

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXVII

MARCH 15, 1961 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 12

MEDITATION

THE DYING CHRIST

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

— Matt. 27:50-54

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus He gave up the ghost." — Luke 23:46

Everything surrounding this awful cross is wonderful.

We feel a great humility when we set ourselves to say something about one of its episodes. This is true of every attempt at exegesis of the Holy Word; but how much more when we attempt to say something of the dying Christ of God!

It was early when we arrived at the place of a skull. The rulers of the people had done everything with expediency and dispatch. They must have congratulated one another, and themselves. There! That is work that is well done. We are rid of Him, who really was a thorn in our sides! At nine o'clock in the morning it was finished, as far as their nefarious labor was concerned. The Christ (in their eyes, the pseudo-Christ) hung on the cross. Let now every one look to Him.

Oh yes, the devil had his hour, we read; and he certainly used his hour. Every spirit or man at his post, each doing the thing that fitted the hellish plot; and here we have the result: Christ is on the tree of shame and dishonor. Satan has won his war!

* * * *

But has he?

There is a masterpiece in existence, depicting the awful scene of the crucifixion. And with marvellous skill the artist has depicted on the face of Satan, hovering above the cross in a dark and lurid background of clouds, a sardonic leer or grin, but in it there is also an unspoken question of awful dread: Did I have the victory?

I wonder what exegesis Satan put on the *perfectum* of Jesus: It is finished!

And then that loud cry of Jesus as He bowed the head and gave up the ghost. Satan must have heard it. He certainly was there at the time.

And the import of the last crossword! Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!

Also the terrifying signs at the death of Jesus: the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, the veil was rent, and even from the top to the bottom, signifying that it was God's hand!

Of course, Satan now knows that with all his hatred of God in the persecution of Jesus, he did nothing but help to lay the foundation of the holy city where the perfected kingdom shall be to God's praises forever!

Sorrows of Satan!

* * * *

Yes, Jesus died on the cross.

And what marvellous things happened at His death.

First, He cried with a loud voice just before He died, and said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!

This is a quotation from Psalm 31. And yet, it is no quotation, for they are the words of His own speech as He spoke them through the mouth of the prophet many ages before. He simply enters His own words and deepens them to the utmost and fullest significance.

Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit! I hear in these words an exuberant gladness; it sounds to me like a shout of victory. That is especially so when we connect

this last crossword with the one He uttered just before: It is finished!

We realize full well that His physical death is part and parcel of His humiliation; and that His body must rest in the grave so that He might show to the church of all ages that He has overcome death in all its agonizing phases, to show that He opens the grave for all those that follow Him. But let us also see that this last cry of Jesus signifies that He is going HOME! He is going Home! Home to God, His Father in heaven.

From the moment that Jesus bowed His head and died, He arrived in the arms of God and at once He was in the midst of great rejoicings and jubilant singing.

The Blood of the New Testament arrived.

I realize full well that the victory began with His resurrection, but I would like to contrast this last crossword with the fourth, and then we will realize that Jesus came to rest in Father's arms. In His arms the spirit of Jesus rejoiced. Moreover, in His second crossword He had already prophesied: *today* thou shalt be with Me in *Paradise*!

And in Paradise it is well with Jesus! What inexpressible contrast to the cry from out of the depths and from out of the impenetrable darkness of a few moments before! There He felt *forsaken of God*; here He is in the *hand of Father*. There He experienced an agonizing agony; here He experiences the delight of heaven.

There is glory already in His dying, a glory that shall progress to dizzying heights of the New Jerusalem in His final day.

* * * *

Yes, the Christ of God died.

And both the church and the world shall know it. God will take care that this date does not pass unnoticed. Awful things shall happen.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Why is that added to the holy record?

Undoubtedly it points to the fact that all this cross and dying, all this redemption and glory, is a work of the Triune God. He will not give His praises to another. For Himself He created all things; well, it shall become evident that also re-creation is His own work alone.

The veil is rent. O yes, but God reached down into the temple, and His own hands ripped the veil in twain!

There is Gospel joy in that act.

For ages it was told the church that God dwelled in the holy of holies, and that no one might enter there that he die not. The high priest might enter there once each year, but he did so because of the fact that he was an *official*, a

copy, a shadow, a type of One who was to come. But God was not at home for just anyone. That had to wait for more gladsome days.

The holy of holies was shut to all men because of their evil, filth, corruption and guilt.

And this is the Gospel: a Man was found who would open the door that led to the holy of holies, the Home of God. And that Man is Jesus. He will rend the veil, and that veil is His own flesh.

Do you notice how God's timing is absolute and perfect?

At the moment Jesus died, the veil is rent, the body and the soul of Jesus are parted in death, and so the opening is made that leads to the inner sanctuary.

I think that Sanhedrin appointed an able committee to see to this strange phenomenon; and that this committee did good work; the veil was repaired or a new one bought and installed. I shudder at the implications of such an act. It says: I refuse to enter the sanctuary. And if we note that the sanctuary, or rather, the opening into the sanctuary, is the symbolic representation of the open arms of God, the matter becomes so horrible that we tremble. Sanhedrin, through its able committee, gave notice to God that they refused His Son!

But to the church of Jesus Christ, this act of God is Gospel joy.

The door is open!

Heaven itself lies open to our wondering gaze.

Through the death of Jesus a new and living way is opened to the heart of God.

Oh no, we will not repair that breach which God made. But we will come, we do come to Thee, for Thou art our God in this dying Christ!

The blessing of a dying Christ!

* * * *

The earth did quake and the rocks rent!

If you live in places where earthquakes happen you see more of the import of this testimony than if you have never before felt the earth shake beneath your feet.

We speak of *terra firma*, the firm and stable earth!

Well, if the creature is to be at rest and comfortable, the earth should be firm. It belongs to our nature to live upon *terra firma*. It is unnatural if the earth quakes. It should not be, according to the ordinances of creation.

But let us not accuse God when He takes the earth in His hands in order to shake it and cause all manner of hardship and fatality.

It is not God who is to blame! Perish the thought!

We, it is man himself, who is to blame. We have turned

the foundations of the earth upside down through our sin and iniquity. You can find that in the Bible too. Sin is perverseness. And that word is akin to the earthquake. Oh, I am certain that when the judgment day comes all the calamities that shall befall the wicked shall be beautifully right, entirely just, wholly righteous. Our condemnation shall equal our corruption.

The earth must be moved. God's justice demands it. He has done so many times. It really was not the first time the earth quaked when Jesus died. In the Old Testament they reckoned their years sometimes from "the great earthquake." God has rocked the world in His anger many times.

But I must tremble when I remember a word from Paul: Once more I shall move the earth, and all things!

And that is anticipated every time there has been an earthquake, and especially when Jesus died. It was a prophecy of the final earthquake of the last day. The rending of the veil is a blessing, but the rending of the earth and of the rocks is a curse, or, rather, the promise of the final curse of God when He shall take the earth and shake it in the full revelation of His righteous anger. I think that there shall be an eternal earthquake in hell.

But there is a blessing in it for you, my brother, a blessing in disguise.

The splitting earth and the rending rocks tell you that on the basis of the dying Christ there shall come a palace that is built on the immovable rock, and the rock is Christ. And Christ the Rock is the revelation of God the Rock. Deut. 32:4.

The rocks that split and the earth that quaked when the Christ died tell the church that they shall stand secure forever on the rock of God's everlasting love.

Oh, the blessings of a dying Christ!

G.V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 11, our beloved parents,

MR. and MRS. JOHN KARSEMEYER

celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to our Covenant God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon them and us these many years together.

Our prayer is that He may bless them in their way and that they may experience that there is no peace apart from Him.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. William Karsemeyer

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Karsemeyer

Mr. James Karsemeyer

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Karsemeyer

6 grandchildren

1 great-grandchild

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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

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

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

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

Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

Second Class postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

The Dying Christ.....265
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

Calvin and Common Grace.....268
Oh, Oh, Dr. Dane!.....270
Rev. H. Hoeksema

AS TO BOOKS —

Midden in het Leven (In the Midst of Life).....270
The Way of Salvation.....270
The Apocalypse Today.....270
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation.....271
Rev. H. Hoeksema

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

The Beginning Of Judgment In Egypt.....273
Rev. B. Woudenberg

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of I Timothy.....275
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

God's Royal Priesthood (2).....277
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments.....279
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Belgic Confession.....281
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

The Subjects of Baptism.....283
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

Comments from the Netherlands.....285
A Plea for Christian Day Schools.....286
Rev. H. Hanko

CONTRIBUTIONS —

An Answer to Rev. L. Doezeema.....287
Mr. J. King

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES.....288

Mr. J. M. Faber

EDITORIALS

Calvin and Common Grace

Dr. Herman Kuiper attempts to prove that Calvin teaches the well-meant offer of Christ and salvation to the reprobate. Writes he (*The Banner*, Jan. 27, 1961):

"Meanwhile, there is another element in Calvin's writings which is no less astounding than his teaching concerning God's beneficence toward the whole human race. Calvin, who was reputed to be a very keen logician, made many declarations which appear to be wholly inconsistent with his doctrine of divine reprobation. Calvin asserted time and again that God offers Christ and his great salvation to men, concerning whom He decreed that they are to suffer everlasting punishment, and that He earnestly invites them to become partakers of life eternal."

Now, I would say, in the first place, that, if Calvin really writes as Kuiper represents him, then we simply do not agree with him, for we do not believe in the so-called well-meant offer of salvation, well-meant offer of salvation to all men, elect and reprobate, well-meant that is on the part of God. For, in the first place, such is not the teaching of Scripture. And, in the second place, that, indeed, would contradict the truthfulness of God and make Him a hypocrite. How could He earnestly seek the salvation of men whom He does not want to save, whom He has decreed unto eternal damnation?

Nor do I believe that Calvin, "the keen logician," would ever teach anything of the kind.

Yet, Kuiper, apparently, offers quotations from Calvin in which he seems to teach this very thing.

I say "apparently" for we all know how deceiving quotations can be when they are taken out of their context. Hence, what we have to do is that we carefully check these quotations and read them in their context. And this is what we propose to do, at least with some of the quotations.

The first quotation is from the *Institutes*, II, 5, 10. It reads as follows: "I deny that God cruelly mocks us when He invites us to merit blessings, which He knows we are altogether unworthy to merit. The promises being offered alike to believers and to the ungodly, have their use in regard to both, . . . In His promises to the ungodly He attests in a manner how unworthy they are of his kindness."

Thus far Kuiper's quotation.

First, I want to make a remark about that "offer." It is a translation of the Latin *offere*. It does not have the same connotation as our English word *offer*. With us the word *offer* has the connotation of willingness to give something to another which the latter may and can either accept or reject. That cannot be said of Christ or of salvation. A

better translation, therefore, is *to present*. The gospel and Christ are "offered" that is, presented in the preaching to all that hear the gospel preached, both to the godly and to the ungodly, to the elect and reprobate alike.

Now let us consider the context in which this quotation occurs. Calvin writes:

"What purpose, then, is served by exhortations? It is this: As the wicked with obstinate heart, despise them, they will be a testimony against them when they stand at the judgment-seat of God; nay, they even now strike and lash their consciences. For, however they petulantly deride, they cannot disapprove them." Book II, 5.

And again, the same paragraph:

"God works in his elect in two ways: inwardly, by his Spirit; outwardly by his Word. By his Spirit, illuminating their minds, and training their hearts to the practice of righteousness, he makes them new creatures, while, by His Word, he stimulates them to long and seek for renovation. In both, he exerts the might of his hand in proportion to the measure in which he dispenses them. The Word, when addressed to the reprobate, though not effectual for their amendment, has another use. It urges their consciences now, and will render them more inexcusable in the day of judgment . . . The reprobate, again, are admonished by Paul, that the doctrine is not in vain; because, while it is in them a savour of death unto death, it is still a sweet savour unto God (II Cor. 2:16)."

Kuiper does not quote from this paragraph. He merely refers to it. But, surely, there is no common grace, nor a well-meant offer of salvation. The very opposite is true. The preaching of the Word, according to Calvin, only aggravates the condemnation of the reprobate, is a testimony against them, and when it is a savour of death unto them, it is still a sweet savour unto God.

But, as I said, Kuiper does not quote from this paragraph although he refers to it.

The quotation by Kuiper is from II, 10. There, Calvin is still combating the enemies of the truth of sovereign grace. Let us look at the context. It is as follows:

"The second class of objections is akin to the former. They allege the promises in which the Lord makes a paction (agreement, bargain, H.H.) with our will. Such are the following: 'Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live' (Amos V:14). 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it' (Isaiah I:19, 20). 'If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then thou shalt not remove' (Jer. IV:1). 'It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all the commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth' (Deut. XXVIII:1). There are other similar passages (Lev. XXVI:3, etc.). They think that the blessings contained in

these promises are offered to our will absurdly and in mockery, if it is not in our power to secure or reject them. It is, indeed, an easy matter to indulge in declamatory complaint on this subject—to say that we are cruelly mocked by the Lord when he declares that his kindness depends on our will, if we are not masters of our will—that it would be a strange liberality on the part of God if he sets his blessings before us, while we have no power of enjoying them—a strange certainty of promises, which to prevent their ever being fulfilled, are made to depend on an impossibility. Of promises of this description, which have a condition annexed to them, we shall elsewhere speak, and make it plain that there is nothing absurd in the impossible fulfilment of them. In regard to the matter in hand, I deny that God cruelly mocks us when he invites us to merit blessings which he knows we are altogether unable to merit. The promises being offered alike to believers and to the ungodly, have their use in regard to both. As God by His precepts stings the consciences of the ungodly, so as to prevent them from enjoying their sins while they have no remembrance of his judgments, so, in his promises, he in a manner takes them to witness how unworthy they are of his kindness. Who can deny that it is most just and becoming in God to do good to those that worship him, and to punish with due severity those who despise his majesty. God, therefore, proceeds in due order, when, though the wicked are bound by the fetters of sin, he lays down the law in his promises, that he will do them good only if they depart from their wickedness. This would be right, though his only object were to let them understand that they are deservedly excluded from the favor due to his true worshippers,” etc.

What, now, does Calvin teach here? Does he support any form of common grace in the above lines? Does he mean to teach here any manner of a well-meant offer of grace and salvation, well-meant on the part of God? Not at all. To be sure, the preaching of the gospel, and the offer (presentation) of the promises, comes to all alike, the elect and the reprobate, the believers and the ungodly. But this does not come to both for the same purpose, according to Calvin. To the believers it is that they may be saved, to the ungodly it is that they may be punished with due severity. And, mark you well, it is not only a matter of fact that the ungodly despise the promises of God when they are proclaimed unto them, but it is the very purpose of God, according to Calvin, that through the proclamation of the promises they shall aggravate the severity of their punishment. Dr. H. Kuiper may not like this. That is an altogether different question. But this is the teaching of Calvin.

And, surely, by quoting Calvin at random by quoting him apart from the context in which these quotations occur, he distorts Calvin's teaching.

The next quotation from Calvin by Kuiper I confess that I do not understand why he makes it. It is this:

“Book III, 22, 10 — By external preaching all are called to faith and repentance . . . though the gospel is addressed generally to all, yet the gift of faith is rare.”

Even though Kuiper again quotes Calvin outside of the proper context, I ask: what is wrong with this quotation even as it stands. Are there, according to Kuiper, also those that deny that the external calling to faith and repentance comes to all, at least, to all to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel? There may be, but if so, they certainly are not to be found in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Or does he probably mean that there are those who believe that all to whom the external calling comes, also receive the gift of faith? Again, I would say: there may be. But, please, do not try to find them among Protestant Reformed people.

Or does he, perhaps, mean to say that the mere external call to repentance and faith is a well-meant offer of salvation and, therefore, is grace to all that hear the gospel as is the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church as taught in the First Point of 1924. In that case you may surely find those that deny this doctrine in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

But, in that case, you certainly twist Calvin's meaning in the above quotation.

Let me quote just a few lines from the paragraph from which Kuiper quotes:

“But it is from Isaiah he more clearly demonstrates how he destines the promises of salvation specially to the elect (Isa. 8:16); for he declares that his disciples would consist of them only, and not indiscriminately of the whole human race. Whence it is evident that the doctrine of salvation, which it is said to be apart for the sons of the Church only, is abused when it is represented as effectually available to all. For the present let it suffice to observe, that though the word of the gospel is addressed generally to all, yet the gift of faith is rare. Isaiah assigns the cause when he says, that the arm of the Lord is not revealed to all (Isa. 53:1). Had he said, that the gospel is malignantly and perversely contemned, because many obstinately refuse to hear, there might perhaps be some colour for this universal call. It is not the purpose of the Prophet, however, to extenuate the guilt of men, when he states the source of their blindness to be, that God deigns not to reveal his arm to them; he only reminds us that since faith is a special gift, it is vain that the external call sounds in the ear. But I would fain know from those doctors whether it is mere preaching or faith that makes men sons of God,” etc.

From this it is abundantly evident that the quotation from Calvin by Kuiper does not teach any manner of common grace, nor any well-meant offer of grace and salvation to all that hear the external calling.

It is grace only for the elect.

H.H.

Oh, Oh, Dr. Dane!

In "Voices in the Church" in *The Banner* of Feb. 24, 1961, Dr. Dane writes that God does not and cannot love *sinners*, according to Protestant Reformed doctrine. He even writes: "Therefore they cannot tolerate any idea of common grace because however defined, it contains the idea that God has love and favor for *sinners* [he underscores, H.H.]. This idea they reject. God's attitude towards sinners is expressed in their oft-repeated assertion: 'God hates sinners'."

I challenge Dane to quote any such statement from any of my writings. He cannot do this.

To be sure, God hates the wicked or the reprobate wicked and, although this is thoroughly Scriptural, Dane does not want this truth.

What is this?

Is this an intentional corruption?

Or is it ignorance, which is bliss?

H.H.

A S T O B O O K S

Midden in het Leven (In the Midst of Life) by Dr. W. Sikken. Published by J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 7.95.

The complete title of this book should be, as the author suggests on the very first page of the introduction or preface: "Life in the Midst of Death." Hence, the idea of death receives a good deal of emphasis. The author reviews what mere men, philosophers as well as religious men, outside of the Scriptures, have written about death. He, moreover, writes a good deal about Luther's conception of death. Also he writes about the immortality of the soul by which he, evidently, means, not that the soul has everlasting life, as is the biblical meaning of immortality, but that, after physical death, the soul continues to exist.

By far the nicest part of the book is the section in which the author writes about the resurrection of Christ and of our own glorious resurrection.

H.H.

The Way of Salvation, by Gordon H. Girod. Published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$2.95.

This is a very good book and I may recommend it to all our readers for it is very readable and written in very clear language and style.

The book deals with what is known as the *ordo salutis* or the order in which the salvation which God has prepared for His elect in His eternal counsel is applied to them in time by the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God. In

a rather broad introduction the author presents an outline of the whole book. After this he speaks of election, of the external calling, the so-called mystical union, regeneration, internal calling, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The book, as may be gathered from this brief outline, is thoroughly Reformed.

On page 112 I find a slip of the pen. We read there: "Peter would not have become aware of his lack of conviction, had he not come to the courtyard of Pilate . . ." This, of course, must be "the courtyard of Annas and Caiaphas."

H.H.

The Apocalypse Today, by Thomas F. Torrance. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.00.

This book is a brief interpretation of the Book of Revelation. I may recommend it to all our readers for it is a thoroughly orthodox interpretation of the Apocalypse. I could quote several passages to prove this, but let me quote just the following: "It is to our shame that there are multitudes who stain the baptism with the image of the beast. They flirt with Christianity and flirt with evil at the same time. The fusion of religion with the image or fashion of this world marks them out as belonging to Babylon and not to Christ. And because these adulterers of the faith feel insecure in their religion, they try to establish themselves with worldly power and worldly alliances and soon become banded into false societies and false communities. Thus it is that an apostate church grows up with a counterfeit faith. . . . Outwardly it is quite impossible to separate the true from the false, but God knows who are His. . . ." pp. 128-129.

It stands to reason that much difference of opinion may be and is expressed with regard to the interpretation of a book like the Apocalypse. Thus, for instance, I do not agree with the author's interpretation of the first of the four horses mentioned in Rev. 6. According to the author we have here a vision of the antichrist. My interpretation is that the white horse represents the victorious progress of the gospel of Christ for the salvation of the elect.

But let the reader judge for himself. I recommend this book to our readers.

H.H.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, April 5, at 9 A.M. in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church.

Consistories will please take note of this in the appointment of their delegates.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER XVIII

The Marriage of the Lamb

Revelation 19:6-10

6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

In these verses we have a new vision, the vision of the marriage of the Lamb. This vision is introduced by the voice of a great multitude. In verse 6 we read: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." It is evident that all that are in heaven—for this vision does not take place on the earth, as some would have it, but in heaven; and it is not a vision that takes place in time, but in the beginning of eternity—that the multitude that here is presented as uniting in praise and joy because of the marriage of the Lamb is in everlasting glory. They now unite in praise, that is, the former multitude and elders, the four living creatures, perhaps joined by the angels. And their sound is as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings, roaring and rebounding through the heavens.

They say, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." God's sovereignty and omnipotent reign and power are, of course, always evident in the history of the world. But here the reference is undoubtedly to the fact that this sovereignty and power of God have become revealed in the judgment of the great whore. His kingdom has now come. He alone is King. And therefore we read that the multitude expresses joy and gladness: "Let us be glad and rejoice." The destruction of the antichristian world-power is the occasion for the marriage of the Lamb. And this marriage of the Lamb is now celebrated in this vision with great joy. "And give honour to him . . ." That is, give honor to God. Give honor to God Who is the only omnipotent one and Who is the author of this great salvation that is realized in the marriage of the Lamb. "For the marriage of the Lamb is come . . ." This marriage of the Lamb is the final and heavenly union of Christ and His church in eternal and perfect glory. It is not, as some would have it, a new period of prosperity for the church on earth. Nor is it anything else. It is the final salvation. Marriage is the symbol of the intimate fellowship of nature, of life, and of love between Christ and His church. Thus, for instance, we read in Ephesians 5:25, ff.: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." We read further, in vs. 7: "And his wife hath made herself ready." The church is always expecting the Bridegroom, Christ, and therefore she always keeps her garments pure by grace, through faith. And now His wife, that is, the glorified church, has made herself completely ready. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen." That linen, according to the text, is the righteousness of the saints. This righteousness is not only the legal righteousness, the righteousness of our state, according to which the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to the saints; but it is also a spiritual, ethical righteousness. And therefore, the wife that is here mentioned, that is, the church, is clothed in garments of justification and sanctification, which are wrought in her by the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. So much about the marriage of the Lamb.

The same angel that talks with John in the very beginning of this entire vision now again instructs John: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Those that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb are the same as the

wife that is mentioned in the context, but now considered from the aspect of individual believers. The marriage supper is the marriage that is presented as a joyous occasion. It is the celebration of the marriage of the Lamb. And all that are called, all the elect and all the glorified saints, take part in that occasion of great joy. And we must understand, of course, that this joy is not only for the moment. On the contrary, it is everlasting. Eternally the saints will rejoice in the fact that now they have been perfectly united in life, in nature, and in love to the Bridegroom, which is Christ.

And the angel continues to say, "These are the true sayings of God." These sayings to which the angel refers do not only include the marriage and the marriage supper and the joy of the saints that they are now united with Christ, but rather refer to the whole vision that begins in chapter seventeen and which extends to chapter nineteen, verse 10. All these are the real words of God. And the words of God can never lie: we can surely rely on the words of God in life and in death. Moreover, they are not only true, but they also shall surely come to pass. All that God has promised shall be realized, and shall be realized forevermore. Finally, in this passage we read that John fell at the angel's feet and wanted to worship him. From the last statement of the angel the apostle probably concluded that it was Christ Himself speaking to him. And therefore he falls down before the angel to worship; he prostrates himself at the feet of the angel. But immediately the angel corrects him. He assures John that he is not divine and that he is not the Christ, but that he is only a fellowservant of John and a fellowservant of all the saints, and that God alone must be worshipped. No creature, no matter how glorious and no matter how important his message is, may be worshipped; but only God is the object of our adoration and worship. And then the angel concludes: "For the testimony of Jesus," that is, the testimony which speaks of the coming of Jesus in glory and of the salvation of the believers, "is the spirit of prophecy." The meaning is, of course, that prophecy is the Word of God, to which the angel had already referred. The true sayings of God are the prophecy. They are prophecy, not only in the sense of predicting the future, but in the sense that all the salvation of the saints is declared in this prophecy. All that God has ever promised for His people, not only for the eternal future, but also for the present time, is implied in the words of the angel. And when we read here that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," it means, of course, that the entire testimony of Christ, the entire testimony concerning the salvation of the people of God, is wrought by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God that is given to His people and that declares all the words of God. Hence, the angel can deliver the true sayings of God and all the revelation of the salvation of the people of God. And therefore, it is exactly in this respect that the angel is not divine, but is a fellowservant of John and of all the saints, all the saints that receive them and that also, therefore, have this same testimony.

CHAPTER XIX

Revelation 19:11-21

The Final Victory of the Lamb Over Antichrist

11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Once more we must caution you against the view that the events that are described in the words of the present passage historically follow those of the preceding verses. As I have said before, there are many interpreters that entertain this view. First there is the destruction of Babylon, the great city; then the supper and the marriage of the Lamb follow immediately upon the destruction of the great harlot in time; and then follows the battle of Armageddon. According to this view, then, the marriage and supper of the Lamb is a special event that will be terminated by the battle of Armageddon. This is, however, not our view; and I do not believe that this interpretation is tenable. H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Beginning Of Judgment In Egypt

And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 7:1-3

God had said to Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron, "Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." It was an affirmation of Jehovah's eternal love, a love for His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, an affirmation of love for all those who were chosen eternally in His Son, even Israel. Because it was Jehovah that spoke, this affirmation would not and could not change. This love would be realized, and if Pharaoh or anyone else sought to change this, they would do so only unto his own ruin.

Pharaoh had answered to this, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." Pharaoh was the king of Egypt and the world's most powerful potentate. Moreover, he was a man of great pride and ambition, determined to maintain his place of greatest power and influence in the earth. Words brought by this mere pair of shepherds, Moses and Aaron, were not going to sway him. He was not going to cower before the God of a nation that served as his slaves. The mere suggestion that he should do so made him indignant. He would prove himself to be the potentate that he was. He would take on the challenge of this Jehovah, even if He was a God.

Thus there was drawn up in Egypt the great battleline of all times. On the one side there was Pharaoh, determined to prove himself self-sufficient and able to withstand even the power of God. On the other side was Jehovah, eternally resolved to realize His love. The ensuing conflict was ordained to reveal the power and glory of God as a witness unto all times. All that was to follow would serve to witness to the faithfulness of Jehovah's love even to the ruin of its enemies. It would be a witness so clear that only the blind would be so foolish as to deny.

First there was a sign from God. Moses' rod, a symbol of his office appointed by God, was cast to the ground and transformed into a serpent, a symbol of Satan and the sin of

Egypt. But Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Pharaoh, were with their incantations able to imitate this, and Pharaoh remained unimpressed. The fact that Moses' serpent swallowed those of the magicians and then was restored to a rod foreboded no good for Pharaoh. But Pharaoh was in no mood to tremble before a mere sign. His heart was only hardened in its sinful resolve.

It was early one morning as Pharaoh was engaged in his daily worship of the Nile that Moses and Aaron were sent to begin a series of works that would manifest the unwavering determination of Jehovah's love and judgment beyond dispute. The rod of Moses would become like a rod of iron, breaking into slivers the pretense of Pharaoh like a potter's vessel.

The Nile was very really the lifeline of Egypt. Without the Nile Egypt as a nation could not have existed. The Nile was Egypt's only real source of water. From it the fields were irrigated, and its waters filtered through the soil to fill their wells. Its surface provided channels for shipping and communication; its depths furnished fish and such food to eat. It was the very source of the land, for the sediment deposited by its floods formed the rich fields from which Egypt lived. Quite naturally the Egyptians worshipped the river. Not only did this satisfy the religious inclinations of their nature, but it furnished them with an impersonal god which would not interfere with their sins. Willingly the Egyptians served the creature rather than the Creator.

Moses and Aaron were standing on the bank of the river that morning when Pharaoh came to offer his daily sacrifice to the Nile. He knew them well by this time and the cause which they represented. He despised them from the depths of his heart. That they should think to interfere with his morning worship he undoubtedly found distasteful. But they did not allow him time either to speak to them or to order that they should be removed. They bore a message from Jehovah, and immediately they spoke. "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. Thus saith Jehovah, In this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river." Thereupon Aaron lifted the rod of Moses, and just as they had said, it was done.

As Pharaoh watched, the waters of the Nile took on a deep red hue as of blood. It was not as though this color in itself was too astounding, for the Nile customarily at certain seasons was red in appearance; but still this was different. This coloring of the waters did not come gradually, but all of a sudden at the wave of Moses' rod. Moreover, there was a stench that arose from the river's surface. Soon dead fish were to be seen floating upon the water, and the water was

unpalatable to the taste. It filled the river and its tributaries, the ponds and pools and wells, even the water setting in open vessels of wood and of stone. Every exposed surface was corrupted. Still, it was not all this that troubled Pharaoh. The only question to which he gave thought was whether this great demonstration of power could be matched by his magicians. Quickly Jannes and Jambres were again summoned, and soon with their enchantments they had erected a small imitation of the wonder wrought by Moses' rod. True, they did not and could not relieve the plague that was upon them. At best they only made it worse. But Pharaoh was relieved and satisfied. Heady with pride and hard of heart he turned and went up into his house.

It remained for the Egyptian people to taste the torment of what had happened. In all the land there was no water for them to drink. Quickly new wells had to be dug down to water that had not been corrupted. But even then the stench remained, a constant reminder that the river which they worshipped had been turned into a curse. Seven days passed by while the people suffered, until at last the plague was lifted.

The respite for the Egyptians was not long. Soon Moses and Aaron appeared again before Pharaoh to announce a new manifestation of the power and judgment of Jehovah. Again their words were bold, "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: and the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: and the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants." Immediately thereupon the rod was stretched forth again, and even as it had been said, frogs came up from the waters and filled the land.

Once again the first thought of Pharaoh was whether this work could be matched. And Jannes and Jambres did not fail him. They succeeded again in creating a reasonable imitation of Moses' act. Yet, this time the work of the magicians did not give Pharaoh the satisfaction that he had felt before. The fact was that the plague of frogs was there, and it persisted. Jannes and Jambres could bring forth more frogs, at least in appearance, but they could do nothing to drive the frogs from the land. The situation was much more grave than he had anticipated. The frogs were becoming a burden. Everywhere he went they were present, a constant reminder of the power of Moses' God. Something had to be done to relieve the land, and the only thing he could think of was to use subterfuge with Moses. He called Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat Jehovah, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." He had no intention of doing this, but at least it was a way to relieve them of the frogs.

Moses was pleased to think that at last Pharaoh was going to yield to the power of Jehovah. He said to Pharaoh, "Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for the people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy house, that they may remain in the river only?" So that Pharaoh might appreciate the power of Jehovah the more, he would be allowed the glory or privilege of determining when the plague should cease.

Pharaoh answered, "To-morrow."

And Moses replied, "Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Jehovah our God. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only."

On the morrow Moses prayed to God and the frogs died throughout the land. All that remained were the heaps of stinking carcasses which the people gathered together, a reminder of the curse that had visited their land. Pharaoh was relieved. As soon as he saw that the plague of frogs had ceased, he informed Moses that his promise would not be kept.

But the relief of Pharaoh was short lived. God commanded, and Aaron smote the dust of the ground with the rod. The dust was changed into lice which lighted on man and beast. It crawled into the eyes and ears and nose, and penetrated under the skin.

This plague had come unannounced, but Pharaoh knew well enough from whence it was. As before, he immediately summoned his magicians, if only to satisfy himself that this work also could be matched. But this time it was to no avail. Their incantation could not go so far as to even appear to bring forth such lice. Rather, as though to add to Pharaoh's consternation, they turned and solemnly confessed, "This is the finger of God."

Now Pharaoh knew mere subterfuge would not work. It might relieve one plague, but it would be followed immediately by another just as bad and maybe even worse. In his heart he was determined. He would withstand Israel's God. It was just that he knew not how. In moody silence he sat and pondered.

Meanwhile in Goshen, the children of Israel also had been feeling the hand of their God. They had rejected His promises out of fear of Pharaoh, and now they too were made to suffer. But the very same demonstrations of power and judgment that were making the heart of Pharaoh progressively harder, were having on them an entirely different effect. They were being reminded of the folly of their doubts and sins. They were being turned in repentance. They were being brought to acknowledge as never before the greatness of their God.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 1:3-11)

b.

Timothy must teach certain men in Ephesus not to teach a "different" doctrine. Other foundation can no man lay than that which was put down by Paul in the Church. It is the foundation of the apostles and prophets of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. Eph. 2:20. That is the position of all Paul's apology for the faith once delivered to the saints. And any and all teaching which does not measure up to this plumb-line of the truth in Jesus is branded for what it really is: a *different* doctrine!

We had better state here and now that the position of the Gospel is not a happy medium, a middle-of-the-road position, somewhere between legalistic Pharisaism and wanton antinomism; it is wholly different from either one. The position which Paul holds to is such that it clings to Christ and His redemptive labors as the Son of God; it glories in the Cross of Calvary. The error of the teachers of law, the legalists, is enmity toward the Cross of Christ. Such have never seen the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God!

Hence, they confidently affirm that which they do not at all understand!

And such must be admonished to be silent. They must cease with this vain-jangling, this juggler's act of attempting to preach legalism under the mask of preaching the truth!

Overagainst such Paul asserts most confidently that he knows, as do all the congregation who believe the Gospel, what the meaning is of the "law" of Moses in relationship to the Gospel in the plan and purpose of God. Writes he: "Now we know that the law is good if any one use it lawfully, knowing this, that law is not appointed unto a just [man] but unto the lawless and the insubordinate," etc.

It should be borne in mind that Paul is here not explicitly militating against Antinomists; it is not against those who teach that the law has no purpose and *validity* in the life of the redeemed, the justified saint. Certainly the Antinomists can take no comfort from this passage, even though Agricola, the antinomistic antagonist of the Reformers, quotes it to attempt to sustain his erroneous position, namely, that the law has no more *meaning* for the Christian, a pedagogical purpose to teach us our "misery." Howbeit, Paul is not combating that error here. He is combating other enemies of the Cross of Christ—the legalists, who say that a man must keep the law of God in order to be justified. He is opposing those who have never learned "that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before God." Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:20 and 28.

This entire matter of "works" and "grace" is really touching the very heart of the Mystery of godliness. Works and grace cannot possibly be mixed. It is an either-

or matter (Entweder-oder). And therefore the "law" must have its proper place in the economy of God's salvation. But that means that the "law" cannot possibly displace grace, the promise of God fulfilled in Christ Jesus. The law "serves" in this economy but it does not redeem or save any man; it serves a useful *end* if it serves grace in the believer.

There seems to be a certain "concession" made by Paul here when he says, "Now we know that the law is good." He does not agree with the proponents of the law who would place the Christian "*under* law"; but he does concede the goodness of the law. This is the argument, this concession, against all antinomism, which reasons that the law *as such* is a destruction of the sound doctrine of grace. It is good to see this, lest evil things be ascribed to the law which is spiritual, holy, just and good. Rom. 7:12, 14. So very easily when we strongly wish to assert the free grace of God, the teaching that Christ has fulfilled the law once and for all, we forget to properly emphasize the good use of the law, stating: "Don't tell God's people what they must do"! And if we do not retrieve ourselves we would fall headlong into the maelstrom of Antinomism—"let us sin that grace may abound."

It is a good and careful "concession" when Paul says: "We know that the law is good"!

Now Paul is in a position to wield his devastating blow against these teachers of law, this "different doctrine."

It should also be ascertained just what Paul means with the term "law" here in this passage, as well as what this term means with Paul elsewhere in his writings in Holy Scripture. We believe that the term "law" refers not simply to the moral law of the Decalogue, nor to some isolated precepts of Moses, written in the Bible, but rather to the entire Old Testament Scriptures from their prescriptive point of view. "The man that doeth the same shall live thereby" is the prescription in this case. It is, therefore, possibly most aptly stated by Joh. Huther (Meyer Series) as follows: "The entire Mosaic law in its existing form as a revelation of the divine will in a system of written commandments." Of this Paul speaks in Gal. 3:17: "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Here we see "the law" which came later, much later, as given by Moses, as something from which Christ must redeem us. It is something "added" which, although of a different nature than the promise of grace, is good, if only used lawfully. It is all the commandments of God *apart* from their being fulfilled, for us and through us, in Christ. Whoever has not seen this good use of the law either falls headlong into the error of the antinomist or into the lie of legalism! Both these errors are antagonistic of the "sound doctrine" of grace; although antipoles of each other they are both against the truth in Jesus.

When we speak of "law" we, therefore, have in mind that system of written commandments given by God through

Moses apart from the Cross of Christ. It is man on his own before the law when it is not related to Christ. Then he either becomes a Libertine or a self-righteous Pharisee.

Whoever raises himself up as teacher in the church must know whereof he speaks. And Paul challenges anyone who does not see the proper relationship of the *use* of the law to grace. The law is good. The law is useful. The law serves a good purpose — a good “end” — only when it serves the fulfilment of the promise by God in Jesus Christ.

And what must we then know when we would teach that the law is good?

We must know, we must consider very carefully and we must weigh the exact function that the law has in God’s work in Christ.

And then it is an axiom in the writings of Paul that the “law is not made [appointed] for a righteous man.” We must never seek to place the *free* man in Christ under the *bondage* of law; the Cross of Christ must not so be taught that it is made of none effect. What is a “righteous man” here in the text? There are two possible alternatives here: The first is — and this we do not believe to be the correct interpretation — that Paul has in mind a man who does the law by nature, who simply does rightly. Thus when a man keeps the traffic laws because he loves good order in society because of its humanistically conceived usefulness, he does rightly. The traffic law is not made for him; it had in mind the offender. Those who advocate this view point out that Paul here does not employ the article “*the*” along with *law* but simply speaks of “law,” all law, any law; that, therefore, this is simply a common maxim, a universal fact and rule observable anywhere and everywhere. Since Paul is here speaking of the “law” in distinction from the Gospel, and since it is a good rule in exegesis that if a term has a given meaning in a context, it has the same meaning everywhere within that context, unless there be solid reasons for departing from this meaning, we prefer the interpretation of Huther, Van Oosterzee and others, who hold that “law” here refers to the entire “system of written commandments.” This interpretation holds that the “righteous man” is the man who is justified in Christ Jesus, who although he has kept none of God’s commandments, and is still inclined to all evil, is dealt with by God as if he had never sinned; yea, as if he had fully kept it all, since he receives the benefits of Christ’s merits with a believing heart.

Such a righteous man is not under law. He is under grace.

Such a righteous man is one for whom the law is not appointed, as *law*. That may sound like an impossibility. But God has here done what the law could not do; God has fulfilled the righteous demand of the law in Christ for us. We are, as righteous ones, not under the law. We are not under sin!

God has written His law in our hearts, having renewed us after His image, in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

And, as such, we are righteous. And this is the freedom in which we stand. And no one is to place us once more in bondage of sin. We are out of the land of Egypt! And we are never to return thither again. The free-born children of Sarah must remain free at all cost. It was the precious blood of Jesus, as of a Lamb without spot or blemish, that has cleansed us. Nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness is our boasting. We glory in the Cross of Calvary. It is finished, once and for all, and that, too, forever! Hallelujah!

The law was not set for a righteous man!

It was set for the unrighteous, for the ungodly. They are under law and therefore under sin. That is Paul’s polemic against this legalistic teaching of these men who do not understand what they so confidently affirm to understand.

It is true that the law is “set” for the unrighteous means that it has a “lawful use” also for the Christian as long as he is in this sinful flesh, in this “body of sin!” The Heidelberg Catechism asks the very carefully put question: “Why will God then have the ten commandments so strictly preached since no man *can* in this life keep them?” It should be borne in mind that such “strict preaching” does not put the church under law, but addresses us as we are under grace. The “ten commandments” address the church as she stands in “thankfulness,” having been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. Read the address of Jehovah God in Exodus 20:1. And although the law has a pedagogical purpose for us and is a rule for our life of thankfulness, showing us how to “work out” our salvation with fear and trembling, the “ten commandments” are not so preached as to once more put us in the company of those for whom the “law is set.”

Preaching the law “sharply” to the thankful — although imperfect — church is a far cry from placing the church under law, that is, under sin!

Let that truth sink down deeply into your hearts, dear readers, for your very life’s sake!

For the law is *set* for those who hate God and their neighbor and not for those who confess: “I am, *by nature*, inclined to hate God and my neighbor.” In the latter case it is the man who says “but what I *hate* I do” (Rom. 7:15) while in the former case Scripture has in mind men who *love* iniquity. And these two men are by no means the same. The latter is alive and the former is dead; the latter is under grace and the former under sin!

And, therefore, it becomes exceedingly evident to us why Paul says that the law is set for men who hate God! They are: the lawless, the insubordinate to Him, God; they have no reverence for God and continually miss the mark of their creation in relationship to God. Always they are unholy and profane, having a deep and deadly aversion to the things of God.

And such is the correct view of the relationship of the “law,” to both the righteous and the wicked, according to the gospel of the glory of God. G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

God's Royal Priesthood

(2)

There seems to be something lacking.

The theme above does not seem complete. And that various texts we quoted last time also seem to give but part of the picture.

We speak of the threefold office of every believer even as we find in the Old Testament Scripture the three offices of prophet, priest and king.

But here you have no mention at all of the office of prophet. King and priest are clearly indicated. And even though I Peter 2:9 makes mention of the work of the prophet, it does not speak literally of such a prophetic office the way it does of the priestly and kingly offices. Exodus 19:6 does not even indicate this office of prophet. It simply states that we shall be unto God "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

We do well to guard ourselves against taking the position that the prophetic office, either in the Old Testament or now in this dispensation, is one of minor importance. We dare not say that it soon will be discarded and that in the new creation we shall simply be a royal priesthood that is done with prophecy. Through the mouth of Isaiah God Himself declares, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise," Isaiah 43:21. As we indicated last time when referring to I Peter 2:9, this showing forth of God's praise is an essential element of the prophetic office. And this cannot mean that God forms this people simply for a time in this life to show forth His praise. Instead, when all God's work of salvation is perfect and His Church stands before Him without spot or wrinkle, that Church shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Thus Paul writes to the Church at Ephesus declaring that we are predestinated unto this very thing. See Ephesians 1:5, 6. And do we not confess that Christ today is our chief prophet? He is not simply our priest and our king. We depend upon Him as our chief prophet for all the knowledge of our salvation; and we will depend upon Him as our chief prophet also when we walk upon the street of gold in the New Jerusalem.

Last time we pointed out that we have this threefold office because we have the three faculties of mind, will and strength. Plainly it is the mind that is on the foreground in the prophetic office. The prophet teaches and speaks. And we consider the Hebrew word for prophet to be very rich in meaning. It comes from the verb which means to boil over or pour forth. The prophet was a man to whom God revealed Himself in vision, dream or direct speech. He filled the mind of that man with the truth. And that truth of

God came pouring forth out of his mouth in words which he spoke to the people in God's name. That his mind was boiling over with the truth, that he was filled to an overflowing measure of that truth became evident by the words that poured off his lips from his open mouth. Now surely when we walk the street of gold, we are not going to be without that faculty of a mind. Nay, then above all will we have a good and strong mind, one that is pure and that functions well. And our mouths shall not be silent. We shall sing and speak and praise God from Whom all blessings flow. In fact without that wonderful faculty of a sanctified mind we could never be priests and kings of God. There simply would be no royal priesthood of God without there being also prophets of God, as we also hope to make plain somewhat later. But let it be established now that the prophetic office is not discarded and is not of minor import.

If you trace the history of the Old Testament Church you will find that these three phases of the one office are not always on the foreground to the same extent. From Adam to Moses there really was no king in the sense that the king stood before the Israelites from the days of King Saul to the Babylonian captivity. True, there was the period of the judges, and Joshua also assumed the leadership over Israel. But all this is after Moses; and from Adam unto Moses there was no man who assumed authority over other families and tribes. Each was king in his own family; and each was also prophet and priest in that family. And it was at Mt. Sinai that God established the priestly office as it was known from Aaron till The High Priest offered Himself as The Passover Lamb that we might be redeemed from the curse of our sin. For a period of four hundred years there was no prophet in Israel, from Malachi to John the Baptist. But then this office was not discarded. God raised up the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets; and he only prepared the way for our Chief Prophet Who still teaches us and reveals to us the whole counsel and will of God concerning our redemption. See Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 31. When God raised up this greatest of all Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, the kingly office had disappeared from among Israel and the priestly office was so corrupted that the high priestly office became a political matter; and men served as they were appointed instead of for life, as God had ordained. Yet the prophetic office still stood.

You do even find various combinations of these offices in the saints in the Old Testament dispensation. We are at once reminded of Melchizedek who was both King of Salem and priest of the most high God. Of Moses, no doubt, it may be said that he functioned before Israel as both prophet and king. Exodus 7:1 reveals that Aaron was Moses' prophet. This means that whatsoever Moses revealed to Aaron, Aaron would speak in the ears of Pharaoh. He was, as is also indicated in Exodus 4:14-16, Moses' mouthpiece or spokesman. But Moses was the one to whom God spoke. Moses was the

prophet whose mind God filled with the truth and who then transmitted it unto the people of God through his open mouth. All the knowledge that Israel received of God flowed first through his mind and forth from his tongue. He was the fountain from which Israel drank the truth of the word of God. And yet he was also the administrator, the ruler, the king in Israel to whom all came with their cases for judgment. His word was law, and he gave word for the punishment of the evil doers.

Priest and king we see then in Melchizedek. Prophet and king we see in Moses. But prophet and priest, yea and even king may all be found in Samuel. He was of the tribe of Levi—see I Chronicles 6:27, 28 in connection with I Chronicles 6:16—and therefore we find him sacrificing and insisting that King Saul wait for him to sacrifice to God. Repeatedly God appeared to him with the truth that He would have His people know. And so he served as a prophet. Yea, repeatedly he is called such in Scripture. And by the way that other word used formerly for prophet as found in I Samuel 9:9 is also revealing and interesting. He was formerly called the Seer. God caused him to see certain things not known to others. God showed them His secret counsel and will concerning our redemption. And what they saw they in turn revealed to the people. This Samuel did as prophet. And on that he served as judge in Israel as well as king and priest—though he did not function as the high priest—we see in him more clearly than any other Old Testament character the threefold office.

And now today each believer stands in that threefold office as Samuel did and with mind and will and strength he is in the service of God. But our apparent problem is that all these passages in their literal form seem to deny the prophetic office and speak only of a royal priesthood or a kingdom of priests. As far as this latter statement is concerned, it does not even state that we are kings. Our theme likewise, although the word royal would indicate that we belong to the King's family, it does not specifically state that we are a group of priests and *kings* of God. It will be noted then that what is singled out is the office of priest; or let us put it this way: the threefold office is presented to us from the point of view of the priestly office. Picture in your minds a triangle, an equilateral triangle then, the three sides being equal and therefore also the angles being equal. Now you can stand so that you have one of these angles pointing directly at you and the other two are then behind and off to the side. But they are there. Let us then consider this threefold office as the area bounded by the three sides of this triangle. And though you and I may look more directly at any one of these three points of the triangle, the other two points are always there. With such an idea we have to do here in the statement of God's Royal Priesthood. And in all these passages that speak this way, we do not have a denial or even an ignoring of the other two offices. We simply have one placed upon the foreground.

This is done more often in Scripture. We have such a

triangle-thought also in the Triune life of God. When we speak of God the Father and our creation, we do not deny or ignore the Son and the Spirit. We, because of our limitations and not because there are any limitations in God, stand at one point of the triangle. Behind the Father in our Creation is the Son Who also is active with the Spirit in that creation. When we look at the Son in our redemption we stand at a different point in that triangle, but we do not then deny that the Father Who creates is there to send the Son by the Power of the Spirit. And on Pentecost we speak of the Spirit and experience the point of the triangle of the Spirit's work; but Father and Son are there as well, even though because of our limitations we can see only the Spirit on the foreground.

You have the same idea expressed in regard to that trilogy of faith, hope and love. Paul tells the Church at Corinth that the greatest of these is love. And yet that same Paul does not say to the Philippian jailer, "Love the Lord thy God, hope in His promises in Jesus Christ." Instead he counsels him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Does he then deny love, the greatest of these three? Did he at one time think that faith was more important? Not at all. If there is no love in that faith, the Philippian jailer is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. There are times when we focus on one particular matter and view all the rest in its light.

That, we believe, is also the case here.

God's Royal Priesthood is not a denial of the other offices, or rather other phases of the one office in the believer, but presents the one office from that particular point of view. The very good reason for this we will consider later. We are all three: prophet, priest and king. Let us in His fear walk as prophets, priests and kings of God.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The South-Lawn Choral Society of the South Holland and Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Churches takes this opportunity to express its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. John C. Haak, in the loss of her mother,

MRS. PETER BOER

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

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy to our brother and retiring elder, Mr. Jelles Van Niewenhuyzen in the loss of his wife,

LUCY VAN NIEWENHUYZEN

May the Lord grant to him comfort with His Word and Spirit.

Ps. 73:26 — "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Rev. B. Woudenberg, President
Mr. H. Huisken, Clerk

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

We concluded our preceding article with the question whether our rejection of the error of Rationalism also implies that our faith must therefore be regarded as irrational and unreasonable. And then we wish to remark in the first place that it is not a question now at this time of "defective logic or reason." Many of our readers undoubtedly know that our Protestant Reformed Churches have been accused of rationalism in our approach to and interpretation of the Scriptures. We maintain that the Lord cannot hate and love the same sinner at the same time, that He cannot bless and curse him at the same time, that the doctrine of sovereign election and reprobation and of particular atonement simply render impossible a general offer of salvation and that the Lord desires to save all men and would bring salvation to all the hearers of the gospel. We maintain that when the Scriptures teach that the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked this must mean that His curse is upon him and upon all that he has and does, and that this must rule out and exclude the thought that the Lord would also bless the ungodly, and this for the simple reason that this reasoning involves us in a hopeless contradiction. And, explaining the Word of God in this light, we have been accused of rationalism, that we have attempted to have our mind or reason lord it over the Bible instead of permitting the Scriptures to speak to us and bowing before the Word of God. And, so these adherents of the theory of Common Grace would have us believe, if then there appear to be contradictions in the Word of God, as, for example, that God chose only His own and nevertheless would have all men be saved, this is because of our defective logic. Sin has simply rendered our reason and thinking defective. There are really no contradictions in the Word of God. They only appear as contradictions to us. This we deny. We deny that we try to lord it over the Word of God. But we also deny that sin has made our reasoning defective. Sin, of course, has affected our mind spiritually. We have become darkened in our understanding, so we no longer see, spiritually, the beauties of the Word of God. But sin has not affected our mind naturally. The sinner did not become insane or idiotic. Black is and appears to us as black and white is and appears as white. If our reasoning were defective all knowledge would be impossible. Then there could not possibly be a revelation of the living God to us.

Then we would never be able to read the Scriptures, and that for the simple reason that we could never know whether our defective reasoning is causing us to read and understand something which is not expressed in a particular Word of God. What we may be reading may have an entirely different connotation and meaning than what the words appear to convey. However, this is not at present the issue when we ask whether our faith is rational or irrational.

That the Reformers did not deny the Christian and the Church of God the use of the mind and of the power to reason is surely not to be denied. Calvin and Luther, too, but especially Calvin made full use of the powers of the mind which the Lord had so abundantly bestowed upon him. While still a young man he completed his first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion. He was thoroughly familiar with the writings of the Fathers who had preceded him. He set up a theological school for men to enter into the ministry of the gospel and gave the Church of God a commentary on most of the books of the Bible. He had mastered Greek and Hebrew and used these original languages in his commentaries. And this is also the language of our Confessions. When the Heidelberg Catechism asks what true faith is then we are informed in Lord's Day 7 that it is not only a hearty confidence in Christ that all our sins are forgiven, etc., but also a certain knowledge. And we are told in this same Lord's Day that it is necessary for us to believe all that is contained in the gospel, the Word of the living God. Paul admonishes Timothy that he give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. And in II Tim. 2:15 the apostle admonishes his spiritual son, Timothy, and we quote: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And this "rightly dividing the word of truth" surely implies that we apply our minds to the study of the Word of God. And, the minister of the gospel must certainly apply the rules of language and of logic in his interpretation of the Word of God. Why is this necessary?

We understand, of course, that God did not adapt His revelation to our mind and faculty of reason, but that He adapted our mind and ability to think to His revelation. We must distinguish between knowledge and understanding. We know so much more than what we understand. In fact, we really understand, comprehend nothing. We must know and do know the Divine plan of salvation; but no man is able to comprehend its mysteries. We know that plants grow and that our will controls and directs our activities; but no man is able to understand these activities of the mind and of the will. We know that we are personal beings with a body and soul and that our body and soul are wondrously adapted to each other, but no man can possibly comprehend these parts of our human nature and understand the relation in which they stand to one another. We know the living God and that He has sent His Son into the world and that this Son suffered and died in our flesh and blood for our sins and that He is risen from the dead; yet, no man is able to com-

prehend these unfathomable truths. We believe these things, and our faith is also a certain knowledge, not because we can understand them, but because the Lord has adapted us to know them. Faith is rational, reasonable, not irrational and unreasonable. It would be irrational and unreasonable for me to believe that a creature is able to create, that a man is able to raise others or himself from the dead, that Divine attributes and qualities would be ascribed to human mortals. But it is not illogical for me to believe that whereas nothing is possible with man, all things are possible with God. It does not conflict with my rational thinking that an almighty God can create, raise the dead, call into existence the things that are not as if they were, to call into being by the word of His almighty power new heavens and a new earth. The Lord has adapted me unto Himself and unto the revelation of Himself, so that I know that He is, that I am but a creature, and that I am under the Divine and moral obligation to serve Him in spirit and truth.

Moreover, it also belongs to the activity of faith that we do not ascribe to the irrational and unreasonable, that which is contrary or contradictory. There are no contradictions in the Word of God because there are no contradictions in God. There cannot be any contradictions in the living God because God is one and He is never, cannot be, in conflict with Himself. And His Word is one. Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology*, writes that the impossible cannot be believed, and that that is impossible which involves a contradiction. And then he goes on to illustrate such a contradiction, as that a thing is and is not, that right is wrong and wrong is right. And yet, although people will concede that the Bible is not characterized by contradictions, they will nevertheless try to maintain that God loves only His people and also all men, that Christ died only for His own but that salvation is also freely offered to all who hear the gospel, that whatever is not of faith is sin but that that sinner can also please the Lord without regeneration of the heart. These are apparent contradictions, which appear as such to us, and this is due to the fact that our mind has become defective through sin. But, there are no contradictions in the Scriptures, and the rule must always be applied that Scripture interprets itself and that we must explain Scripture with Scripture. Only, Rationalism would elevate human reason above the Word of God and believe only that which we can understand. Faith, however, takes hold of Scripture, believes the Word of God, knows the things contained therein to be true, because God has spoken them, and we have learned by grace and the Holy Spirit to bow before His Word and testimony. If, then, it be true that we must study the Scriptures, this is true only to look more and more into these unfathomable depths, and be able to say: O, God, how great Thou art!

THE MATERIAL PRINCIPLE

We will recall that the main principles of the movement of the Reformation in the sixteenth century are usually con-

sidered to be two: the formal and the material principle. The formal principle was that the Reformers acknowledged only one source of authority: the Holy Scriptures. And they stood opposed with this principle to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism, and Rationalism. Roman Catholicism acknowledged, besides the Word of God, also Tradition as a source of authority. The Protestants rejected everything as having authority except the Word of God. Roman Catholicism claimed that the right to interpret the Bible belonged to the Church only, that is, the clergy, and this refers particularly to the pope; the Protestants claimed that every Christian has the right to interpret the Word of God. False Mysticism rejected the objective authority of the Word of God and relied upon the "inner light"; Protestants claimed that the objective revelation in the Scriptures must be the sole and only reliable canon or rule of faith and life. And Rationalism would subject all things, including the Scriptures, to Reason; the Reformers subjected Reason to the revelation of the Word of God. This is what is usually called the formal principle of the Reformation. The other main principle of the Reformation is the material principle. And this material principle is expressed in the words: Justification by faith only. That this was the guiding and driving force in the soul of Luther we all know. To this material principle we now wish to call attention.

The Roman Catholic Church had become Semi-Pelagian and held that justification is also by works. Writing on the Romish doctrine of justification Hodge writes as follows in his *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, page 166: "According to the Romish scheme (1) God is the efficient cause of justification, as it is by his power or supernatural grace that the soul is made just. (2) Christ is the meritorious cause, as it is for his sake God grants this saving grace, or influence of the Spirit to the children of men. (3) Inherent righteousness is the formal cause, since thereby the soul is made really just or holy. (4) Faith is the occasional and predisposing cause, as it leads the sinner to seek justification (regeneration), and disposes God to grant the blessing. In this respect it has the merit of congruity only, not that of condignity. (5) Baptism is the essential instrumental cause, as it is only through or by baptism that inherent righteousness is infused or justification is effected. So much for the first justification. After this justification, which makes the sinner holy, then, (6) Good works, all the fruits and exercises of the new life, have real merit and constitute the ground of the Christian's title to eternal life." H.V.

He will not suffer that thy foot be moved,
 Safe shalt thou be;
 No careless slumber shall His eyelids close
 Who keepeth thee;
 Behold He sleepeth not, He slumbereth ne'er
 Who keepeth Israel in His holy care.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Belgic Confession

INTRODUCTION (concluded)

We must still say a few words concerning the present status and position of our *Belgic Confession*, particularly here in our own country.

There are those who find reason for optimism in this regard, although at the same time this optimism seems to be tempered with a certain misgiving. One of these, apparently, is Dr. P. Y. De Jong, who touches on this subject in the first volume of his commentary on the *Belgic Confession* entitled, "The Church's Witness To The World." After remarking that at present the Reformed churches with their "dynamic and well defined *Confession* find themselves in an age of spiritual and theological ferment," he goes on to state that "our situation differs radically from that which obtained a few decades ago, when the dominant mood in the churches of Canada and the United States was radically anti-intellectual." And he makes the claim that the tide has shifted, evidently intending to emphasize that there is a greater receptivity and more of a point of contact for an orthodox, and particularly for a Reformed witness in American ecclesiastical circles today, and intending to stress that Reformed churches have a more serious responsibility and calling to make their voice heard. Then, having bemoaned the fact that Reformed churches have too long "lived on the fringes of American ecclesiastical life, content to be by ourselves and concerned almost exclusively with the task of delivering to the next generation our legacy untainted and unsullied," he points with some degree of optimism—evidently referring to his own Christian Reformed denomination—to the fact that "we are finally disentangling ourselves from the comfortable cocoon of our cultural and spiritual isolation to challenge with the Reformed faith all who will hear." And he goes on to note certain evidences of this emergence from isolation. It is plain, however, that Dr. De Jong's optimism is not without misgiving. For, in the first place, he complains, again with special reference to his own denomination, that "we have come with so little and we seem to have come so late." But, in the second place, he finds even more disturbing the fact that not all who profess the Reformed faith seem committed to a thorough program of action. And especially ominous to him is the discovery that many seem to know so little about the principles which undergird and alone can give vibrancy and strength to our Christian testimony. And he speaks of habitualism and doctrinal indifferentism in this connection.

We share these misgivings, but not the optimism. In fact,

we would say that the misgivings to which the afore-mentioned author has given expression constitute a more nearly accurate characterization of the true condition of Reformed churches generally in our day and of the true position of our *Belgic Confession* in the life and witness of the Reformed churches.

In the first place, it may perhaps be true that our Reformed churches and Reformed people have been afflicted by a certain amount of cultural isolation. We would not deny it. We would not even deny that this so-called cultural isolation has to some degree been a hindrance, at least in the past, in the carrying on of a Reformed witness. However, first of all, it must not be forgotten that there is something quite natural about such a cultural isolation. It lies in the very nature of the fact that our forbears came from the Netherlands. The process of Americanization is one that naturally takes time. It took time in the years when our parents and grandparents came from the "old country." And even today, when life in general is faster and when there is more communication and more intimate social contact, so that it is virtually impossible to live in this country and to remain culturally isolated, that process still takes a certain amount of time to reach completion. America is the melting-pot of nations; but it takes time for this melting-down process to be completed. Secondly, it is indeed open to question whether this so-called cultural isolation was deliberate on our part, that is, so to speak, whether we shut ourselves up in our shell, or whether after all that isolation was something which was to some extent forced upon us by others and woven about us because of our doctrinal distinctiveness and because of a healthy spiritual isolation. When one analyzes the history since the establishment of the Dutch and Reformed colonies in the mid-nineteenth century in Michigan and Iowa, and attempts to evaluate the process of Americanization which took place especially more rapidly after the first World War, it is not always easy to determine what is cause and what is effect in this respect. And the slow growth of the Reformed movement and the small degree of acceptance of our Reformed people and our Reformed witness and heritage need not necessarily be ascribed to the fact that we isolated ourselves culturally, but may well be due to the fact that in former years we maintained more consistently our doctrinal distinctiveness and our true spiritual isolation.

In the second place, it is a rather striking fact in the history of the Reformed movement in this country that the process of doctrinal decline and of spiritual decay and of increasing world-conformity has gone hand in hand with this so-called emergence from cultural isolation. This was so striking, in fact, that even in respect to the one aspect of this cultural emergence, namely, the transition from the Holland to the English language, there were those in former years who resisted that transition simply because they feared the loss of doctrinal and spiritual distinctiveness that seemed to go hand in hand with the change from a Dutch to an American culture. Our ancestors may have been wrong in

resisting the process of Americanization in its totality. But again, they evidently sensed a danger for their Reformed heritage and their Reformed way of life, and they sensed that somehow there was a connection between the loss of these and the process of Americanization. Was their resistance to change merely due to their love of the old fatherland and its culture and language? Were they really so foolish as to think there was something inherently sinful and evil in the American language? Did they imagine that you could not properly worship God and maintain and preach the Reformed faith except in the Holland language? Perhaps it would be more correct instead of speaking of our emergence from the cocoon of cultural isolation to speak rather of the breaking down of that isolation from without through the impact of the American culture upon ours. And there is undoubtedly reason to believe that along with that so-called cultural impact there was also a doctrinal and spiritual impact that brought with it secularization and the beginnings of a modernizing trend of doctrinal and spiritual decline. Culture is not merely a natural and formal something, but also has its spiritual and ethical aspect. And while from that natural and formal aspect one culture is no better or worse than another, and one language is no better than another, nevertheless we experience the spiritual impact of a certain culture along with the natural impact of it.

In the third place, and in close connection with the above, I am afraid that while Reformed churches have emerged and have found themselves somewhat of a place in the scene of American ecclesiastical life and have expanded and broadened their witness and have met with a greater degree of receptivity and acceptance, they have done it too much at the expense of a distinctively Reformed doctrinal position. In that respect I believe it is true — sadly true — that they have come with “so little.” Our calling as Reformed people was indeed to take our place in American civilization and culture, but to do so as *Reformed* people. Our calling was to take our place in American ecclesiastical life, but to do so specifically as *Reformed* churches. And the trouble has been that as we were swallowed up in the stream of American civilization and culture, we were too much swallowed up spiritually as well and forfeited our doctrinal and spiritual isolation. The result has been that according as we have lost our doctrinal distinctiveness and our spiritual isolation, so we have lost the ability to bear a distinctively Reformed witness. The clear notes of the gospel of sovereign grace and the clarion call to an antithetical way of life are heard so very little in the witness of Reformed churches. If not altogether silenced, they have been compromised and mingled with the foreign elements of Arminianism and the synthesizing tendencies of common grace.

And therefore I would emphasize that there is little reason for optimism in this respect. Not only is it true that to a large degree the Reformed churches have lost and denied their distinctively Reformed heritage and character, as em-

bodied most comprehensively in our *Belgic Confession*, but it is also true that if we would remain Reformed and would bear a distinctively Reformed witness to the world in the midst of which we live, we must not expect a large degree of acceptance. This has never been the case in the history of the true church, and it never will be. The Reformed faith, purely and distinctively maintained and proclaimed, is not popular. We may expect that it will be shunned and that we will be shunned if we maintain it. We may expect too that we will be charged with cultural isolationism if we maintain faithfully our spiritual isolation. And if we bear witness to the truth and to the faith of our fathers, we need not expect big results from a worldly and human standpoint.

In the second place, I would emphasize that it is exactly our calling to give a Reformed witness. But for that reason it is also exactly our calling to maintain our doctrinal distinctiveness and our spiritual isolation. If we do not, our witness will not be Reformed. We are lights in a dark place. And it is our calling indeed to let our light shine. But it is not our calling to allow the light to be swallowed up by the darkness, nor to let the line of demarcation between the light and the darkness become blurred and indistinct. If we are to give a Reformed witness, we must maintain our doctrinal and spiritual isolation, unmarred and unsullied by the numerous doctrinal corruptions and evil spiritual influences which abound in the American ecclesiastical world. And from the strong position of our doctrinal and spiritual isolation we must send forth our witness at every opportunity and with all our means and in every sphere and relationship of life. In isolation is strength!

Hence, in the third place, we must indeed be concerned, seriously concerned, with the task of delivering to the next generation our legacy of the faith untainted and unsullied. We must combat with all our might the tendency to doctrinal indifferentism which plagues us. We must educate ourselves and our children in the knowledge of the Reformed truth as purely set forth and maintained in the *Confession*. We must not become a prey to doctrinal ignorance. We must be experts in the truth and in the discernment of the lie. Only in this way will a Reformed witness among ourselves and to the generations to come and to the American ecclesiastical world at large be possible. We ourselves must know our confessions — and we think now especially of our *Belgic Confession* — much more thoroughly than we do on the average. Our children must be instructed in the knowledge of the confessions — again, especially of our *Belgic Confession* — much more thoroughly than they are, so that when they make profession of their faith, they indeed profess distinctively and articulately and with rejection of all errors repugnant thereto the doctrine that has from years past been maintained as the Reformed faith.

May our study of the most comprehensive of our creeds, the *Belgic Confession*, under God's grace serve as a means to this end!

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Subjects of Baptism

(Continued)

Two questions remain for us to answer in regard to Article 56 of our Church Order. You will recall that this article deals with the sealing of the covenant of God unto the children of Christians by means of the sacrament of baptism. We have pointed out that the administration of this sacrament should take place as soon as feasible after the children are born. There should be no unreasonable delay due to certain matters of superstition. We have also discussed at some length various matters concerning the proper subjects of baptism and have considered some of the problems that arise in this connection due to irregularities in our sinful life. We now have to discuss the questions, "By whom and where must this sacrament be administered?"

The Reformed position in regard to the first of these questions is that, in the final analysis, it is Christ Himself Who administers the sacrament and, therefore, it is proper that baptism be administered only by those who are commissioned or authorized by Him to do so. In John 4:2 we find that Jesus delegated this task to His disciples and then after the resurrection He commissioned them to "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). Since then the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments go together, it is a most logical and correct conclusion that these two things should be done by the same persons. The church, through the office of the ministry of the Word, administers the sacraments. No one else is authorized to do so. This position is the position of our Church Order as is implied in the article we are discussing and is definitely stated in Article 3, "No one, though he be a Professor of Theology, Elder or Deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments without having been lawfully called thereunto."

This position has not always been consistently maintained in the Reformed Churches. In 1578 the Synod of Dort held that if an elder, upon the authority of a consistory or church, had administered baptism, such baptism was to be considered valid since such an elder in a way had a call for this administration. Though this practice has, therefore, been allowed, it was not encouraged and the same Synod decided that other churches and consistories should not follow it.

This question is important because it involves the deeper matter of what constitutes a valid baptism. The Reformed position does not recognize baptisms that are performed by private individuals. This, of course, brought the Reformed Churches almost immediately before the question as to

whether or not they would recognize baptisms performed by the Roman Catholic Church. Here too, as you know, the sacrament is administered not only by the priests but in some instances by monks, midwives and doctors. *The Church Order Commentary* informs us that, "The Synod of Emden, 1571, held that those who had been regularly baptized in the Roman Church did not have to be baptized once again, fearing that the Roman Baptism was of no value. But our fathers doubtlessly felt that although the Roman Church was filled with error, that yet it was a Church of Christ in essence, and that therefore its Baptisms were valid. If therefore Baptism was administered by an authorized priest, with water and in the name of the Triune God, then re-Baptism did not take place. Even the Baptism of 'vagabond priests,' constantly traveling from place to place, was held to be valid (Synod of Middelburg 1581) inasmuch as these were officially called. But the Baptism of monks was considered to be invalid for they have no charge to Baptize. Even 'emergency Baptisms' administered by midwives, doctors, etc., were usually held to be valid because the Roman Church charges individuals to Baptize a child which is about to die. Whether the Reformation Churches were justified in acknowledging even these latter classes of Baptisms is indeed a question."

Although each case must be determined on the basis of its own merits and circumstances, it may be said in general that Reformed Churches recognize baptisms that conform to the following standard or meet with these requirements:

- (1) If the baptism was administered according to the institution of Christ (the rightful element, water, not wanting).
- (2) If the baptism was administered in the Name of the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
- (3) If the baptism was administered in the assembly of believers which assembly is in principle a church of Christ.
- (4) If the baptism was administered by one who was properly authorized by this assembly or Church to administer the sacrament.

Baptism by groups or individuals that are disassociated with the essence of Christianity, deny the Trinity, etc., are not to be recognized. If such persons would seek affiliation with a Reformed Church, they would have to be baptized. We do not say re-baptized but simply baptized for what was administered to them previously is in actuality no baptism at all.

The second question we raised earlier had to do with the proper place of the administration of baptism. This question arises from the practice of the Roman Catholic Church which allows baptisms in the home and hospitals, etc. This practice is sometimes desired by people of Reformed persuasion. They ask why it is not proper to have baptism (and even more so the Lord's Supper) administered outside of the church in cases of necessity? This question is understandable. Believing parents, for example, who seriously and earnestly desire to have baptism for their children, receive a child that is very ill and find it impossible to take such a child to church. What

can be done? Why can't the minister and elders of the church come to the home and baptize such a child?

In the past this has been allowed but even those ecclesiastical bodies that decided in favor of it were not too sure it was the proper thing. The Wezelian Convention in 1568 advised to grant such requests for the time being but held that such infants should be baptized in the presence of some believers who could be present. Then in 1574 the Synod of Dort decided that henceforth children should be baptized only in a regular church service.

The question arose again at the great Synod of 1618-19. Here it was decided that baptism might be administered at home to children and adults who were sick and still unbaptized if circumstances were very urgent, and then only with the knowledge and in the presence of the consistory; this synod also permitted the baptizing of condemned criminals awaiting execution in jails, but only upon advice of the delegates of Classis. The same Synod, however, may have feared the ill effects of these decisions for they decided not to publish them if the Acts of Synod were published. It is, of course, obvious that such decisions are not in accord with the Church Order.

Article 56 specifies very clearly that baptism is to be administered "in the public assembly." To this is added, "where the Word of God is preached." To this may be added that Article 35 of our Confession of Faith which speaks of the Lord's Supper contains in it the statement that, "we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God." Both the Church Order and the Confessions, therefore, maintain the position that the sacraments are to be administered only by the church and in the meetings for public worship. Undoubtedly the motivating factor in this position must be found in the fact that the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments belong together. Since the sacraments derive their meaning and significance from the Word, it is imperative that they be administered only where the Word is preached. This is made plain in the following quotation from *Baptized Into Christ* by Rev. H. Hoeksema.

"Of these the preaching of the Word is the more important. This is evident, first of all, because the preaching of the Word is indispensable. Without the sacraments the Christian, if need be, can live; but never without the preaching of the Word. Without the Word of God he cannot come to a conscious faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has no knowledge of Him, and, therefore, cannot appropriate Him by a true and living faith. It is through the preaching of the Word that the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts. Besides, the preaching of the Word is not only the means whereby the Holy Spirit works faith within us, but it is also the main means for the strengthening and upbuilding and sustaining of our faith. The sacraments are also used to strengthen our faith, but in a different way from the Word of God: *they are really added to the Word* (Italics, G.v.).

They obsignate and seal the promise of God in the gospel. But it is chiefly through the Word that we increase in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Upon the Word, therefore, the sacraments are dependent. Without it they are meaningless and have no content* (Italics, G.v.). This would not be true, of course, if the Roman Catholic view of the sacraments were correct: for according to the Romish Church the sacraments have power to work in themselves, even without the preaching of the Word: grace is not really worked in the heart of the believers by the Holy Spirit *through* the sacraments, but the latter *are* grace. Just as the theory of common grace proceeds, really, from the idea that things in themselves are grace, so the Roman Catholic Church teaches that grace is in the sacraments. Baptism, according to them works regeneration; and in the Lord's Supper we really eat and drink Christ with our physical mouth. In that case we really do not need the preaching of the Word, but what we need is the Church and the priest, as the dispenser of grace. In distinction from them the reformers and the Protestants in general have always emphasized that the preaching of the Word is the main means of grace, that it alone is really indispensable, and that the sacraments are dependent on it. And, therefore, not the sacraments, but the preaching of the Word should have the chief emphasis in our churches" (pgs. 21, 22).

G.V.d.B.

Office-Bearers' Conference

will be held Tuesday, April 4, at 8 o'clock in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema will be the speaker. Topic: "Should the Form for the Lord's Supper be revised?" All present and former office-bearers are urged to attend.

John De Vries, Sec'y

My failing spirit see,
O Lord, to me make haste;
Hide not Thy face from me,
Lest bitter death I taste.
O let the morn return,
Let mercy light my day;
For Thee in faith I yearn,
O guide me in the way.

Lord, save me from my foe;
To Thee for help I flee;
Teach me Thy way to know,
I have no God but Thee.
By Thy good Spirit led
From trouble and distress,
My erring feet shall tread
The path of uprightness.

ALL AROUND US

COMMENTS FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Some of our readers may have wondered occasionally what was the reaction of the people in the Netherlands to the history of our churches in the past eight years, and, more particularly, what was the reaction of these churches to the efforts of those who left us to return to the Christian Reformed Church.

Recently, several copies of a Dutch paper *Opbouw* were given to me. This paper evidently represents the views of the Reformed Churches — Article 31 (the so-called “Liberated Churches”), and contains, in recent copies, a series of articles written by J. Meester commenting on the recent efforts towards reunion by the “other side.” Under the title “Hereniging in Amerika?” (“Reunion In America?”), Meester has given his own views of this matter. Evidently the series was eight articles long, and only the last three articles were given to me. But, it seems as if the first five articles were mostly concerned with a review of the history, while the last two are particularly concerned with his own comments on the subject. Although his comments are rather detailed, there are particularly two comments which he makes which are of special importance.

In the first place, Meester bemoans the fact that in all the efforts towards contact and reunion, the basic question of 1924 was not settled. After reviewing the history of contact between the Christian Reformed Churches and the De Wolf Group, and after quoting some of the correspondence, he comes to the conclusion that there was no resolution of the issues that separated the Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed Churches — particularly the issue of common grace. His concern is therefore primarily about the fact that, although the De Wolf Group officially asked that the three points of common grace be declared not binding, the Christian Reformed Church would not budge on this issue, and insisted instead that they remain binding doctrine in their denomination. But since this evidently does not deter many churches of the De Wolf Group from returning, Meester is sad. Writes he (the translations are mine, H.H.):

They have not come to agreement on the matter of the question which brought about the separation of 1924. This is to be regretted. A compromise solves nothing. The question remains in the knot as it was in 1924.

And so, although Meester speaks of a compromise, the compromising was entirely on the side of De Wolf and his followers. This to him is rather astounding. He writes,

This is remarkable! What was expressed in 1924 is maintained! Yes, yes! Remarkable! Men want brotherhood all right (broederschap in het algemeen), but the brothers must step into “our” boat.

Concerning the issue itself, i.e., the issue of common grace, Meester leans partly towards the position of De Wolf.

He does not like the idea of a general and favorable attitude of God towards all mankind without distinction; nor does he want a general offer of salvation as the first point of 1924 taught; nevertheless, under the influence of the Liberated position of a general promise within the covenant, Meester prefers to speak of “a general calling” within the covenant to all the seed born in the line of the covenant. Evidently, he would have preferred that some sort of a compromise following these lines would have been accepted by both De Wolf and the Christian Reformed Church.

However, he points out that except for this matter of the “general calling,” Schilder himself changed his position since 1939, and came to adopt the position of Rev. H. Hoeksema. He writes,

In (Schilder’s) “Heidelberg Catechism” of 1950-1951, Schilder’s opinion concerning the three points has radically changed. He wrote in 1939 concerning the three points: “No establishment of a dogma of common grace (has been made by the Christian Reformed Church)”; in 1950 he said, “Indeed, a common grace dogma (has been) adopted.” He wrote in 1939: “The Synod of Kalamazoo has not adopted a favorable attitude of God towards mankind in general (‘if I can analyze the sense,’ K.S.)”; in 1950 and after he proceeded from the viewpoint that the Synod of Kalamazoo had indeed done that, and he turned with the sharp weapons of his penetrating intellect against the position that there is a favorable attitude of God towards mankind in general. With respect to this point of the appraisal of Kalamazoo, Schilder has gone over to the position of Rev. H. Hoeksema in the passing of the years after 1939.

From these comments of Meester it is clear that the Liberated churches are as afraid of anything binding as they always were. During our own contacts with the Liberated and with immigrants from the Liberated Churches, one thing became increasingly clear: they were very afraid that they were going to be bound by the covenant views of our churches. This they did not want. In keeping with this, the churches of Dutch background in Canada have also recently expressed their fear of anything being binding within the Christian Reformed Churches apart from the Three Forms of Unity. They did not want a synodical expression on the question of the infallibility of Scripture within the Christian Reformed Churches for fear it would be binding; there were overtures at recent Synods to take away the binding force of the three points of common grace. Of course, the Christian Reformed Church has always maintained that the three points were confessional — i.e., clearly taught and maintained in the confessions. And while we do not agree with this, it is for this reason that the Christian Reformed Church has insisted on their binding power.

And yet I can never fully understand this almost unnatural fear of anything binding on the part of the Liberated. I too feel strongly for the fact that there must be some freedom within the Confessions. But the trouble is that the Liberated do not merely want freedom within the Confessions; they want to be able to maintain covenant views which are evidently contrary to the Confessions.

But all of this does not mean that a denomination of churches may not officially express what the Confessions

teach with regard to such matters as the inspiration of Scripture, the denial of a general offer of the gospel or a general promise within the covenant. Especially this is true when, in reality, the confessions are attacked on these points. Such an unnatural fear of anything binding seems to be only a cover to introduce contra-confessional views into the church. Certainly, if a certain point of doctrine is the expression of the Confessions, and as such, is the expression of the truth of Scripture, anyone who loves the truth will be willing to submit himself to the binding power of this truth. For in the bondage of the truth alone is true liberty. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

For the rest, we, with Meester, deplore the fact that the compromising has been entirely on the part of the De Wolf Group. They have indeed and entirely stepped into the boat of the Christian Reformed Churches. Of course, if the Christian Reformed Church had taken any different position than the one which they did take — if they had taken away the binding character of the three points or retracted them altogether, then they would also have to come to our Synod with an apology for what they did in 1924. And this they have no intention of doing.

A PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOLS

The last issue of *Christianity Today* was almost entirely devoted to the subject of Christian education. For this reason, the issue was both pertinent and instructive. However, in a lead article entitled, "Education and Faith: A Plea for Christian Day Schools," by T. Robert Ingram, Rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, the whole matter of Christian Schools was discussed in a most interesting way.

The author is particularly concerned with the dilemma in which the school system of America finds itself today. This dilemma has come about through ignoring the fundamental principle of the separation between church and state. This doctrine of separation, he maintains, means that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has "freed religion from the grip of temporal government." He says,

Christ seized (religion) for himself, and entrusts it only to those ministers of his who will act independently of the sword. Thus, what we in the United States call the doctrine of separation of Church and State, is demonstrably a religious doctrine about politics, not a political doctrine about religion.

This strict separation between church and state, according to the author is not maintained in America any more. The state has taken over education. The first evidence of this is to be found in the fact that it has become mandatory to attend school in our country. Everybody must attend school on pain of punishment. And because the government has insisted on compulsory attendance in the schools, it has caught itself in a trap from which there is no real escape. The government must itself adopt officially one religion which it supports and which it insists be taught in the school,

or it must take the position that no religion may be taught at all. The first is contrary to the position of the separation between church and state; the second is manifestly impossible. If the first position is taken, then all those who do not agree with the religion which the government has officially adopted, are forced against their conscience to have their children instructed in a religion which they do not believe is the truth. This violates the fundamental principle that a man is free to decide what he wants to believe; that no coercion or force of any kind may be brought to bear upon him to believe what he does not want to believe. But should the latter course be adopted, and the position taken that no religion may be taught in the schools, the result is that the schools do not become non-religious but rather anti-Christian. For there is no such thing as no religion. In explanation of this point the author quotes Dr. A. A. Hodge, one time a theologian in Princeton:

I am as sure as I am of the fact of Christ's reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social, nihilistic ethics, individual, social, and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen. . . . It is capable of exact demonstration that if every party in the state has the right of excluding from the public schools whatever he does not believe to be true, then he that believes most must give way to him that believes least, and then he that believes least must give way to him that believes absolutely nothing, no matter in how small a minority the atheists or the agnostics may be. It is self-evident that on this scheme, if it is consistently and persistently carried out in all parts of the country, the United States' system of national popular education will be the most efficient and wide instrument for the propagation of atheism which the world has ever seen.

The author concludes that subsequent history has exactly followed this pattern.

What then is the solution to the problem?

The author finds the solution in the establishment of church schools; although he does not mean by church schools, parochial schools, but schools established by the parents of churches. Every congregation ought to establish its own school, or every group of congregations who are agreed in their faith ought to establish together a school where their children can be instructed. And if there are those who are entirely atheistic, let them establish their schools where atheism is taught. But this means that the schools would be freed entirely from any government control — that, in fact, the government should no longer be in a position even where it can compel children to go to school at all or to go to a certain age. If parents want to send their children to school or keep them home, if they want to send them all the way through college and university or only through grade school, this ought to be left entirely up to the parents.

That this is from a practical point of view entirely possible is pointed out by the author. He points to the fact that the private schools have grown much faster than the public schools in the last two decades. Between 1940 and 1956 the increase in enrollment in public schools has been 22%, while

in private schools, mostly church-operated, the increase has been 86%. Besides, there are many things in favor of private schools. For one thing, the schools would probably be smaller, and this is to the advantage of both the teachers and the students. The "little red schoolhouse" of years ago was after all preferable to the large educational plants of today. In fact, a school of as few as twenty students can very well be superior to a school which numbers five hundred. For another thing, the private schools of America have often been pioneers in the areas of instruction and education. They have contributed more to educational theory and produced better men than the public schools which are not necessarily conducive to scholarship and experimentation.

If the objection is raised that this would involve a tremendous shortage of classroom space, the author suggests that the church buildings which now stand unused most of the week be used also for class rooms. If some cry that there would be a shortage of teachers, the author suggests that this is pure myth.

He concludes his article by saying,

The key to the whole matter is a conviction that teaching cannot be separated from religion; that to teach at all one must teach something about God and about Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and that, therefore, it is the inherent responsibility of free religious institutions to operate schools. It would be unthinkable to compel attendance in any way, and every church must be free to teach children what their parents want to have them taught. If schools are to be truly free they must be free to be bad and to fail to conform to the pattern of the majority. And parents must be free to send their children or not as they decide. For it is also a Christian tenet that parents have sole responsibility for the training of their young children — not the state.

Most of what the author has written is certainly correct. We cannot agree with all the author says about freedom of religion. It is after all not true that before God a man can believe what he pleases. God demands of every man that he believe the truth. God allows no freedom of religion. And even from the point of view of the government, which after all represents God and Christ in the sphere of the state, it is highly questionable whether the magistrate can take or may take a neutral attitude toward religion — an attitude of freedom of religion as interpreted in our country.

But certainly, the author is correct when he points out that the state cannot educate children; that, in fact, when they do they become in effect anti-Christian. And it is also correct that the solution to the problem is a complete return to parental schools where parents have full control over the education of their offspring.

The remarks the author makes about the benefits of small schools ought to teach us not to be apologetic about our own Protestant Reformed Christian Schools; it ought instead to give impetus to our schools now in operation and to our contemplated schools in South Holland-Oak Lawn, Loveland, Redlands, Hull-Doon. They may be small schools, but this is often to be desired rather than shunned. This the article clearly demonstrates.

H. Hanko

CONTRIBUTIONS

Grand Rapids, Michigan
February 28, 1961

Editor of *The Standard Bearer*,
Rev. H. Hoeksema

Dear Rev. Hoeksema:

Will you please place the following contribution in the next *Standard Bearer*?

An Answer to Rev. L. Doezeema

An article appeared in the *Reformed Guardian* of January 1961, written by the Rev. L. Doezeema, in which he by way of implication accuses the Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church, and directly accuses Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Church of approving the excommunication of one of our former members without the Consistory's having visited the member involved.

Let me state in the first place, that the party involved, had never received a personal visit from the Consistory, or a committee thereof. The statement of Rev. Doezeema as such is true. Although the Rev. Doezeema knows the history of the case, and also knows the circumstances of the time, yet he seems to desire to blacken us by making statements that are but half truths.

Article 76 of the Church Order reads: "Such as obstinately reject the admonition of the Consistory, and likewise those who have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, shall be suspended from the Lord's Supper, and if he, having been suspended, after repeated admonitions, shows no signs of repentance, the Consistory shall at last proceed to the extreme remedy, namely, excommunication, agreeable to the form adopted for that purpose according to the Word of God. No one shall be excommunicated except with advice of the Classis."

According to this article a personal visit is not specifically called for; it does call for admonitions. Due to circumstances a personal visit was impossible, and therefore the admonitions had to be sent through the mail, and this was done. Rev. Doezeema knows this too. One thing Rev. Doezeema does not know is this: He does not know if Classis East was informed by the Consistory of Creston, that the party involved never had a personal visit. That question is not even asked by Classis. Classis does want to know if the party involved has been admonished as per Article 76 D. K. O. To that we answered in the affirmative. Now if the Consistory of Creston Protestant Reformed Church erred in this, and it can be proved from the Church Order and the Scriptures that we did err, we will be more than glad to rectify this error, even as we have rectified another error in this same history of schism.

The Consistory of the Creston Prot. Ref. Church,
J. King, Clerk

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

March 5, 1961

The congregation of Randolph, Wisc., extended a call to Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church in Grand Rapids.

From a trio which consisted of the Revs. H. H. Kuiper, G. Van Baren and R. Veldman, Creston called the Rev. Veldman.

During Rev. Lubbers' absence from the Mission Field the month of March, the Revs. Woudenberg of Edgerton, G. Van Baren of Doon, and J. Kortering of Hull, are scheduled to preach for him in Tripp, S.D. The visiting ministers will conduct mid-week services in the Legion Hall or in the City Hall. It is reported that the Missionary's audiences numbered over sixty at the mid-week services and over half that amount in the first Sunday evening service held in that city.

The Men's Society of Southwest Church was host to that of First Church Monday, Feb. 20. The after recess program was furnished by the guest society, H. Heemstra giving an essay on "Conformity (with the world) Or Consecration (to the service of God)."

The Ladies' Aid Society of First Church has begun a new system of after recess programming every other meeting. The Program Committee has secured the services of their pastor, Rev. C. Hanko, to lead in the study of the Belgic Confession at that time.

Mr. Tom Elzinga, of our Holland congregation, has prepared a very thorough index of *The Standard Bearer* volumes. This index provides a quick reference to all of the Scripture passages that have been explained in that publication in its lifetime. Mr. Elzinga has prepared several typewritten copies and is desirous of hearing from owners of bound volumes who would like one of them. They are yours for the asking as long as the supply lasts. Address your letter to Mr. Tom Elzinga, 567 W. 19th St., Holland, Mich. When you get your copy you will realize that countless hours went into that project, and that you will reap the benefits of the author's labors.

A special congregational meeting of First Church, Feb. 27, resulted in decisions to purchase the vacant lots across from the church, alterations in the building, and ratification of Consistory action in allocating some Mission funds to the Mission Committee of our denomination.

Grand Haven's congregation celebrated the Lord's Supper March 5, with the Rev. A. Mulder of Kalamazoo offici-

ating. Rev. H. Hanko, their counsellor, preached the preparatory sermon the previous Sunday.

Southwest Church was the designated place for the Protestant Reformed High School Board meeting scheduled for Feb. 23.

The responsibility of the ushering service in the Hudsonville Church was relegated to the Mr. and Mrs. Society by their consistory.

Contribution: "The Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour reports that their hope of having a 'radio room' of their own in the church building has finally been realized. During the past few years the recording machines, mailing facilities, storage space, etc., have been in the consistory room of First Church and in the homes of Radio Committee members. But at the last congregational meeting, held Feb. 27, the congregation voted unanimously to appropriate the necessary funds to provide space in the church building for radio broadcast purposes. This space will consist of two small rooms — one for mailing of the weekly sermons and for storage purposes. The second room will be situated in an area which will allow the engineer operating the recorder to be in visual contact with the program director and the announcer, who, with the musical talent — Radio Choir, soloists, accompanist, etc., are situated in the auditorium. The speaker will record in the consistory room and will be in contact with the committee members by remote control through means of an intercom system and light signals. The Committee is indeed grateful for the decision of the congregation to provide suitable space in which they can continue to prepare, each week, a Distinctively Reformed Radio Broadcast."

Far-off Lynden will be without their minister for two Sundays while their pastor fills a classical appointment in Isabel and in Forbes, March 5 and 12. Rev. Harbach's plans also include attending Classis West, March 15, and the return to Lynden on the 18th.

South Holland's Y.P. Society featured an after recess debate, Feb. 5, on the subject, "Resolved, that attending the theatre does influence our Christian lives." Ruth Poortenga and Adrian Lenting took the affirmative side and Alice Van Baren and Henry Lenting were assigned the negative approach to this subject.

Bulletin quote (South Holland's): "Divine consolations are nearest to us when human assistance is farthest from us." Cave. We wonder if the author had just read Psalm 25 and was thinking of Gethsemane.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.