions proceed; and with all his being the fool says, "There is no God." But the heart of the spiritual man principally affects all the issues of his mind and will, his speech and actions; and, coming into contact with things which God hath revealed by His Spirit, namely, His revelation, that spiritual man understands and discerns and evaluates those things in a radically different manner, and says, "I believe in God!"

In the light of the above, it is also evident why believing with the heart is necessarily accompanied by confession with the mouth. To confess means "to say the same thing with someone else." In this case it is evident that confession means saying the same thing with God, or with the Spirit of Christ. That is, the objective testimony of the Spirit of Christ through the Word finds reception in the believing heart; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. It can be no different: for from the heart are the

issues of life. If, therefore, there is faith in the heart, there must needs be confession with the mouth. Faith in the heart without this confession with the mouth is dead faith. And confession with the mouth without faith in the heart is hypocrisy. Whoever believes with the heart will surely confess with the mouth.

Nor must we overlook the fact that while faith and confession are personal, they are not individualistic. The believer does not believe all by himself; nor does he make confession all alone. "*We all* believe with the heart and confess with the mouth . . ." As we have already indicated, this means that the act of believing and confessing takes place in the community of believers, the church. This united believing and confessing must not be understood, however, as the product of human association and mutual agreement. But we must remember that the Spirit of Christ always operates in the *church*, never in separation from it. In and through the church that Spirit makes known the wisdom of God in a mystery. And in that same body of Christ the Spirit dwells, operating in all the members of that body, performing His regenerating and faith-kindling work in their hearts, filling them with the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, causing the faith of their hearts to find expression in the confession of their mouths. The result of this operation of the Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of the church is this "We all believe . . . and confess . . ." And even when the believer confesses his faith personally, he can and does do so only by virtue of his position as a member of the body of Christ in which the Spirit of Christ dwells. And when this faith and confession of the congregation of Jesus Christ is set forth by the church officially, as it is gathered, organized, and instituted in the midst of the world, and that too, both in common with all those of like faith and in contradistinction from those who do not believe or who depart from the faith, the result is a creed or symbol or confession such as we are now considering.

But someone will take exception to that "all," objecting that it simply is not true that all the members of a certain church which adheres to this confession believe with the heart and confess with the mouth, and that therefore this business of a church making confessions is dangerous and productive of hypocrites and show-Christians. And apparently this objection is a weighty one, but only apparently. For, in the first place, we must understand that in its confessions the church speaks *organically*, as the gathering of believers and their seed. Surely, to that gathering as it is manifest in the midst of the world there adhere unbelievers and reprobate, both among adults and among the children of believers. But the gathering is not known by its carnal and reprobate element; on the contrary, it is the gathering of the elect, of the believers and the confessors and their spiritual seed. It is by the name of the latter that the church is designated: the congregation of Jesus Christ. It is they who belong to the church; the rest outwardly adhere. It is they who speak throughout in the confession of the church: "We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth . . ." Hence, in

the second place, that "all," taken, as it must be, with the terms "believe with the heart" and "confess with the mouth," is both inclusive and exclusive. It is inclusive of all who believe and confess, and it is exclusive of all who disbelieve and deny. And the more vigorously and zealously the church in actual practice maintains its confession, the more sharply this inclusive and exclusive character of the confession will come to manifestation. The more the church insists, "Here, in this communion, we all believe and confess," the more those who do not believe and confess will find themselves in conflict with the confession of the church. The effect, therefore, can only be two-fold. On the one hand, the elect are gathered, brought to a conscious faith, and confess the faith of their heart with the mouth. On the other hand, the reprobate are hardened and, as they come to manifestation in their denial of the faith of the church, they either leave or are excluded.

The practical significance of all the foregoing is obvious.

In the first place, it is incumbent upon the church to take care *that its confession is true*. That confession must be a confession of *faith*, and that too, without any admixture of the products of unbelief. This means, of course, that a confession must be according to the truth of God's own revelation in Christ Jesus our Lord, that is, according to the Scriptures. No other confession is worthy of the name. And to no other authority may a confession ever appeal than that of the Scriptures. A confession has no authority of its own; its authority rests only upon Holy Writ. Always, therefore, it is the duty of the church to compare its confessions with the Scriptures, and in its witness in the midst of the world clearly to establish and point out the connection between its creeds and the Word of God.

In the second place, it is the God-given calling of the church to be *true to its confession*. This is in the very nature of confession: to confess is to speak, to give testimony, of the faith of the heart. Surely, that confession must be officially adopted by the church, and have its place in the official literature of the church. But strictly must the church adhere to it in actual ecclesiastical life. Preaching and catechetical instruction must be in full accord therewith. Discipline must maintain the confession. And never in the slightest degree may the confessions of the church be allowed to become mere dead letters.

In the third place, it follows that it is incumbent upon the members of the church *to know the confession* of their church. If there is any one thing in the life of believers upon which our confessions and our Reformed churches have always placed a premium, it is *knowledge*. All our confessions are premised upon this. No, mere intellectual knowledge is of no value as such. You may have all the head-knowledge possible; but if you have no faith, you are dead. But *believers* must have knowledge, and must grow in knowledge and understanding of the truth. This stands to reason: you cannot very well confess what you do not know.

And mark you well, our confessions—and especially now our *Belgic Confession*—do not proceed from the idea that a sketchy, thumbnail confession is quite sufficient for any ordinary believer. In our day it more and more seems to be the idea that a thorough knowledge of the confessions might be all right for theologians and for officebearers perhaps; but an ordinary layman who knows his confessions is regarded as somewhat of an oddity, who might better leave those deeper things to his superiors. No, we all must know our creeds. We all must avail ourselves of every opportunity to become better acquainted with and thoroughly versed in our Reformed beliefs. And let me add: it is especially the calling of covenant youth to do this. How sad it is when young men and young women of the church are ready to "profess their faith" and are not really ready to give account sometimes of the meagerest fundamentals of that faith. Pray tell, how, if we do not know our confessions, can we acknowledge that we agree with the doctrine that is taught in this Christian church? And how then can we, without lying before the face of God, say in fellowship with the church: "We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth"

In the fourth place, let me hasten to add that also the individual believer must be true to his confession. And he will be if his confession is the expression of the faith of his heart. True to his confession he must be in the church itself, first of all. Never may he depart from that confession for any reason whatsoever. This also bears emphasis in our day. It must be a superficial, if not dishonest, soul that can make a confession before God and the church of the faith that lives in his heart, and then, for any personal and carnal reason whatsoever, can renege on his own confession, follow after heresy, sacrifice the truth on the altar of his personal interests and "happiness," and find himself a church home where that same confession is either flatly contradicted or is a matter of indifference. But true to his confession the believer must be in all his life. This is true of his speech and of his personal testimony among others. If that faith is the faith of his heart, why should he be ashamed of it and keep silence concerning it before men? It is his most precious possession is it not? But not only does this include "confession with the mouth" in the literal sense of the word. After all, the mouth, the speech, is but the highest of the gifts with which God has endowed the rational, moral creature. And if one's faith makes its demands upon the highest of our powers, are not all our other powers included? Hence, confession with the mouth implies that in all our walk and conversation, in every relationship and sphere of life we give expression in word and in very deed to what we believe in our hearts.

Thus, even as that faith is a wonder of sovereign grace alone, it shall, through our confession, redound unto the glory of our God, Who saved us and called us with an holy calling!

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

Sundry Matters On Baptism

"In the ceremony of baptism, both of children and of adults, the minister shall use the respective forms drawn up for the administration of this sacrament."

— Article 58, D.K.O.

THE LITURGICAL FORMS

The use of liturgical forms in connection with the celebration of the sacraments is for more than one reason a good thing. The main benefit derived from their use is that they put life and meaning into what is otherwise a dead symbol. The spiritual significance of the external sign must be explained because the sign in itself does not speak. It is silent. It is dependent upon the Word and the preaching of the Word for its meaning. This meaning is conveyed to the consciousness of the believers through the reading of the form that is adapted to the particular sacrament that is to be administered.

The use of the form for the administration of baptism is, according to the above quoted article of the Church Order, mandatory in all the churches. It would not do to allow each minister to individually explain the meaning of baptism each time that the sacrament was to be administered. This could very well lead to the danger of having certain facets of the doctrine of baptism over-emphasized at the expense of other essential elements of the truth. Moreover the second benefit that is reaped by the use of a commonly adopted form would be lost. This is the fact that a desired uniformity is secured in the administration of the sacraments. The same would be lost if each consistory drew up and adopted its own form. This would not be desirable. It is much better that those churches that agree in faith and doctrine jointly adopt a form in which they express what each and every church believes to be the truth of the Word of God regarding the sacraments and that this form be used in all the churches.

Churches that use such forms are not "*formalistic*" in the bad sense of the word. Formalism is the evil that creeps into the church as a result of the spiritual deterioration of its members. The latter proceed through the rituals of worship without spirit or meaning. Religion becomes a matter of superstition. Customs handed down from of old are blindly followed and any emphasis that can still be aroused is placed upon externals. Such religion thrives upon ignorance and is in actuality nothing but an open sham. The use of forms which in a concise and lucid manner set forth the truth of God's Word with regard to the sacraments and other practices of the church are not conducive to such a sad state of affairs. These forms, like the preaching of the Word itself, enliven

the ceremonies of the church by giving to them content and meaning. They militate against a dead formalism and are useful to uproot erroneous conceptions and usages that might otherwise easily creep into the church. As means of instruction they stimulate the faith of the church and arouse in the believers a deeper appreciation for those holy signs and seals which God has given His Church.

This is not the place to discuss the content of the liturgical forms used in the churches. That would belong to the rubrics of "Our Doctrine" or "Our Confession." The Church Order purposes merely to set forth the rule that these forms, adopted by all of the churches, are to be used by them and refusal to do so or the substituting of them with self-made forms is a violation of the Act of Agreement and a step in the direction of individualism which cannot be tolerated in the church.

A few things, however, may be said in this connection about these forms in general. We limit ourselves to the Forms for Baptism since this is the subject of the Article of the Church Order we are presently discussing. In our churches we have two such forms: one for the baptism of infants and one for the baptism of adults. Our form for Infant Baptism was originally drawn up by Petrus Datheen, a Flemish Reformer who had been driven by persecution to England and later to Germany. He was a very able man who translated the Heidelberg Catechism from German into Dutch. He also prepared a metrical version of the Psalms and wrote various liturgical documents for the churches. The baptism form which he composed (perhaps together with Van der Heyden) was prepared after the Forms of Calvin, a Lasco, Micron and Olevianus. Originally it was much longer than its present form but the Synod of 1574 abbreviated it and recommended that all the ministers in the churches use it. Later synods also concerned themselves with this matter but did not adopt any particular Form as an official text. The great Synod of 1618-19 recommended certain changes in the 1611 edition of the Baptism Form but it was not until as late as 1897, during the time of Dr. Bavinck and Kuypers, that this addition with the incorporated changes advised by the great Synod of Dort was published and in 1902 the Synod of Arnhem approved this Form.

Our Form for Adult Baptism dates back to the Synod of Dort, 1618-19. The doctrinal part of this form is the same as that for Infant Baptism. This, of course, is proper for baptism has the same meaning or significance for adults as it does for infants. The main difference lies in the questions that are asked. When infants are baptized the parents are asked to answer three questions. In adult baptism no less than five questions are put to the candidate for baptism and each question is answered separately. Consistency, it would seem, would require that this same practice of answering the questions individually be also followed in connection with infant baptism. This would greatly enhance the solemnity of the occasion.

ADULT BAPTISM

"Adults are through baptism incorporated into the Christian church, and are accepted as members of the church, and are therefore obliged also to partake of the Lord's Supper, which they shall promise to do at their baptism."

— Article 59, D.K.O.

We know only a few instances where adults have received the sacrament of baptism in our churches. This is generally speaking more the exception than the rule in the Reformed Churches for the vast majority of its members are baptized in their infancy. This does not mean that the propriety of adult baptism is in any way subject to question. Scripture itself gives direct support to this practice and this article of the Church Order makes provision for it in the churches.

Of significance in this connection is the meaning of the statement, *"Adults are through baptism incorporated into the Christian church."* Concerning this there are marked differences of opinion. In the *Church Order Commentary*, for example, Monsma and Van Dellen express the view that this refers only to being received as members of a local congregation. We quote these authors as follows:

"The significance of this statement is that those who have come to years of discretion and comparative independence can only be admitted to Church membership by profession of faith and baptism administered upon this profession. The term 'Christian Church' as used in Article 59 does not stand on par with the expression 'Church of Christ' as used in Article 1. The expression 'Church of Christ' is used to indicate the body of believers living in a certain region or country. It does not as a rule refer to these believers as they are organized into a Church or Churches. The term 'Christian Church' in the present article, however, refers to a specific congregation or organized Church. The opening provisions of Article 59 therefore simply specify that adults who stand outside of the organized Churches can only be incorporated into a local or particular Church upon confession and Baptism, and that thus they are admitted to full membership rights in the Church which so receives them. A literal translation of Article 59 on this score would make this interpretation very evident. Literally we read, 'Adults are to be incorporated into the Christian congregation by Baptism, and are thus to be accepted as members of the congregations.' He who has been granted adult Baptism thereby receives all the privileges of Church membership. He stands on par with those who were baptized in infancy and who in later years made profession of their faith."

The argument in the above is that "Christian church" means the "church institute" or "local congregation" and therefore the term "incorporated" must denote no more than the bestowal of the rights and privileges of membership in that congregation. On the same basis it must be evident that the baptism of infants merely denotes the bestowal of the same rights. With this position we differ as we shall show

later. This reasoning is just in reverse. Why not reason from the meaning of the term "incorporated" to the meaning of the term "Christian church"?

This is the view taken by Rev. G. M. Ophoff in his *Church Right*. He writes:

"Adults are through baptism incorporated into the Christian church and are accepted as members of the church. 'Incorporated' is a term that implies a body in which the adult is incorporated in the organic sense; and this body is the spiritual body of Christ as manifested in the Church Institute with its ruling and teaching and alms giving ministry. This incorporation takes place not magically through baptism apart from faith but through a living faith having for its content the truth symbolized by baptism and confessed by the adult."

In support of this view several things may be advanced. First of all we must point to the organic conception of baptism embodied in our Baptism Form and supported throughout Scripture. Baptism is not a mechanical *rite* but it is a sign instituted by God which signifies and seals the righteousness of Christ unto believers. Not all who receive the outward sign receive actual baptism. To be baptized is to be buried with Christ into His death and to be raised again in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-6). This is indeed incorporation into the real body of Christ and it is the only baptism that Scripture and the Confessions know.

In the second place it should be noticed that this term as well as the idea of the term is found in our Baptism Form as well as in this article of the Church Order. In both places it must be interpreted alike. In the prayer of baptism, God is implored to "graciously look upon these children and incorporate them by the Holy Spirit into His Son Jesus Christ." In the first question asked of parents the phrase "Sanctified in Christ and, therefore, as members of His church," indicates the same idea. Finally the thanksgiving prayer at the conclusion of baptism proceeds from the fact that the baptized are "in Christ" and not simply members of a visible, earthly institute and endowed with certain rights and privileges.

G.V.d.B.

IN MEMORIAM

On March 31, 1961, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take from our fellowship one of our members,

MR. HENRY KUIPER

We hereby express our sympathy to his wife and family.

May the God of all grace comfort her and all the bereaved with the thought that the death of God's saints is a door through which they enter the New Paradise of God.

The Men's Society of the Doon
Protestant Reformed Church
Rev. G. Van Baren, President
Mr. Wm. Den Besten, Secretary

ALL AROUND US

MATTERS CONCERNING THE UNION

Recently there was given to me some material describing an attempt on the part of the AFL-CIO to gain control of the building trades in Michigan, particularly in the Grand Rapids area. This attempt is spelled out in a letter sent to those contemplating a building project under a letter head which reads, "Grand Rapids Building Trades Council of Building and Construction Trades Department Grand Rapids, Michigan," and over the signature of "Dave Almergi, President." This letter reads,

We understand that you are contemplating awarding a contract for the construction of a building in the near future. There are some pertinent facts which we believe should be called to your attention.

Effective as of August 15, 1960, an Agreement was consummated between the 18 AFL-CIO Craft Unions affiliated with the Grand Rapids Building and Construction Trades Council and the Grand Rapids Contractors' Association, consisting of all Contractors who are signatories to a labor contract with the above mentioned 18 AFL-CIO Craft Unions, agreeing that they would not enter into any contractual relationships or perform any work at the site of construction unless all work done and to be performed in connection therewith was performed by employers (the Contractor and all Sub-Contractors) who had a collective labor contract with one or more of the 18 Unions who also signed the August 15th Agreement, covering the type of work they would do. The 18 signatory Building Trades Labor Organizations agreed on behalf of themselves and all of their members that they and their members would refrain from entering into contractual relations with any employer concerning such work unless all work done on the site is performed under contract or subcontract with employers who have a collective labor agreement with one or more of the 18 signatory Labor Organizations for the class of work involved.

We believe that, with this in mind, you should give careful consideration as to the effect the limitations for the above Agreement will have on such Contractors' ability to complete your project.

Enclosed is a copy of the Agreement. If you have any questions or desire additional information in regard to this Agreement, please feel free to contact this office.

The purpose of this letter is rather clear. The agreement of which the letter speaks is an agreement which was made between all the craft unions in this area which includes general building contractors, plumbers, heating men, bricklayers, masons, etc. These various craft unions have signed an agreement not to work on any job in which there are non-union men employed. If, e.g., the general contractor is a member of the union, he may not hire any non-union help. If, on the other hand, a general contractor is not a member of a union, no union plumber or mason or bricklayer may work on a job for which he is responsible. The purpose of this is two-fold. On the one hand, anyone letting out bids to have a job done in the field of building will be reluctant to give the job to a non-union general contractor for fear the general contractor will not be able to complete the job since no union man will sign a sub-contract with him. He may not, e.g., be able to get a plumber to do his plumbing, with the result that the whole job stands idle. On the other hand, the union is attempting to force both general contractors and sub-contractors to join the union or lose their

work since there will be nothing anymore for them to do without joining. This is also the implication of the veiled threat in the letter, "We believe that, with this in mind, you should give careful consideration as to the effect the limitations for the above agreement will have on such Contractors' ability to complete your project." The aim of the union is to gain control of all building projects and all building trades in this area.

This attempt of the union however has not gone unchallenged. On September 19, 1960 a letter was sent to "Contractors and Building Material Suppliers in the construction field in Grand Rapids and Holland, Michigan." This letter is interesting enough to quote.

Before stating the purpose of this letter we would like to make clear that although this letter is being sent to you by the CLA [the letter is written on CLA stationery over the signature of J. Gritter, Secretary - HH] it is being done upon the urging of many contractors who operate in Grand Rapids and Holland. The facilities of the CLA are used because of our direct interest and the contacts we have.

These contractors and we are inviting you to attend a meeting that will be held on Friday, September 30, 1960, at 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon, in the CLA building located at 1600 Buchanan Avenue, S. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Why is this meeting being called?

You are undoubtedly aware of the action taken by another labor organization in the building trades, not to allow sub-contractors with which its affiliated unions have contracts to do any work on industrial, commercial and institutional building projects on which the labor and services performed are not being done entirely by members of that organization. The purpose of that action is to deprive CLA and non-union contractors of certain specialized services that are essential to the completion of their building projects, so that eventually they will have to employ members of that organization only. It is the old squeeze play which in practically all the major cities of our nation has resulted in complete monopoly of the construction field by that labor organization.

What can be done about it? Many contractors who are concerned, and we, are confident that much can be done about it, that this threat can be effectively met if the contractors and building material suppliers will stand together to meet it. Contractors in the home construction field should be interested too, because if this attempted squeeze play should succeed in the heavier construction field, they will be next in line. . . .

As a result of this meeting an organization was formed of men who are engaged in any work relating to construction as well as building suppliers who are not members of the AFL-CIO. It was called the "Contractors and Suppliers Association of Western Michigan," and numbers at this point about 100 members. As I understand it, it is an organization independent from any other existing organization, formed for purposes of its own. I do not know whether this organization has a constitution, but I have a copy of the Articles of Incorporation in which they state their purpose:

The purposes for which the corporation is formed are as follows:

a. The promotion of the public and individual welfare in the building construction industry through the rendering of first class workmanship, the use of high grade materials, and by providing efficient and timely service.

b. Cooperation in maintaining an efficient and sufficient working force, and in the promotion of fair competitive practices through equalization of wage scales and standardization of other working conditions affecting the employees of the members.

c. The lending of assistance to one another in meeting emergencies that may arise within the scope of the interests of the Association and directly affecting one or more of its members, or indirectly affecting the organization as a whole.

d. The taking of joint action as an Association, if necessary, in defense of the members and/or their employees' rights, guaranteed to them by the laws of the United States of America and the State of Michigan.

e. The continuation and further development of Christian, social and ethical principles of freedom guaranteed to all men in the Constitution of the United States and the State of Michigan.

f. The taking of any action germane to the purposes of Subparagraphs a, b, c, d, and e above.

The obvious purpose of this organization is primarily to bring into its federation men of all the various trades related to construction in order to be able to guarantee a general contractor who is not a union member that he will be able to complete his job without having to fall back on union help; and to guarantee to the general contractor and sub-contractors the availability of all the necessary material to complete a job. The organization has succeeded to the extent that the AFL-CIO has, for the time being, reconsidered the agreement which originally it made with all the craft unions.

Although one could wish that the purposes outlined above were more specific, especially point e, there seems to be no objection to joining such an organization. Any attempts that are made within and based upon the principles of righteousness and which will aid our people in maintaining their right to work in the job of their choosing is commendable and ought to be encouraged. We only hope that this organization will make a real effort in "the further development of Christian, social and ethical principles of freedom" as these are related to their particular problems.

MORE ABOUT AID TO SCHOOLS

The debate that has been stirred up over federal aid to private schools continues to swirl. The Roman Catholics have taken a strong stand in favor of the giving of aid to private schools, particularly their own, and have begun extensive lobbying on Capitol Hill to try to persuade Congress to vote aid for them as well as for public schools. President Kennedy has gone on record as being opposed to outright grants to private schools on the basis that this would be unconstitutional and opposed to the separation of church and state. He is not however opposed to the giving of loans to private schools, only he wants to make provision for this in separate legislation fearing that should loans to private schools be added to the present bill before Congress, the whole bill would go down in defeat. Archbishop William Brady of the Roman Catholic Church wondered out loud if it was not time for another Boston Tea Party with the cry "No taxation without representation."

Other church organizations have placed the matter on their agendas for the coming meetings, and some of their spokesmen have already made their position clear.

A spokesman for the National Council of Churches testified before a Congressional Committee in favor of federal aid to public schools, but expressed himself as opposed to any kind of aid to private schools.

Protestants and other Americans United registered strong opposition to grants and loans to private schools.

The Citizens of Educational Freedom is waging an ex-

tensive campaign for federal aid to be given to parents of children to be used for tuition in either public or non-public schools patterned after the GI bill. The argument in favor of this is that direct grants will not be given for sectarian purposes. This will preserve the separation between church and state. The National Union of Christian Schools is said to support this proposition.

There are several aspects to this question which ought not to be forgotten in our own consideration of the problem.

On the one hand, our schools should never be tempted to accept help from the government, not on the rather weak basis of the separation between church and state, but rather on the basis that federal aid will inevitably lead to federal control.

On the other hand, however, there is something deeply unjust in our whole educational set-up in this country which the recent controversy has sharply outlined. The government takes the position that aid can be given to public schools on the basis of the fact that they are neutral and non-sectarian, and that consequently the government is not supporting any religion with aid to them. The same argument is used to justify the use of tax-payers' money for public education. But this argument has a very hollow ring to it. The public schools are not neutral with respect to religion, for neutrality is an impossibility even for a government. In actual fact, the public schools are atheistic and promote Atheism as long as no religion whatsoever may be taught. The result is that the money of the taxpayers is used to support atheism. And this is true of our money as well. And so the government involves itself in the foolish contradiction of not giving aid to private schools on the basis that it cannot promote any one religion; while in giving aid to public schools, it promotes the religion of atheism.

And this dilemma is in turn based upon another mistake in our society — that it is the business of the government to educate children. If the government had never entered the field of education, but had recognized instead the principle that only parents have the calling to educate the next generation, the problem would not now exist.

The solution then to the problem is to return the responsibility of education back to the parents and free it as much as possible from government control. There is no question about it that this also has its difficulties. For one thing, certain requirements have to be set up as an objective standard of attainment to receive a diploma and transfer to an institution of higher learning. For another thing, some parents may not want to educate their children at all. Or again, some parents, while wanting their children to be educated, may not want to pay the price so that the money is forced out of their pockets by taxation. But, considering all these problems, this is evidently the only proper solution.

This is all no doubt a vain dream. And so it is well that we remember, that no matter what happens, our schools do not accept outright grants and handouts from the government even if we should have to suffer injustice to insure the proper education of our children.

H. Hanks

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

April 5, 1961

Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church, declined the call from our Randolph congregation.

The Junior Mr. and Mrs. Society of First Church sponsored a program featuring our Missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers. The meeting was held in the gym of Adams St. School. Mr. Fred Hanko, president of the Society, opened the meeting with the reading of Zechariah 4 and then asked his father, Rev. C. Hanko, to lead in prayer. Mr. and Mrs. C. Jonker rendered a vocal duet, which was followed by a short talk by Donald Hauck, a former member of our Forbes Church, who gave a thumbnail sketch of the background of the German people amongst whom the Missionary works. After him Miss Coraine Streyle, of our Isabel Church, told us about the location and of the situation of Forbes and Isabel, and also a little of the work done by our Missionary in those two newest members of our denomination. Rev. Lubbers chose to speak on the text found in Zech. 4 which speaks of "not despising the day of little things." He described his newest field of labor in Tripp, S. Dak., and the neighboring towns of Menno and Scotland. The speech was characterized by the humility befitting a Servant of God who is called to work in an area of "The day of little things." It inspired the audience to rely on the grace of God in His good hand upon us in our missionary endeavors. After the speech Arnold Dykstra sang two numbers, and the meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. H. Hoeksema. An offering was taken for Missions which amounted to \$83.00 after expenses. After the program the Mr. and Mrs. Society served refreshments giving opportunity for visiting with Rev. Lubbers and with one another. Everyone there was convinced that it was a worthwhile evening, bringing the needs of our Missionary closer to our hearts, encouraging us to make them the objects of our prayers.

Easter Sunday evening was enriched for the people of the Hope, Hudsonville, and South Holland-Oak Lawn churches. At Hope an Easter program was rendered by their Choral Society; Hudsonville enjoyed a singspiration sponsored by their Male Quartet; and in South Holland Church the Resurrection Day was concluded with the singing of God's praises in a singspiration.

Contribution: "Most everyone enjoys receiving letters by mail. This is certainly true of the Corresponding Secretary of the Radio Committee of the Ref. Witness Hour. Especially true when the writer states that he is 'helped and comforted' by the messages heard in these distinctively Reformed broadcasts. Many of *The Standard Bearer* readers know that the

Ref. Witness Hour can be heard in the British Isles by means of Trans World Radio. The following letter was received from Sussex, England: 'Dear Sir: Please send me the printed sermon entitled, Armed For Suffering, by the Rev. Hanko. We enjoyed a blessed time in the Lord with your ministry through the radio services, and are fairly zealous listeners to your programmes. The reception is loud and clear which gives us great delight. We pray that God may double His blessings upon your faithful ministry. In the Lord Jesus' Name . . . ' Yes, it is indeed gratifying to the Committee, and to the ministers and musicians who are heard on our programs to hear from the listeners. Address *your* comments to The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids, Mich.'

From Grand Haven's bulletin we learn that Seminarian D. Engelsma conducted the Easter morning service, and was scheduled for both services the next Sunday. Though this congregation is without a minister the bulletin shows that the catechism classes are faithfully conducted, and the Sunday School meets every Sunday after the morning service.

Holland's consistory has reached a decision to stipulate a definite cause for which the Communion thank-offering will be taken. The March 5th offering was for Pine Rest.

On March 13 the Men's Society of Hull was host to the societies of Doon and Edgerton. Ray Brunsting, of the host society, gave a paper based on Matt. 15:8, 9. All of the men were invited to enjoy the evening of Christian fellowship with the members of the combined societies.

Classis West, in the last meeting reported in our last issue, nominated the following delegates to Synod: *Primi*—Revs. J. A. Heys, H. H. Kuiper, G. Vanden Berg, H. Veldman; Elders G. Gunnink, E. Hauck, P. Hoekstra, P. A. Poortenga. *Secundi*—Revs. R. C. Harbach, J. Kortering, G. Van Baren, B. Woudenberg; Elders T. Feenstra, M. Gaastra, W. Griess, R. Regnerus.

The Office Bearers' Conference was held in Hope Church April 4, the evening before Classis convened. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema was the speaker, his topic being, "Should the Form for the Lord's Supper be Revised?" The speaker recalled the history of the Form, discussed the manner in which it was written, and weighed the question of the need for its revision. The speaker also related the recent history, from 1913 to date, in which requests for revision were aired, and in 1959 a trial revision was adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches. The Professor criticized some points of that revision, and concluded that it is in his opinion that revision of our present Form is not necessary, but that it would be dangerous to do so. Thirty-five office bearers were present at this conference to enjoy the timely speech and to ask questions of the speaker after recess.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.