

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE MORE GLORIOUS COVENANT

*"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: and they shall not teach every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."*

HEBREWS 8:10-12

In the context there is a contrast between the Old Testament High Priest and Christ, between the Old Testament sanctuary, tabernacle, temple, and the real sanctuary, the former being pitched by man, the second by Christ. A contrast also between the Old Testament offering and the sacrifice of the New Testament. The earthly priests must have something to offer, and they did: the innocent animals. The New Testament Priest must have something to offer also: He offered Himself on the cross. A contrast also between the ministry. Moses, Aaron, and all the High Priests had an excellent ministry to perform, but Christ's ministry is infinitely more excellent than theirs.

Why?

Because the latter was the Mediator of a better Covenant, established on better promises.

And all this according to the Old Testament prophecy.

My text, indeed, is a quotation from Jer. 31:31-34, quoted by the Holy Ghost. The prophets of the Old Testament always looked forward to the fulfilment of these wonderful promises.

And they are fulfilled.

Let's look at them.

\* \* \* \*

Here is the better promise: "I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts."

What is the meaning of "My laws"?

I think we can safely say that their expression is found in the ten commandments. Oh yes, we must say more, and we will. A little later in another connection. But I am sure that we are right when we refer this to the law of the ten words of God. You know, Paul writes about the same theme as the writer in my present text, namely, in II Cor. 3. There Paul compares also the Old Testament covenant and ministry with the New Testament covenant and ministry. And in the course of his comparison he also speaks of the law of God. And says: "But if the ministration of death, *written and engraven in stones was glorious,*" etc. The words which I wrote in italics show that the law of God which he referred to was indeed the law of the ten commandments. And the same is true here.

That law is the reflection of God's ethical life. And therefore it is fulfilled in just one word: LOVE!

Jesus says this to the inquirer: The whole law is fulfilled into these words: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and the second like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Now then, this law is put into our minds and written into our hearts, expressing our unity with that law of God: the child of God loving his Father in heaven, and his brother on earth.

And God adds: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people. Both are an echo and fulfilment of the covenant with Abraham.

And that is the utmost happiness for a man: God our God, and the church our brethren and sisters.

\* \* \* \*

What a contrast with the Old Testament condition!

Suggested in the negative language of our text: they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord!

Not that the ministration of the Old Covenant and the

Old Sacrifices was without glory. Oh, no! It was so glorious that Moses had to cover his face.

But the contrast is great.

How little knowledge of God was there!

The prophets, priests and kings did have to go about teaching, and admonishing from city to city and from village to village, saying: Know the Lord!

But not anymore.

Now the oracle tells us: You have no need that anyone teach you! You have the unction of the Most High, and you know all things.

Let a minister now get off the true pathway of the knowledge of the Lord, and he is jumped at once! Every one knows the Lord. Even a child knows the fundamental truth of God.

How great a difference in the Old Testament times!

How little of the Bible was there.

How poor was the revelation of the love of God: a sheep, a lamb, a heifer, a pigeon, a priest, a prophet, a king, a city, a country, a tabernacle, a people.

But now, in one word: there is Jesus!

There is the Triune God, represented by Jesus Christ, hanging on the awful cross at the crossroads of the world, shedding His heart's blood for the sins of the people!

And behind that cross and above that cross we hear the voice of that Triune God: Look upon the Gift of Our heart!

Now look at the contrast: there is Abel, sobbing out his heart by a little hill. It is the hill of one of the first altars. And on it lies a little lamb.

Now, today, in the New Testament, we look and we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God, in the throne of God! And we begin to sing.

But look at the Old Testament: we see Aaron in the tabernacle made with hands. Watch him: he is carrying a bason with the blood of a heifer.

What was there? The letter, tables of stone, ministration of death, ministration of condemnation. Glorious? Oh yes, but not the glory of the New ministration of Jesus. Not the glory of the New knowledge of God, written not on tables of stone but in the fleshy heart of the child of God.

Now, beloved reader, we have the ministration of the Spirit of Christ. The text says that God will write His law into our minds and hearts, so that we do not have to have a teacher saying: Know the Lord!

What does that mean?

It means that Jesus came into our hearts! And that makes all the difference in the world. And the oracles of God are complete.

Therefore we do not have the ministration of condemna-

tion, but the ministration of righteousness. Everyone of us knows now that God prepared a righteousness for us from all eternity; that He gave that righteousness to us centrally and historically when Jesus died and rose again, for He did so "for our justification." That He gives that righteousness in our hearts by faith; and that this righteousness of Jesus' ministration shall be fully revealed when the Bride of Christ shall be manifested at the day of Christ without blemish or any such thing.

Therefore the first covenant disappeared and the second, or the last, Covenant took its place.

\* \* \* \*

And how blessed is that Covenant!

Listen: I will be merciful to their unrighteousness! Imagine!

Again! The old covenant had blessednesses. Listen to this: 1) The light of the glory of God shone in the Mount at the time Moses was with God; 2) Moses' face shone because of the glory of God; 3) It taught the people of God; 4) The church loved it, and sang; oh how love I Thy law: it is my meditation all the day; 5) Paul lauds it in II Cor. 3; and there God's Spirit says: "For if that which is done away was glorious," etc.

But now! God is merciful to our unrighteousness!

Every day and every night we bow down in the dust and cry to Him: O God, be merciful to me, the sinner! And every day and every night He says to us: Be of good cheer, My son; be of good cheer, My daughter: thy sins are forgiven thee! And note this: we know this to be true. It is amply explained in the New, the eternal Covenant of grace of the New Testament. A child will lead you.

Further: "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more!"

When I was a child I listened to the prayers of old men who came together to visit, and before they went home again, they would say: Let us have a word of prayer! And very often I heard them say in their prayers: O God, who hast cast our sins behind Thee in the ocean of everlasting forgetfulness!

It has made an impression on me ever since.

Later, much later, I found texts which substantiated such prayers. I read that God has cast all the sins of His people into the depth of the sea. And also that He has cast those sins behind Him. Oh, it is true alright!

And it is taught here.

How can God say: I remember them no more?

They are, and they were so real!

Here is the answer: it is because of the far better ministration. Let me say it somewhat differently: It is because of the better MINISTER! And I have in mind the only true Minister there ever was.

Minister means SERVANT! Will you, please, remember that? There is a lot of nonsense, wicked nonsense about the ministry.

If you want to be pre-eminent; if you want to be great; if you want to excel, there is only one way: become the SERVANT of all! That is God's injunction to all of us.

A minister is a servant.

And such a servant was Jesus.

When He came into the world He saw a great mountain, and He saw a great void, emptiness.

And God said to Him: My Son, you must remove that mountain, and you must fill up and exalt that great void, that emptiness.

I am talking of the mountain of our sin and guilt, and of the great void of having failed in fulfilling the law.

And our Lord, our Mediator began His work, His unspeakable task. Oh how great a Minister He became. What kind of Servant, slave, groveling in the depths of eternal death, under the outpouring of the fierce wrath of God!

And He labored so long and so intensively until all our sins and all our iniquities are gone, and He has filled the void, exalted the doing of the commandment of God, until all God's sons and daughters are in the bosom of God!

That Jesus is written in your hearts and written in your minds!

G.V.

### Attention — Synodical Committees

All Synodical Committees (*Standing Committees and Special Study Committees*) are herewith reminded that their reports to Synod are to be prepared for publication with the regular Synodical Agenda.

These reports are to be sent to the undersigned not later than April 15, 1961.

*Stated Clerk* of the Synod of the  
Protestant Reformed Churches

G. VANDEN BERG  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

### IN MEMORIAM

The Priscilla Ladies' Society of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church expresses deep-felt sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. B. Zandstra and family, in their sorrow occasioned by the sudden removal from this life of her mother

MRS. P. BOER

who passed away on February 1, 1961, at the age of 54 years.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4.

Oak Lawn Ladies' Society  
Mrs. E. Medema, Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### "The Adam Question"

We still must say something about the report of the Theological Commission that was before the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America last year.

And first of all we wish to quote from that report:

"There is a diversity of opinion among the members of the Commission relative to the manner in which the various details of these accounts [in Gen. 1-3, H.H.] are to be understood. In this we believe we reflect a general condition in the Reformed Church, and Protestantism as a whole, but one which should give no cause for alarm. How one interprets e.g. the word 'day,' the geography of the garden, the speaking of the serpent, the angel with the flaming sword, does not determine one's understanding of the essential word which God is speaking to us in these accounts, nor the genuineness of one's faith. We believe that the Church must allow for a certain latitude in the understanding of details, especially in accounts where symbolic language is evidenced. It is not possible to establish certain canons of interpretation which enable the interpreter to determine infallibly the extent to which the details are to be viewed as literal or symbolic. But we are unanimous in our conviction that the Church insist that the events described are events in history.

"We recognize two inherent dangers in interpreting Scripture. On the one hand there is the danger of imposing an unnatural framework on these narratives and reading them in the light of secular views of history, instead of the framework of faith. On the other hand, there is the danger of severing these narratives from their actuality in history so that they become simply a reflection of every man's universal experience. Both dangers must be avoided. The Reformed Church, as part of Protestantism, has always had a real concern for the message of the Bible. God must be free to speak His word in His own way."

Thus far my quotation.

And about this I wish to make a few remarks.

First of all, I would say that, if the Theological Commission had never heard of the theory of evolution, it never would have entered their minds that the first three chapters of Genesis must be interpreted, not as a literal record of events, but as a matter of symbolism.

What, for instance, is there in Gen. 1 that is symbolical? In fact, there is nothing in that entire chapter that is not literally meant and that can even be interpreted as symbolism. The Commission speaks of the "framework" of faith. Of this "framework" I have heard before. And whatever the expression may mean (and I confess that I do not understand it) it, evidently, stands opposed to a literal interpretation or, as the Commission expresses it, to "imposing . . . on these narratives and reading them in the light of secular

views of history." This includes the interpretation of the word "day" in Genesis 1. If we would explain the word "day" in the literal sense of the word, we would impose upon it an "unnatural framework" instead of "the framework of faith." Hence, according to the Commission, it belongs to the framework of faith that we must interpret the word "day" in Genesis 1 as meaning long periods.

But I would say that this is exegetically impossible. First of all, every one of the days of creation is limited by evening and morning. Is there any reason in the text itself to interpret that between these evenings and mornings there were thousands and, perhaps, millions of years of light and again millions of years of night-darkness? Such an interpretation of the word *day* is, evidently, absurd and impossible. It is not in the "framework of faith," but in the framework of the theory of evolution that such an interpretation can possibly be given. In other words, this is not an interpretation of the text at all, but stands in flagrant contradiction to the text in Genesis 1. Why not frankly admit that this cannot possibly be the meaning of the text but that, in order to cater to the theory of evolution, we corrupt and contradict the text. This would be, at least honest. Besides, we read in all Scripture that the world was created by the word of God. This is also evident from the first chapter of Genesis. Thus, for instance, in regard to the first day, we read that "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Can this possibly mean that God spoke millions of years and that thus gradually light was created or rather came into existence? Again we must admit that this is no interpretation of the text but an imposition of the "framework" of unbelieving science upon the text of Genesis 1. Again, how about the fourth commandment. We read in Ex. 20:8-11: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days God created heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Is not one of the soundest exegetical rules that the same word in the same context must have the same meaning? If this be true then the word day or days of the creation week must be the same as the days of our week.

I could say more about this but I will refrain. I only want to say to the Theological Commission that they cannot possibly impose the framework of natural science upon the first three chapters of Genesis. And in the "framework of faith" they can never make long periods of the days of Genesis 1.

And there certainly is not even a semblance of symbolism in this chapter.

But how about chapters 2 and 3?

The Theological Commission also suggests that in these

chapters we have symbolism. We read that "the geography of the garden, the speaking of the serpent, the angel with the flaming sword, does not determine one's understanding of the essential word which God is speaking to us in these accounts, nor the genuineness of one's faith. We believe that the Church must allow for a certain latitude in the understanding of details, especially in accounts where symbolic language is evidenced. It is not possible to establish certain canons of interpretation which enable the interpreter to determine infallibly the extent to which the details are to be viewed as literal or symbolical."

Of course, if we interpret the sixth day, the day in which Adam was created, as representing thousands or even millions of years, it stands to reason that also the events recorded in chapters 2 and 3 must be interpreted in a way different from the literal sense. For in that case Adam was not really created, but developed gradually from some lower animal. Then the account we have in Gen. 2:7 that "the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul" also is symbolism and cannot be literally true. The same is true of all the rest of the chapter. Then the account of Paradise, of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of the fall of man and of the speaking of the serpent—all this cannot be literally true, but must be interpreted as "symbolism."

But the question is, first of all: why? Why cannot these chapters be interpreted literally? Why cannot man have been created as it is narrated in Gen. 2:7? Why can there not have been a literal garden of Eden? Why cannot the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil be interpreted as literal trees? Why cannot Satan have spoken to Eve through a serpent?

Secondly, if we cannot believe the account of Gen. 2, 3 as literally true, what is the truth which the "stories" represent? If the "story" of man's creation as recorded in Gen. 2:7 is not literally true, what is the truth which it represents? The same is the question about Paradise with its two special trees and the speaking of the serpent. Who can interpret this so-called "symbolism"? What does all this symbolism stand for? I am sure that no one can give a satisfactory answer to these questions.

Thirdly, I claim that there is not even a trace of symbolism in these chapters. The whole of the contents of these chapters makes the impression of being a literal account of what was actually there and what actually took place. Perhaps, you object that, certainly, the speaking of the serpent is an exception? I would answer as follows:

1. The devil certainly needed some kind of an instrument to reach man. He could not reach the heart and mind directly, because man stood in the state of righteousness and was without sin. The same was true of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to tempt Him the devil could not enter into His heart but had to use outward means: the stones in

the desert, the pinnacle of the temple, and the high mountain. In the case of the temptation of man, he made use of the serpent.

2. It is evident that the serpent was an entirely different animal than before he was used in the temptation of Eve. For, in the first place, we read that he was more subtle or wiser than any beast of the field, Gen. 3:1. And, in the second place, we read that, after the temptation, "the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

3. Hence, the serpent surely was the most fit instrument for Satan to tempt the woman. Whatever language the serpent as an instrument of the devil was speaking, it is evident that Eve could understand him. Nor was she surprised that the serpent spoke to her.

We believe, therefore, that even in respect to this speech of the serpent, we cannot possibly find any symbolism here.

We now have come to the end of our discussion of the report of the Theological Commission. But we must still call attention to a final "Note" that was added to this report. It is this:

"One member of the Commission has expressed his conviction that the name 'Adam' as a proper name, should be included in the report. Other members also, while recognizing that the term 'Adam' is used to represent mankind, nevertheless would be inclined to see this as the proper name of the first man. But some of us, since we are doubtful that it was the concern of the sacred writer to describe in factual detail particular events and to make an identification of particular individuals, would prefer to keep as primary the emphasis on the symbolical nature of the events described and the representative nature of the persons involved in these chapters."

There you are.

The language of the Commission is still vague, as might be expected. Personally, I doubt whether they can give a clear account of what they are writing. But one thing seems rather plain and that is that they deny that Adam was a real, historical person.

And by this they deny really all that Scripture teaches, not only about Adam, but also about several other important truths such as, for instance, the doctrine of original sin, original guilt and original corruption. Just read Rom. 5:12 ff.: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," etc., etc.

Surely, the Commission cannot interpret this as symbolical language as they do with respect to the first three chapters of Genesis. The only thing they can say is that Adam was, according to Paul, a historical person and that in this he was mistaken.

And thus we lose the whole of Scripture.

H.H.

# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER XVIII

#### *The Voice of Joy*

#### Revelation 19:1-5

1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:
2. For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.
3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.
4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.
5. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

From one particular point of view the scene of the end has now been pictured in detail; and along just one line we have reached the very end of history. Babylon, as we saw, was the ultimate outcome of the line of false religion, of apostasy from the living God, of faith in the lie of Satan, "Ye shall not surely die, but ye shall be like God." The principle of this lie is that it rebels against the living God and tries to work out its own salvation and come to the establishment of its own kingdom, without God and without Jesus Christ. And the development of this lie in the new dispensation is that the apostate church commits fornication with the powers of the world, aids them in their efforts to establish that one and final, powerful kingdom, which shall exalt itself against the living God and do wondrous things. That church as an institute shall be done away with by the very powers that courted her favor, so that her spirit and principle shall ultimately embody itself in the great city that bears her name, Babylon. But as we saw in the preceding chapter, also this great city shall be destroyed, and that by the power of God through Jesus Christ. As we studied the ultimate downfall of this Babylon, we had at the same time a most beautiful opportunity to obtain a glimpse of her real character, as it becomes manifest from all that is said of her in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation. We found that in every respect Babylon appears as a great world-center, as a city of worldwide significance. She is pictured

as a center of world-power, and all the kings and the great of the earth commit fornication with her. She is pictured as a center of commerce, of the commerce of the earth; and she has control over every article that sells on the world's market. She is portrayed too as a center of industry and art and science: for every craftsman and artist finds his home in Babylon. But above all, she is presented as the great center of luxury and dissipation, and, in close connection with this, as the embodiment of the wickedness of the earth. Her sin rises up to heaven; and in her is found all the blood of the saints and apostles and prophets that have died because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. And hence, her doom and punishment is inevitable. She falls! Concerning her fall specifically, we found that the manner of it is not revealed to us, but that it appears to be sudden and complete and final. Babylon becomes a hold of demons; and after her fall she is utterly desolate, never to be rebuilt. We found too that this fall of Babylon is the fall of the entire antichristian power, that because of her greatness and worldwide significance it is plain that without her the world-power cannot exist. And therefore, it is completely destroyed. That is true for the very reason that the kings of the world and merchants and sailors and ship-masters and all classes of people weep and wail over her destruction. And finally, we found that the people of God are admonished to separate themselves from Babylon — an exhortation which implies, no doubt, in the first place, that the children of the kingdom must separate themselves spiritually from the wicked city, so that they have no fellowship with her sins. But in the second place, it becomes a powerful and irresistible call, taking the people of the Savior to glory immediately before the very last and final punishment of Babylon.

And now we have a different scene, a scene of joy and exultation. We may observe, in the first place, that with our chapter we meet once more one of those remarkable contrasts of which the book of Revelation is full, and, in fact, that are numerous throughout the Word of God. The same event leaves different impressions and arouses radically different sentiments. When the Savior is born and there is joy in heaven and the angels come down to shout of the glad tidings for the earth, the shepherds of Bethlehem in joyful expectation direct their way to the manger of Bethlehem, and even the wise men from the distant east follow the star of the King with keenest interest and deepest concern; but, on the other hand, you find that Herod is deeply worried about this event and makes the treacherous attempt to remove the Babe from the earth before it can rise to glory, and the scribes and pharisees, the wise men of the nation, evidently meet it with stoical indifference. At the cross, which for a moment appears to the bystanders as the last and complete defeat of the Man of Galilee, you may note the women that used to follow Jesus and Mary and John filled with astonishment and sorrow because of the things that happen; but also the exult-

ant joy of the leaders, of the scribes and pharisees, comes here to its manifestation—a joy aroused by the same event as the grief of the disciples.

At the resurrection morning the disciples joyfully meet one another with the exultant greeting, “The Lord is risen indeed.” And their hearts are filled with a new-born hope. But the same fact of the resurrection caused the enemies to flee in dismay and filled the hearts of the leaders with devilish apprehension. Thus the illustrations might be multiplied. The same events, connected somehow with the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and its coming, are the cause of fear and sorrow to some, of joy and gladness to others. Thus it was with Babylon, the great city. For some time it had been the cause of dismay and fear and terror to the people of God. For Babylon embodied all the principles they hated, and, therefore, became the cause of their persecution and tribulation. But the great of the earth committed fornication with her, and the masses in general were wondering at her glory and filled with joy because of the greatness of her power. But now the scene has changed. Babylon is fallen. And even as her glory was the joy of the world and the grief of the children of the kingdom, so also her downfall causes a two-fold sentiment to come to manifestation. But this time the joy is of God’s people, and the grief is expressed by the children of unbelief.

Let us notice concerning these singers, in the first place, that they are in heaven: “After these things,” so John informs us, “I heard a great voice of much people in heaven.” The scene of this chapter, therefore, connects itself with that of the preceding. It takes place after what has been recorded in chapter 18. In fact, what is described here is occasioned by what is told us in chapter 18, and the scene here described takes place in heaven. Heaven and earth are still separated. In fact, I imagine that there never was a moment in the history of the world that the gap between heaven and earth was so wide as at this present moment. Because of sin a breach was made between heaven, the dwellingplace of the Holy One and all His holy servants and of the saints that have gone before, and the earth, condemned and cursed because of the entrance of sin. Originally this was not so. There was harmony and unity between heaven and earth, a harmony which was purposed to grow and increase till all the world, heaven and earth, had become the glorious kingdom of our God in perfection. But sin made the breach, a breach which was scarcely visible in paradise, but which becomes wider and wider as history develops, until, at the time of Babylon’s culmination and destruction, it had reached its climax. The man of sin has developed to his last stage. The iniquity of Babylon cried unto heaven, cried to Jehovah Sabaoth; and at this moment all that is left upon earth is a mass of misery and desolation. Children of God there are no more upon the earth. The picture presents us with a scene of misery and desolation, wept over and bewailed by the great and merchants and all the people of the world. It is a picture of sor-

row and grief. The kings of the earth express their grief. The merchants wail and weep over the loss of Babylon. And the shipmasters and sailors stand afar off to shed their tears of grief over Babylon’s desolation. But it is a sorrow of the world. They are sorry not because the iniquity of the city called for the punishment of the Almighty. They are sorry not because they have so greatly sinned and provoked the wrath of the Most High. But they are sorry because of material loss and because they cannot now continue to engage in wanton rebellion against the Most High and enjoy the pleasures of sin. It is the sorrow of the world. They are tears of sin and selfishness, not of true repentance, which are shed by the world over the destruction of Babylon. But however this may be, fact is that all the inhabitants of the earth are pictured as in misery because of the destruction of the great and glorious city. But in heaven there is an entirely different scene. The very same event that causes so much misery and sorrow on earth among the people of the world fills the heavens with joy and causes them to rebound with a fourfold *hallelujah*, to the glory of Him that sitteth upon the throne. A tremendous contrast, therefore, is caused by the fall of Babylon, a contrast that finds its principle in the attitude of men to the Lamb. On earth were the followers of the dragon, the subjects of the beast, the worshippers of his image, who expected their all from him and his reign. And therefore they are disappointed at the desolation of the great city. But in heaven are the Lamb and his one hundred forty-four thousand and the holy angels, they that serve and love and fear the Lord and His name and look for the kingdom of God and His righteousness in perfection. They naturally are filled with joy because the destruction of the great city is their glory and victory. The joy is in heaven.

In the second place, we may ask the question: who are these that sing at the destruction of Babylon? Must we think here of a particular class of people, as some venture to guess? Must we separate the people of God in heaven? Must we say that they are only those that have suffered directly from Babylon at the time of her culmination and greatest glory, the saints that were on earth at that time? I do not think that we are warranted at all in so interpreting the scene. True, it must be confessed that not all have been in contact with Babylon in her clearest and most impudent manifestation. Not all have suffered from her in an equal degree. But the fact remains that in principle Babylon always existed and that she has always been the enemy of the people of God. Besides, it is simply a monstrous and inconceivable assumption to suppose that part of the people of God should sing the praise of the Almighty while others would be profoundly silent in connection with the fall of Babylon. If it is true in regard to the suffering of this dispensation that all the members suffer where one member is in tribulation, it is equally true that in the state of glory all shall rejoice even though not all have been in equally close contact with the cause of

this joy personally. Besides, in the preceding chapter we read, in the first place, that Babylon is to blame for all the suffering of the children of God and that in her is found the blood of all the saints, of all that have been slain upon the earth. And, in the second place, we find that the call comes to all, the apostles and prophets and saints, to rejoice over the fall of Babylon, vs. 20. The song of this multitude in heaven is undoubtedly the response to that voice. Still more, the text is careful to mention all the people of God and, in fact, all the animate creation, as participants in this joy over fallen Babylon. In a very general way John tells us, in the first place, that he heard a tremendous voice, as of a great multitude, in heaven without specifically stating who belongs to this multitude. Even if he had not informed us further, we would not have the right to limit their number to any particular class. But he does speak more specifically too. He tells us that the twenty-four elders — representatives, as we know, of the entire church, both of the old and of the new dispensation — fall down and worship God and join in with the *Hallelujah* that rebounds through the heavens. And not only they, but the four living creatures — representative of the glorified creature delivered from the bondage of corruption — worship Him that sitteth upon the throne. And finally, the voice comes from the throne, calling upon all the servants that fear the Lord, both small and great, to call upon the name of Jehovah in exultant praise. And therefore, the text rather leaves the impression that this multitude embraces all the saints and even all the inhabitants of the heavens, and, still more widely, embraces all the animate creation, that sees in the destruction of Babylon its own restoration and deliverance. Abel and Noah, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Joshua, all the patriarchs and prophets and saints of the old dispensation, and all the apostles and martyrs and saints of the New Testament day join in with this song and give praise to God Almighty and unto the Lamb. And as they sing, the angels respond in songs of joy and gladness, and all creation as it is represented in the picture of the glorified economy in heaven worship and praise and sing their *Hallelujahs* to the glory of the Most High God.

As to the song, we may remark, in the first place, that the glory of God is very emphatically the main theme of the entire praise that flows from the lips of this tremendous multitude. It is noteworthy that four times the shout of praise, "Hallelujah," is repeated by them, that the voice from the throne has but one message, "Give praise unto our God," that the multitude sings, "Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power belong unto our God," and, finally, that the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fall down to worship, repeating the "Hallelujah, Amen" of the saints and the holy angels. There is in this song nothing of man, nothing of the creature; it is all of God and His glory that all the creatures sing. And the purpose of all God's plans and works is certainly plainly reached when Babylon

is destroyed. For He receives praise and adoration from all His creation, and His name is glorified. *Hallelujah* is a word that occurs nowhere else in Revelation, and, in fact, nowhere else in the entire New Testament. Here it occurs four times in practically the same song. In the Old Testament it occurs very frequently, especially in the Psalms. It is a Hebrew word. The first part of it, *hallelu*, means "praise ye," while the second part of this compound noun is an abbreviation of Jehovah, the covenant name of God. And therefore, the entire word simply means, "Praise ye Jehovah; praise our covenant God." The reason for this praise of Jehovah is further set forth in the following sentence of the song of the multitude: "Salvation, and glory, and power belong unto our God." It is because the salvation and glory and power belong to God that He must be praised. All these three attributes of God, all these three ascriptions of praise, must be taken in their most comprehensive sense. Salvation belongs unto our God, that is, salvation to its fullest extent. This multitude stands at the close of history. Babylon is already destroyed, and the power of Antichrist is broken. All things are ready for the coming of the new heaven and the new earth and the complete glorification of all God's saints and of all God's creation. The multitude naturally looks on salvation from this comprehensive point of view, salvation of body and soul, salvation of man and the whole world, the complete salvation and restoration and glorification of that entire kingdom which God created at the beginning, which for a time seemed to be in the hands of the devil, but which is redeemed by the Lamb.

H.H.

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#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 22, 1961, our parents

MR. AND MRS. RICHARD DYKSTRA

hope to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We thank our heavenly Father that He has blessed them for each other and for us these many years; and it is our prayer that He will be with them in the years to come.

Mr. and Mrs. Arie Dykstra  
 Mr. and Mrs. Simon Dykstra  
 Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Cole  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Nyenhuis  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ben Huizinga  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Postema  
 Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Klinge  
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dykstra, Jr.  
 38 grandchildren  
 3 great grandchildren

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#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to our fellow member, Mrs. Ben Bosman, in the loss of her Mother,

MRS. PETER BOER

May our God comfort the hearts of the bereaved with His glorious grace.

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

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### The Word Of God In Egypt

*And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel;*

*And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.*

*And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.*

*And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.*

*And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. — Exodus 4:29 - 5:2.*

With the burden of God's Word resting upon their hearts, the two brothers, Moses and Aaron, entered the land of Egypt. After four hundred years of silence, God had revealed Himself again. During that time He had not changed; His promises of former years were still faithful and true. Soon it would be unquestionably demonstrated in Egypt, God's love for His chosen Israel. That truth would determine the great events soon to take place in the land of bondage. So immense were these events to be that even Moses and Aaron could not as yet imagine it. With signs and wonders God would extract His people from the cruel clutches of sin. Let all who would oppose Him beware!

Upon entering the land, Moses and Aaron gathered together the elders of Israel. To them first they made known the will of the Lord. How different it was from the first time that Moses had sought to establish himself in Israel. Then his whole concern had been with proving himself. His whole effort had been to show himself able and willing to be for them a leader and savior. In doing so he had failed. But now he merely came, and, without one reference to himself, spoke the Word of the Lord. In humble silence the people listened. They heard again the promises of grace which had been received by their covenant fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were told that God looked upon them in their affliction and would come as the I AM to save them with a mighty hand. They gazed in wonderment upon the signs, the rod changed to a serpent, and the leprous hand which was cleansed. Having heard and seen it all, they believed. They were the children of God within whom was the beginning of faith. In humble thanksgiving they bowed their heads and worshipped. Surely great and wondrous things were soon to be done; the I AM had promised it.

Encouraged by the reception they received from the Israelites, Moses and Aaron proceeded immediately to the

court of Pharaoh. The message which they bore was simple and direct, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." This was no mere suggestion; nor was it in any sense a request; it was very clearly a direct command. It was this that aroused Pharaoh's anger and moved him to retort, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Pharaoh was not one accustomed to receiving orders or commands. He was the king of Egypt, the most powerful sovereign in all the earth. The very thought that anyone should think to command him, whether Moses or Aaron or even their God, only made him furious.

To some it would seem that this reaction of Pharaoh was quite natural, almost to the point of being excusable. After all, what did he know about the God of Israel? As far as he knew, what Moses and Aaron spoke were just words. There had been as yet no proof that their God was real and worthy of being listened to. Furthermore, the words of Aaron were notably without tact. Two men merely burst into his presence and, claiming to speak in the name of their God, demanded, "Let my people go!" There was no recognition of his position and authority as king of Egypt. There was no allowance for the fact that he had his own gods which he worshipped. There was no acknowledgment of his superior power and might over Israel. With blunt and uncompromising terms they merely issued a demand. They treated Pharaoh as a mere, ordinary man. Was it then surprising that he reacted so sharply?

Such speculation, however, is after all superficial. Pharaoh was not as ignorant of the God of Israel as at first it might seem. Had not he and his predecessors been trying now for many years to break the power of Israel as a nation? Yet their greatest efforts had proved to be of no avail because the God of Israel sustained them. Again, did he not know the history of his own nation and the great power that had been demonstrated among them in the days of Joseph? Even besides this, Pharaoh had but to look to the heavens to see the glory of God, or to the firmament to see His handiwork. Had he the least bit of discernment or honesty he would have known that this was not the work of his gods, idols of wood and of stone. Moreover, if Moses and Aaron represented the true God, as they said they did, how could they possibly come in any other manner than they did? God, if He be God in truth, can not come to man merely requesting or suggesting, offering, begging or pleading. Such would in effect place him down on the level of man, an abrogation of His right to divinity. There is only one way that God can come to any man, even though he be a king, and that is with the authority of a direct command.

The history which was shortly to follow would demonstrate evidently enough what was the real reason for Pharaoh's response. It was pride. Pharaoh had determined long before that he would be the supreme authority in his own

life. It was the working of sin such as is found naturally in the heart of every man. He wanted to be as God. He recognized the gods of Egypt only because they were of wood and stone so that he could use them as he would. When, therefore, Moses and Aaron came in the name of a God with an authority greater than his, he met it as a personal challenge. It was not the fact that Pharaoh did not know whether the God confessed by Moses and Aaron was real or not that kept him from acceding to their demand. It was not even actually a fear lest he should lose the advantage of part or all of Israel's service. It was the principle of the thing. An authority had appeared which claimed to be greater than his own. His pride would not allow this to go unchallenged. The more that the power of Israel's God would become evident, the more he would set himself to prove that it was not greater than his. It was not because of ignorance that Pharaoh refused; it was because the very word of another authority set his heart in rebellion. The more he would learn, the greater this rebellion would become. This was the hardness of heart of which God had spoken. It had begun at Pharaoh's birth. It would continue until his final destruction. The Word of God only hastened it on its way. God was setting up Pharaoh as an example to all ages of the rebellious working of sin. It was the same hardening which is found in the heart of every natural man. It is the hardening which only the grace of God can break; but for Pharaoh no such grace existed.

Moses and Aaron patiently proceeded to explain themselves further. "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." They set before Pharaoh a minimal requirement. Moses knew that God's intent was to deliver Israel completely from the land of Egypt. He knew that in the end it would be so. However, it was first to be demonstrated that Pharaoh would not accede to the least demand no matter how small it might be. The requirement was perfectly sensible. Israel's God had a right to the service of His people. Moreover, it was quite impossible that such service should be rendered amid the alien religions of Egypt. Not only would that be a mockery to Israel's God, the Egyptians themselves would not stand for it. Thus the thing to do was to remove themselves from the borders of the land. Surely if Israel did not render due worship to its God, that God could be expected to turn upon them in judgment. Pharaoh could easily see that this was so.

It is quite futile for us to speculate at this point as to whether, if Pharaoh would have granted this request, God would have returned Israel afterward to Egypt. It was ordained not to be so.

But Pharaoh was not to be changed. He had set his course and from it he would not waver. He would not even recognize Moses and Aaron as messengers of God, but only

as mere peasants negligent in their labors. "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." Moreover Pharaoh was a man of action. No sooner were Moses and Aaron dismissed from his presence than he summoned his subordinates which were in charge of the taskmasters of Israel, saying, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words."

Life for the children of Israel soon became even more bitter than before. In the making of bricks which was required of them they had to mix straw or stubble to give the bricks strength. Formerly the Egyptians had supplied the large quantities of straw which they needed; but now they were told to gather their own material where they could while producing the same number of bricks as before. This was an impossible task. The Israelites had always been diligent in their work, and, when many of them were taken from actual production to go out and gather stubble for the work, it became impossible to maintain their former quotas. But the Egyptians were unrelenting. Bending over them with whips the Egyptians exclaimed, "Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as heretofore?" With furious effort the Israelites labored as never before, but all to no avail. They could not make enough bricks.

The children of Israel had believed when Moses and Aaron had brought to them the Word of God, but as yet their faith was weak and wavering. Almost immediately under this new affliction they disowned the leadership of Moses. They sent new leaders to Pharaoh to try to make peace with him. These leaders presented their case, "Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people." But Pharaoh's wrath was not so easily soothed. He answered back, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks."

In bitterness the children of Israel turned upon Moses and Aaron. Angrily they accused them, "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." They were yet far

*(Continued on page 230)*

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Timothy

(I Timothy 1:1, 2)

*"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope; unto Timothy my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."*

It is our plan to write a series of sketches on this first epistle of Paul to Timothy. We believe that this pastoral letter is full of instruction, correction, reproof, in order that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Although this letter is addressed to Timothy, it cannot, therefore, be said that its instruction is meant only for him. It is, indeed, a letter for the entire church; only in this instance it gives various directives to Paul so that he may be able to conduct the affairs in the church. Paul does not touch upon everything in this letter; he merely writes the essentials and matters which were pressing. The rest he will set in order when he comes.

It seems that when Paul writes this letter he has left Ephesus for Macedonia; he has left Timothy at Ephesus. And now he will write a letter to the young preacher. This letter is a gem for every preacher of the Word of God. In a way it is a veritable textbook of practical instruction for the church. It is a kind of "church-order" on doctrine and customs.

Without entering too much into detail as to the purpose, place and time of the writing of this letter, we shall proceed to our exposition of the verses 1 and 2 of this first chapter.

As in all of his epistles, so also here, Paul writes in the deep and firm confidence that he writes as an "apostle of Christ Jesus." He is an apostle of Christ in the sense that he belongs to Christ, called by Him into His service in the Gospel. That he is an apostle is due to the great mercy of God upon him. Paul was *appointed* to the service of Christ, and he is empowered by Him so that he has all the ability which this office requires (I Tim. 1:11, 12). God counted him trustworthy; he may take care of the ministry entrusted to his care. Hence, he stands in the service of the Anointed One of God, the Christ, and may labor in the gospel of Him, who is "Jesus," that is, of Him who "will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). He is Immanuel, God-with-us!

And thus Paul takes up the pen to write. He is clothed with *apostolic* authority. He is an *apostle* of this Christ Jesus.

The office of apostle was unique in the church. And Paul insists that he is an apostle, equal to any of all the other apostles. He has all the credentials necessary to prove his apostleship. This is evident from the following:

1. He has the earmark of apostleship because he had seen the Lord; he had been an eye-witness of Christ, the exalted Lord. It is true that he had not been with Christ and the other apostles from the baptism of John unto the day that He had been taken up into heaven. Such was necessary in an apostle according to Peter's address as recorded in Acts 1:15-26. Paul was an apostle extraordinary. But he was an apostle nonetheless. He was one as "born out of due time" (I Cor. 1:8). Paul had seen the Lord, however. He is on this count a bona fide apostle.

2. He has the earmark of having been instructed by the Lord Jesus *Himself*. He did not receive his knowledge in the mystery of God's will through and from the other apostles. We know that he received his knowledge of the Lord's Supper from the Lord Himself, as he writes in I Cor. 11:23: "For I have received from the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed . . ." And, in Gal. 1:1, Paul emphasized that he is "an apostle — not from men, neither through men, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." And, again, in Gal. 1:12 Paul explicitly states that the gospel which was preached by him was not after man, whereas he says: "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul received nothing second-handed as did the prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.

3. Paul also has the third earmark of being an apostle. He was called directly and personally by Christ Himself. He was not chosen by the congregation, nor was he appointed by the laying on of hands by the other apostles. He was arrested by Christ Himself on the way to Damascus. We read in Acts 9:3-6 as follows: "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shown round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Hence, Paul was directly called by Christ Himself. Jesus, whom he persecuted in His church, met him upon the way, and mercifully took him up into His service. For when Ananias feared to go to see Saul at the street called Straight, the Lord reassured Ananias that it would be very safe to go and see him. He says to Ananias: "Go thy way: for he [Saul] is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:13-16).

Small wonder that Paul writes, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus." This indeed he is. But it is not so strange either that Paul adds, "According to the commandment of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope." Paul is under order. He knows himself a servant and a **minister**. However, the phrase "according to the commandment of God our

Savior" means far more than simply a limited command to Paul. This term here really anticipates the meaning of the sovereign will and purpose of God in our salvation in Christ. That Paul is an apostle fits with, is in harmony with the great plan of God in the salvation of Jew and Gentile. It refers especially to God's decree that in the Dispensation of the fulness of times, God would have the Gospel proclaimed not merely to the Jews, but that now the Gospel shall be proclaimed to "all men." The middle-wall of partition has been broken down; the enmity between the circumcision and foreskin is gone. Thus we read so beautifully in Rom. 16:25, 26: "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the *commandment* of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith."

In accordance with this plan of salvation, and God's commandment that the mystery of salvation no longer be kept in silence, Paul is made an apostle. For let it not be overlooked that Paul speaks here of the commandment of God, our Savior. We must not attempt to put another meaning than that of the Bible into the term "Savior." It is true, as Thayer points out in his Lexicon, that the term Savior (Sooteer) was "a name given by the ancients to deities, esp. tutelary deities, to princes, kings, and in general to men who had conferred signal benefits upon their country, and in the more degenerate days by way of flattery to personages of influence." It would be an entirely wrong methodology to reason from the usage of the term "Sooteer" among men, and then try to apply such to the term when used of God in Scripture. This has been attempted. And they, who thus attempted to construe the term, did this in order to show that God is the Savior of all men in the sense that His providential care is over all men and over all His creatures. Now surely the latter is true. But it does not follow that one can simply interpret the concept that "God is Savior" in such a sense. The Scriptures too definitely indicate everywhere that God is Savior in the sense that He delivers the creation from the curse and the bondage of corruption, and that He saves His people from their sins, from the guilt and pollution of sin, and exalts them to the glory of the heavenly through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that is something far different and also far more exalted than simply referring God's being Savior to His providential care over the cosmos.

The addition of the pronoun "our" with "Savior" indicates that Paul has in mind that God is our Savior from sin and death, as He is the God of our salvation and worketh all things after the counsel of His will. For the commandment according to which Paul is an apostle refers to the will and purpose of God which He executes in Jesus Christ, our hope.

Let us try to understand this just a bit.

When the Scriptures speak of Christ as our "hope" this

is a tremendous concept. It refers to that sure and certain future of the believers in Christ which is and has been brought about through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is the promise of the renewal of all things. We look for and expect a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness shall dwell. In this new heaven and new earth Christ is the first-born. He must have the pre-eminence in all things. He has made peace; He reconciled all things unto the Father. And herein God is glorified in the Son.

In this great work we can say that, whereas Christ will bring this all about, as the anointed Mediator of God and men, He is the hope. He is our peace. He is the hope of glory. And thus is the "commandment of God our Savior." And, in accordance with this great commandment, Paul is an apostle of Christ. Thus it is in the text here.

What a grandeur this lends to Paul's office!

And well may we give believing heed to what he has to write.

He writes in this capacity to Timothy. Timothy was from the city of Lystra. He was a companion of Paul in travel, born from a Greek father and a Jewish mother. From earliest childhood he had been instructed in the Scriptures by his believing grandmother Lois, and his equally believing mother Eunice. Paul had circumcised Timothy because of the Jews who knew that his father was a Greek.

It is especially the gift of "peace" that is spoken of in this apostolic greeting. Paul speaks of a "peace" which is joined with "grace and mercy." The term peace is the "Shalom" of the Old Testament. Only the term is greatly enriched in the New Testament in the light of the work of Christ on the cross. A greater riches has been put by God into this term in the sending of His Son in the flesh. It is for this reason that when Christ is born the multitude of the heavenly host sing "Glory to God in the highest, and *peace* among the men of his good-pleasure." The reason is that a Savior is born to us, who is Christ, the Lord. And for this very reason Jesus, speaking with His disciples at the occasion of the last Passover, said, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). And, again, it is for this reason also that Jesus, when He appears to His disciples after His resurrection, says, "Peace be unto you," while showing them His hands and His side (John 20:20).

This is the peace which Paul has in mind. It is a peace which in the "grace" of God the Spirit effectually works in our hearts, and which is rooted in and springs forth from "mercy." Grace meets us as we are — unworthy — while mercy reaches us in our utter helplessness.

And thus from God the Father and from Christ our Lord we receive the peace that passeth understanding. And in that peace Timothy is addressed and we with him.

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### "The Life You Save . . ."

Quoted in its entirety the slogan is, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own."

All of our readers, no doubt, know that this slogan is used to strive to bring about more sanity in our driving habits and to keep down the mounting toll of lives that are lost daily on our highways. The slogan makes a direct appeal to the motorist to consider that he endangers his own life as well as that of others when he drives carelessly.

And the slogan undoubtedly is concerned only with salvation in the sense of escape from physical death. It does not speak of saving in the theological sense that the word is used in Holy Writ. It has no thought of salvation from sin and guilt, death and the fierce wrath of God. No, it is concerned only with a prolongment of this life on this earth. And you will not be rebuked for asking, "And what does all this have to do with the fear of the Lord?"

An answer might be suggested, in vindication of this matter for an article *In His Fear*, by pointing out that the slogan is purely one that concerns itself with earthly, carnal things. The slogan breathes nothing spiritual. It presents even a very selfish reason for driving safely. It does not stress that we are our brother's keeper and that by carelessness we might become murderers. It does not call us to our God-given duty to seek the well-being of the neighbour. And it does not even suggest the oft-quoted "Golden Rule": Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. All this is very true. But all this still would not explain the reason for this article under the heading of *In His Fear*. We certainly should not drive with care simply for our own sake. But as is the case with all our activities and work, it all ought to be in His fear. And we like to write a few lines about that at this time. It is not simply a case of striving to warn you to save your earthly life. It is the far more serious matter of living to the glory of God and of using all that which He gives us as good stewards of His goods.

Surely there is something wrong when we can laugh about our traffic violations and boast of how many tickets we were given. In His fear we hang our heads in shame when we have transgressed the law, and we flee to the cross with all our disobedience. Our sin does not become a piece of entertainment. It does not become a thing of which we are proud. In the world you can expect such things. For the world is sold under sin. They practice evil, and as Paul writes to the Church at Rome, they "have pleasure in them that do them." The world looks up to the evil doer and worships him often as a hero. Men strive to set a record even in evil deeds. All they know is sin, and the fear of the Lord is not in them. But in the Church . . .?! How sad a picture that is of covenant youth (and maybe parents and confessing

members?) gloating over a record of traffic violations or of violations that were cleverly performed without being seen by the law enforcement officer.

And let it be clearly understood that "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth therefore the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans 13:1, 2). Traffic laws are made for the well-being of man. They are there to protect man even from his own carelessness and foolishness. And the authorities, or powers, as they are called in the King James version, have the God-given right to make laws for our driving behaviour as well as for any other phase of our earthly life. When we disobey these traffic laws as well as our taxation laws, we resist the ordinance of God and oppose Him. Shall we boast about such things? Shall we laugh about it or laugh it off? Nay, not in His fear. For in these things we show utter disregard for the fifth commandment, the sixth commandment and the first commandment. We hate God and will not ascribe to Him the right to place authorities over us. We say that He may not be God alone. And we are unconcerned with His command that we do not kill. Make no mistake about it, God gives the authorities the right to make the traffic laws they deem necessary for the well-being of man. And He insists that to disobey *these* authorities, as well as the king on the throne, is to walk in sin. We must not keep these laws simply to avoid a fine or to prevent the loss of our right to drive a car on the highways and streets. The very fact that these authorities have that right to fine us and to take away our driver's license, yea, the very fact that they have the right to license or refuse to give a license already indicates that they have authority from God, and to resist them is to resist God.

And we do not have simply in mind those reckless deeds of the youth of our land when they use their cars to play such deadly games as "Chicken" and the like. No covenant youth will so play with his life. Not because he fears a violent death and severe bodily injuries. But once again exactly because he fears God and desires to keep His commandments. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And that covenant youth is wise. He sees the folly of sin in these things. But there are so many other deeds of carelessness in our driving habits that reflect our proneness to live out of His fear rather than in it. We speed through a residential district or even a school zone where children may suddenly dart out in front of us. The speed limit is clearly posted, and we know at what speed we may safely go, and over which we may not go. But our plans and purposes are more important to us than God's ordinances and the safety of others. How many are the character traits which we reveal in our driving habits. Here surely the old slogan of "Ladies first" is wholly in discard. A driver is a driver, and a car is just another car. Nor do we say that it should be otherwise. It would be quite some confusion at the traffic light, if it had to change according to whether a man or woman sat

behind the wheel at the intersection. But courtesy is so hard to find. When a man gets behind the wheel, yea even the meek little man, and he feels the power of a mighty engine in his grasp and under his control, he almost becomes another person. He behaves so differently from what he does when he is not behind that wheel. Suddenly he feels important and he thrills at the power which he has at his command. Bravely he races in and out of the traffic pattern. He lies on the horn to make you keep your place and he jumps ahead of you when the light changes to green. Walking on the street he may not have the nerve to speak to you. In a room full of people he may retire to the quiet corners and fear to voice his opinion on any controversial matter. But get him behind the wheel and you see something in him you would not believe could be there.

And how often have we not had the experience of riding with a shrewd business man who weighs each purchase carefully and gives close attention to the small details that another might ignore. A few pennies saved here soon amount to a dollar, and over a period of time these dollars wisely invested bring in a pleasing amount of interest. Caution is the word. Ignoring none of the details is a must. And yet, when they get out on the highway they will risk that life, without which these things of material wealth have no value, by passing on hills and curves, speeding around curves, following cars and trucks so closely and at high speed that it would be impossible to stop in time, should the driver ahead suddenly make an unexpected move.

Shall we dismiss all this as nothing more than poor driving habits? Shall we say that it is a fine display of nerves of steel and that the more cautious driver is simply being timid? Shall these be our heroes and shall we try to duplicate their driving "skill"?

Indeed all are not good drivers. And there are many, many poor drivers on the highways. All do not have the same amount of good judgment or the same skill in handling an automobile. Some will never learn to be good drivers. There is even such a thing as being too cautious, that is, one can be so overly concerned with what the other driver is doing or going to do that he fails to pay attention to his own driving and is simply confused by the host of circumstances that surround him. Such is the case when a highway driver finds that he must drive through a thickly congested area of a large city with three or four lanes of cars around him, traffic lights and signs, the noise and speed of the flow of traffic—faster than he can think. And we are not writing about driving skills or the lack of it. We are not even writing about courteous driving. What we write about is not even approached from the point of view of safe driving. What we want to leave with you is this, that you must do all things in His fear. And therefore also our driving habits and behaviour must be in His fear.

And that surely means that we keep the laws set for us by those whom it has pleased God to set over us in this sphere. It means that here too we ask the question, Lord,

what wilt Thou have me to do? And we may be sure that the answer which He will give is not, "Keep the traffic laws when convenient and break them when you can get away with it, only be sure that you do not get caught. For that would bring shame to My cause and to My Church that you, a member of the body of Christ, have resisted the ordinances which I have established." No, it will not be that! But it certainly will be in the vein of what He said through Peter about servants. They must be subject to their masters when they are froward as well as when they are good and gentle.

We may not see the sense in some traffic laws. It may seem better to us to ignore them. A speed limit may seem quite arbitrary and entirely uncalled for at certain hours of the day. But it is the law. The authorities call it a violation when you break it. And so does God Who gave these authorities the right to make laws in their sphere of rule over us.

The Jews thought that they had quite a point when they asked Jesus whether they ought to pay tribute to wicked, Gentile Caesar. But without going into the matter of whether the tax was called for and necessary or not, Jesus called attention to the fact that we must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's *in order* to render unto God the things that are God's. And unto God we owe that honor that we acknowledge His right to rule us also in our driving upon the highways and streets through wicked, foolish and depraved men. In His fear be sure that you do not deny that He is GOD!

J.A.H.

### A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

(Continued from page 226)

from the position of strength where they would be able to follow the way of the Lord unto deliverance.

Even the strength of Moses was not yet fully developed. In despair he turned to the Lord and asked, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." Moses, like the children of Israel, had yet to learn that the way of God's people is never easy upon this earth. Slowly the Lord was teaching them.

B.W.

### Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in South Holland, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 15, 1961 at 9 A. M.

The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than 30 days before the date of Classis. And all matters that are to be brought to Synod must also be presented at this classis.

REV. H. VELDMAN, *Stated Clerk*

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

In our preceding article, appraising that form of Rationalism which is known as Deistical Rationalism, we observed, in the first place, that it is surely contrary to the teachings of the Word of God. And, in the second place, we also pointed out that this presentation is contrary to all that which is taught us by history. However, this is not all.

In the third place, we also wish to remark that Scripture alone directs us to the only way out of our present misery and shame and death. Why criticize the Word of the living God when one is utterly helpless to furnish relief and point the way out? Why reject the Word of God when one cannot put anything in its place? The Word of the living God alone is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path to lead man to life and glory. This lies surely in the nature of the case. How could the mind of man possibly serve to lead him to life and peace? How could man's reason possibly lead the way out of misery and the abyss of his shame and corruption and death into life and immortality? How can man who is from below lead mankind to the things that are above? Is it reasonable or rational to assume the possibility of this? Can any mortal who cannot save himself from death lead mankind to life and peace, through death and the grave, and beyond the grave into the land of eternal life and heavenly immortality? Do not the Scriptures obviously declare the truth when they teach that "to us have been revealed the things that could never arise within the heart or mind of man"? The proud and abominably conceited rationalist rejects the Biblical revelation in the Scriptures, but he himself can only plunge mankind and himself into greater shame and debauchery and destruction. Indeed, his attitude toward the Word is surely not reasonable or logical, but purely spiritual. He rejects the Scriptures not because he cannot understand or comprehend them, but only because, hating God, he also hates the Word of God. His heart and mind are dead in sins and trespasses, and his entire attitude is simply one of hatred and enmity against the living God.

Until now we have called attention to that form of Rationalism which is known as Deistical Rationalism. This form of Rationalism denies Divine revelation.

Another more common form of Rationalism admits that the Scriptures contain a supernatural revelation. It maintains, not that the things are true because they are in the Bible, but that they are in the Bible because they are true.

Of course, it is very true that "things are in the Bible because they are true." However, in the mouth of the Rationalist this has an altogether different meaning than as expressed by one who bows before the authority of the Holy Scriptures. The Rationalist, we understand, does not believe the things that are in the Bible merely because they are in the Bible. He believes the things that are in the Word of God only when he is able to understand and comprehend them. If, for example, he believes in the immortality of the soul (and this truth is, of course, taught in the Word of God), then he believes in this doctrine only because it is reasonable to him. If, for example, he does not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, that God is one in essence and three in Persons, and this truth is also taught in the Scriptures, then he does not believe in it because it is not reasonable to him. The arguments which can be advanced against this doctrine far outweigh, as far as the rationalist is concerned, those that can be set forth in favor of it. It means nothing to the Rationalist that the doctrine of the Trinity appears in the Bible and that writers of old have recorded it. This also applies, of course, to other doctrines such as the creation of the world, the incarnation of the Son of God, the re-creation of new heavens and new earth. He does not believe things merely because they are mentioned in the Word of God but only because they fall within the scope of his human intellect and understanding. We repeat: that sacred writers have recorded these things means nothing to him. These writers may have been in error. They undoubtedly were in error. Just because something may have appeared reasonable to them does not mean that they are therefore reasonable. What people may have believed to be true in days of old may not necessarily be true today. God, then, may have revealed to fallible men what He wanted them to write, but He did not inspire them infallibly. The Lord simply left it to them to write as they wanted to write. These writers were no stenographers, we must understand (although permit me to add that we do not believe either that they were mere stenographers). God did not tell them, word for word, what to write, but simply told them in general terms, but left the actual writing to them. And these writers were undoubtedly influenced by the times and circumstances of their particular age. They may have written things which were currently accepted as truth in their day, may have written in harmony with and according to popular opinion. And they may surely have been in error. The Scriptures, therefore, abound with misapprehensions, with inconclusive arguments and accommodations to Jewish errors, superstitions, and popular beliefs. In those days of old, for example, people believed that the earth was flat and that it rested upon foundations and pillars, that the sun moved around the earth rather than that the earth moved around the sun. We know better today, of course. And what must now determine what is truth and what is not the truth? Man's reason must surely supply the answer. To separate the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false is the task of the reason and mind of man. He will believe and accept

to be true only that which is in harmony with his human intellect and understanding.

In our appraisal of this form of Rationalism our first observation is that when it declares to believe only that which it is able to understand and comprehend it is not speaking the truth. The Rationalist is simply lying when he claims to maintain this. Does he reject such doctrines as the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God in our flesh and blood because he cannot understand them? Of course not! Fact is, he does not understand anything. All of life is a profound riddle and mystery to man. Does a child understand that certain people are his (or her) parents and does it therefore address them as its father and mother? Does anybody understand the feeding qualities of foods and the potent qualities of various medicines and therefore partake of them? Does a farmer understand how a kernel of corn can grow into an ear of corn, how the seed of wheat and oats can grow and mature into wheat and oats, and does he for this reason plant his crops in the springtime of the year? We know better. Does the evolutionist believe in the theory of evolution, that one species can develop into another, because it is reasonable to him and he is able to understand it? Does he fully understand and comprehend the process of life, and can he explain, rationalistically and logically, how one species develops into another? The Scriptures teach us that God created Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and that man thus became a living soul. This is Scripture's description of the creation of man. And it also sets forth the Divine creation of all the animals of the earth. Now man has been trying to find the "missing link" between man and the animal world, between the rational and irrational creation. Until now he has been completely unable to furnish this "missing link," has been utterly unable to explain how an irrational creature can develop into a creature with a mind and a will, that is, a moral-rational creature. And this, we understand, is quite a problem. And it becomes more of a problem when attention is called to the fact that, within the last six thousand years, no such development or transition has been discerned anywhere in this creation. Man, we say, has been quite unable to supply this "missing link." Yet, he rejects the Scriptural account of the creation of man and of the entire animal world. Why? Because this Scriptural account does not fall within the scope of his natural understanding and thinking? Of course not! If he would believe only that which he is able to understand and comprehend, why, then, does he believe in Evolution? Rationalism does not believe in the Scriptural presentation of the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, because he cannot comprehend it with his natural mind and thinking? Fact is, however, he cannot even understand the creature. Does he accept himself to be a fact? He does not comprehend the Scriptural truth of the Trinity because his intellect cannot grasp the truth that God is one in essence and three in Persons. So he claims. Yet, he certainly cannot understand his own being, that he is a human being with a

body and a soul, and that his body and soul are wondrously adapted to each other. He does not doubt his own personal existence, does he? Consequently, when he declares that he rejects the truths as set forth in the Word of God because he cannot comprehend them, he is surely not speaking the truth. Another motive surely dominates him in his rejection of the Word of God. The reason why he rejects the Word of God is not because he cannot comprehend it, but because he does not want the things that are contained in it. He hates the living God and refuses to submit himself to what that living God has revealed in his infallible Word and testimony. It must be very obvious that the Rationalist is not controlled exclusively by his reason and thinking after all. He is principally controlled and dominated by his heart, and that heart is evil.

A second observation which we wish to make in connection with this form of Rationalism concerns the written Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. To understand this, we must bear in mind that some forty writers were instrumental in the composition of the Bible. The first writer of the Bible was Moses and the last writer was John as he wrote the Book of Revelation. These writers covered a period of time which lasted approximately fifteen to sixteen hundred years. And these writers were not in touch with one another when they wrote the Scriptures. The one was completely unaware of the other. Now this is surely a very remarkable phenomenon. And the reason why this is so remarkable is that all the writings of these forty or more writers are characterized by a wonderful unity of thought! There is no discrepancy or difference of conflict between them. Their presentation of the living God and His dealings with the children of men is absolutely the same in all their writings. And this becomes all the more remarkable if you bear in mind the time and age in which these various writers contributed to the Word of God. Most of them lived and wrote in the Old Dispensation, the time of the symbols and types and shadows. This means that they lived and wrote in a day when the main theme of their writings was as yet to be fulfilled. They did not write, as far as this fulfillment is concerned, of that which had happened but of that which as yet had to happen. We challenge the Rationalist, who wants to believe only the things he is able to understand and comprehend, to explain this indisputable and amazing phenomenon. To write about things which were not as yet, and about things which they understood themselves so imperfectly and vaguely, and yet that all their writings are characterized by an amazing unity of thought is surely a striking and phenomenal characteristic of the holy Scriptures.

H.V.

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The wicked would destroy my soul,  
 But on Thy truth I muse with awe;  
 Imperfect I have found all else,  
 But boundless is Thy wondrous law.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Belgic Confession

#### INTRODUCTION (continued)

In connection with this bit of history we must explain, in the second place, the anti-Anabaptist position which this confession so emphatically and openly assumes. We shall not enter in detail into the history of the Anabaptist excesses of this period. Those who are interested may study this history for themselves. But to explain why our confession is so emphatically opposed to the position of the Anabaptists and refers to their errors more than once we must remember, in the first place, that at the time of the Reformation in the Lowlands the Anabaptist movement also made its appearance. Secondly, while it may be conceded that not all the Anabaptists were of the same extreme type, nevertheless their principles reached their logical and inevitable manifestation in the anarchistic and revolutionary actions of extremists like Thomas Munzer, John Matthyszoon, and John Beukelszoon (Jan van Leyden) and their followers. These with their followers engaged in such revolutionary and immoral and communistic practices that they brought ill fame upon the Reformation itself. In the third place, as is so often the case in history, due sometimes to simple ignorance and sometimes to wilful wickedness, the tendency was to judge all the followers of the Reformation in the light of the excesses of these relatively few extremists. Reformed and Anabaptists were lumped together as being anarchistic and revolutionary in the minds of the Spanish rulers. And all those who were anti-Roman Catholic were likewise considered to be politically dangerous and revolution-minded. Hence, in order to disprove any connection between the Reformed and the Anabaptists and to divorce themselves from these revolutionaries in the minds of the Spanish rulers our confession was in part composed, and in it the position of the Anabaptists is literally repudiated. It was in part for this same reason that Guido de Bres accompanied his confession with an address to the magistrates. As a means of stilling the storm of Romish persecution and of Spanish tyranny, however, the attempt was a practical failure. Nevertheless, that it was a failure is not the fault of the Reformed believers. They made it very plain that they were not to be associated with the revolutionary Anabaptists, but that they were a law-abiding and honest people, who feared God and honored the king.

At the same time, in the third place, we must by no means imagine that just because our confession does not mention the Romish Church by name it is weak and compromising in this respect. True, the *Belgic Confession* is largely positive in its development of the truth as over against the Romish corruptions that led to the Reformation. But we must remember, first of all, that historically it was exactly the purpose of this little confession to demonstrate that the

Reformed believers maintained the truth of the Word of God and that they therefore were not to be persecuted as heretics. In the second place, there were still many to be reached in the Romish Church with the pure gospel of the reformers. Also with a view to these, the confession aimed at demonstrating that the Reformed Churches were not heretical, but proclaimed and maintained the truth of the gospel, that which the Romish Church should have maintained and claimed to represent in the name of Christ, and that which Rome in fact denied and corrupted. Wherever there were true people of God who had not as yet broken with Rome, the most powerful appeal to them was the simple and positive presentation of the old truths. And, in the third place, it is simply not true that the *Belgic Confession* is weak and compromising or even silent and neglectful as over against Roman Catholicism. This is not the time and place to go into detail in this respect. But a hasty reference to those articles which speak, for example, of justification, of good works and sanctification, or of the sacraments will make it abundantly clear that our Confession assumes a very distinctive position and that it leaves no room for and condemns the perversions of Rome. And most admirably the Confession succeeds in stating the distinctive position of the Calvinistic Reformation.

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We must now give our attention to the further history of that little book that was tossed over the wall of the castle of Doornik on that November night in 1561. How came it to be the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches? And, in connection with this question, we also face the question whether we are justified in calling it the confession of the church at all? Is it not rather strange that this confession drawn up by Guido de Bres should be called the confession of the church? Our *Canons* were drawn up by an entire Synod, semi-international in character. The *Heidelberg Catechism* was officially authorized by the Elector Frederick, who wanted his province to be Reformed, and, besides, was composed by theologians. Our ecumenical creeds were likewise the product of the church itself. But is not our *Belgic Confession* the work of an individual, and that too, a rather itinerant preacher and a refugee?

There are several factors to be considered in this connection.

In the first place, we must not forget the character of the times in which our confession came into being. They were unsettled times, due to persecution and tribulation. Times they were in which the labors of the church were often well-nigh impossible and had to be carried on secretly. Times they were too when the Reformed churches in the Netherlands were only in the process of formation, when the impact of the Reformation was only beginning to be felt in its full power. There was no nationwide organization of the church as yet. In fact, there was very little organization of any kind among the Reformed churches of this time. Congregations there were; but even these led a very unsettled life because

of persecution. And there was a degree of contact and fellowship between the various communities of Reformed believers. Fellowship there was too between pastors and leaders of the churches, sometimes brought about through the very circumstances of persecution and flight to cities where the Reformed faith was tolerated or welcomed. But of organization and unified life and activity among the Reformed churches there was very little. It was simply out of the question, therefore, at that stage of history and under those circumstances to have a creedal statement produced by the official assemblies of the churches. All this does not mean, however, that the Reformed churches of that day and the body of believers shared no common faith and confession. They did. And it only remained for a man or men who were of the church and who lived close to the heart of the church and who perceived the faith of the church pulsating through the entire organism to spell out that faith and set it forth in concise and systematic form, so that later the churches might adopt that expression as their own by official action. It has been said that a genuine confession arises out of the very bosom of the churches as a spontaneous expression of faith. Well, if ever that was the case, it was true in this instance. The *Belgic Confession* came into existence in the most spontaneous way possible. Born from the impulse of a living and vibrant faith from within and under the pressing necessity of a fierce and bloody persecution from without, it is the living and spontaneous expression of the faith of the fathers. And the Lord graciously gave to His church His servant Guido de Bres, a man who was able to perceive and to express the very genius of the Reformed faith, in order that he might be the mouthpiece of the "voice of our fathers."

In the second place, and in close connection with the above, Guido de Bres is not to be viewed as an isolated individual, separated from the main stream of the Reformed faith and speaking individualistically. On the contrary, he is a son of the Reformation. His life and work betray the influence and instruction of John Calvin. And his confession gives abundant evidence that it is the work of one who was well acquainted with Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first of all. Secondly, there can be no doubt that de Bres followed in no small degree the French Confession of Faith (1559), of which Calvin himself was the composer in behalf of the French churches. In the third place, there is evidence that de Bres forwarded his articles in their earliest form to Calvin and the other Genevan theologians for advice. And while Calvin is said to have counselled against introducing another confession in the French-speaking Netherlands, just as he was at first averse to the formulation of a creedal statement for France, but instead advised using the French Confession of 1559, this nevertheless shows us that de Bres took no isolated, individualistic action. Finally, it is to be noted that the original title of de Bres' confession read: "Confession of Faith. Made with one accord for the faithful wandering in the low countries, who desire to live according to the purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ." Nor was this an idle claim. Guido de Bres was in consultation with men like Godfried van Wingen, Cornelis Cooltuyn, Petrus Dathenus, and Caspar van der Heiden, as well as others. And there is evidence in the writings of the time that his confession was early acknowledged as the confession which "we Reformed of the Netherlands have given over to the King of Spain." Besides, we may mention that the important church at Antwerp appears to have had a part in its production; at least it was soon known as the Confession of Antwerp.

Hence, there can be no doubt that already prior to its official adoption by the Reformed churches the Belgic Confession was in reality the expression of the faith of Reformed believers throughout the Lowlands.

And what took place subsequently simply confirms what we have said.

In 1562 the first Dutch edition of this creed made its appearance, necessitated by the fact that both the Dutch and French languages were used in the Netherlands provinces at that time. Not long thereafter the confession became the official creed of both branches of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. A Synod at Armentiers in 1563 already required subscription to the creed by officebearers. The Synod of Antwerp in 1566 revised the French text somewhat and also required subscription. Various Dutch synods concerned themselves with the text. The original Dutch edition was recognized as the official edition until the Synod of 's Gravenhage in 1583, which approved an edition produced from the French text of 1566 by Arent Cornelissen, minister at Delft. In 1611 still another Dutch edition appeared at the behest of the Synod of Veere in 1610. This one was produced by Faukelius, Walaëus, and Bucerus, among others. Besides, numerous Synods set their stamp of approval on this confession in the period before the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19. The Convent of Wezel (1568) demanded agreement with it on the part of ministers. The Synod of Emden (1571) required that the ministers subscribe to it. The Synod of Dordrecht required that elders and deacons subscribe to the confession in 1574; and in 1578 the Synod of Dordrecht required the same of professors of theology. In 1581 the Synod of Middelburg required that also the school teachers subscribe to this creed.

Hence, from the very beginning the *Belgic Confession* has been acknowledged and adopted as the official expression of the faith of the Reformed churches. H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church takes this opportunity to express its sincere sympathy to a former member, Mr. J. Van Nieuwenhuizen, whom the Lord has brought to sorrow by calling unto Himself his wife,

MRS. J. VAN NIEUWENHUIZEN  
Nee LUCY VANDE STREEK

May his heart be comforted by our heavenly Father.

Rev. B. Woudenberg, President  
Dale H. Kuiper, Secretary

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Baptism of Adopted Children

Is it proper for the church to administer the sacrament of baptism to children that have been adopted? Quite naturally this question should be preceded by another. Is it proper to adopt and to give out children for adoption?

Both of these questions have come before the Synod of our churches so that we have an official pronouncement by our churches on this subject. The latter question appeared first. In 1951 two protests were brought to the Synod against a Consistory that was involved in an adoption case. In brief the position of the consistory was that: (a) It is not principally wrong to give out children for adoption, (b) Although not principally wrong, it may not be done unless the parents or parent have the assurance that the child will be placed in a covenant home, be baptized and receive covenant training; (c) If at all possible the parent or parents should keep their children and bring them up themselves in the fear of the Lord. But since there is no principle involved, and if the parent is motivated by a sincere desire for the welfare of the child, and has the assurance mentioned above, the possibility or impossibility must be left to the conscience of the parent.

The protestants, on the other hand, took the position that there is a principle involved here and that under all circumstances it is wrong for covenant parents to give out their children for adoption and, consequently, it would also be wrong to adopt children. All the written material of this case is too lengthy to produce here but it may be found in the printed Acts of 1951 and 1952. The Synod appointed a committee to study the question and then in 1952 made the following decision. We insert in the quotation only the positive decision and omit defeated motions and amendments. In this way we can see clearly just what Synod decided.

"A. In all *normal* circumstances, that is, in such circumstances in which the father or mother or both, of the child can assume full responsibility for the child and its training, the position that it is always the calling and responsibility of parents to train the children that God has given them, is correct. (Synod added three grounds here.)

"B. The normal position being clear, the question arises whether Scripture allows abnormal, that is, such circumstances as make it inadvisable or impossible for father or mother or both to assume responsibility for the child and its training, circumstances to affect the above rule and whether Scripture allows the possibility of the rule being abrogated in certain abnormal circumstances. We believe that Scripture makes this allowance. (Synod adopted one ground here.)

"C. Conclusion: (1) We believe it has been established

that, in certain abnormal circumstances, Scripture allows an abrogation of the normal, direct responsibility of parents to train their children.

"(2) The right or wrong of giving out of children for adoption is to be judged by the Scriptural principles adopted under A and B; initially by the parents or parent involved, and if called into question, by the proper ecclesiastical processes."

We may sum up the decision of Synod by saying that the Synod saw and warned against several grave dangers and real, possible sins involved in the adoption matter but also allowed, under certain circumstances, the possibility of the giving of children for adoption. Although not expressly stated, this position of Synod would certainly imply that it is therefore not wrong as such to adopt a child.

This brings us before the question whether such children as are received through the processes of adoption should also be baptized. Although this question, in its direct form, has not been before our Synod, a matter very closely related to it was introduced to the Synod of 1959 and decided only last year. The question there was, "When should adopted children receive baptism?" In treating this matter it appears that the Synod proceeded on the assumption that such baptism was proper and that the only matter of concern had to do with the time of its administration. In 1960 the following decision was reached:

"Adopted children shall be baptized only when their legal adoption shall have been made final. Grounds:

"1. It is altogether desirable that our churches have a uniform policy in matters of this nature. The immediate baptism of these children is often a tender matter with the couples involved. It is not good that the privilege is granted in one church while it is denied in another.

"2. If people were to know beforehand that the child was to be in their home for only a year, they would not think of requesting baptism. That such is not actually the case is not really determined until the adoption has been made final.

"3. The third of the baptism questions cannot properly be answered in the affirmative until the adoption has been completed. 'When come to years of discretion.' There is no legal assurance that the couple will still have the child when that time comes. 'Whereof you are either parent or witness.' Strictly speaking, they are not the parents as yet. The agency assures us that really these children belong to the courts during this probation period.

"4. There can be no reasonable objection to waiting a year, while there are strong objections to immediate baptism.

"5. This is the position of the Christian Reformed Churches, as appears from their 1949 decision: 'Synod declares that no adopted child should be baptized until the probation period is over and the adoption made final, because adoption results only when the final step is taken and parents

must be sure the child is theirs before they can assume the baptismal vows'."

Insofar as this decision of Synod makes the practice of baptizing adopted children uniform in all our churches, we feel it is a good decision. What is valid in one church in the denomination should be valid in all the churches. However, with regard to the question whether adopted children should be baptized before they come to years, there has been considerable difference of opinion in the past.

Rev. Ophoff expresses the view that "they may be, if the parents were believers, otherwise not." Monsma and Van Dellen state, "Consequently, the present writers believe it is better to postpone the baptism of adopted children in question until they manifest themselves as Christians" (p. 234, *Church Order Commentary*). The same authors refer to Dr. Bouwman's *Gereformeerde Kerkrecht* and add, "It may also be said that the recent or present day leaders of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands are, as far as we know, all opposed to the practice of baptizing children of non-Christian parentage, though adopted into Christian homes." In the same commentary it is pointed out that the great Synod of Dort already faced this question in connection with children of pagan origin who came from the Dutch East Indies and were adopted in Christian homes. Monsma and Van Dellen say that, "The Synod judged that these children should not be baptized until they in due season should make profession of faith." Then they quote the following part of the Synod's decision: "Concerning children of pagans which, because of their youth, or because they cannot understand the language, have not been able to receive instruction from the Christians, although they may have been incorporated into the homes of Christians by adoption, it was also judged by majority vote that these should not be baptized before they have come to such years that they can be instructed in the first principles of the Christian religion according to the measure of their understanding, and after such has also taken place."

Prof. W. Heyns, however, in his "Handbook For Elders and Deacons" judges that those who do not favor the baptism of adopted children of non-Christian birth cannot appeal to the Synod of Dort. His claim is that the question did not concern adopted children but rather children who were brought into Christian homes as slaves and occasionally were later removed from these families and fell back again among the heathen. Such children were not to receive baptism. The literal wording of the synod's decision, however, appears to disprove this contention of Heyns.

In the Christian Reformed Church this question has appeared on more than one synod. In 1910 the Synod left the matter of the baptism or non-baptism of adopted children of non-Christian parentage to the judgment of each consistory. However, twenty years later the Synod answered this question in the affirmative. Against this decision of 1930 various protests were brought with the result that this question was

referred to a study committee. This committee reported in 1936. The committee was composed of nine members. Four submitted a majority report. Three members delivered a minority report. Two members offered a third report. After consideration of these reports the Synod decided: "That there is not sufficient ground to reverse the decision of the Synod of 1930 upholding the permissibility of the baptism of children born outside of the covenant circle and adopted by believing parents." To this the Synod then added: "That this 1930 decision in no way justified the molestation of anyone who, whether as church member or in the specific capacity of officebearer, may have conscientious scruples against the administration of the sacrament of baptism to such children." Just what this means is not clear. Does it, for example, mean that a church member or office bearer who might adopt such a child and is of the opinion that it should not be baptized until maturity may not be troubled about the earlier baptism of the child? Or does it mean that a minister who holds the position that such baptism is improper may not be coerced to administer the sacrament if the occasion presented itself? The meaning is not plain.

Finally, in 1949 the Christian Reformed Synod took the position that we referred to earlier and that is similar to that taken by our last Synod.

We do not know why our Synod did not enter into the question of the propriety of baptizing all adopted children. Our position now is that it is proper to baptize all of them as long as they are legally adopted. Whether this position is wholly correct is subject to debate but we will have to wait until next time to present some arguments which Monsma and Van Dellen raise against this practice.

G.V.d.B.

### Adams Street School

Will need four Protestant Reformed teachers to complete its teaching staff this coming fall, 1961-1962.

Please give this your earnest prayer and consideration that our children may be brought up in the knowledge and fear of our God.

Education Committee  
GERRIT PIPE  
1463 Ardmore St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 24, 1961, our beloved parents

MR. AND MRS. BEN WIGGER

will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to God for the privileges and blessings of His covenant grace in which they and we have shared through the years, and for the assurances given us for the future.

Their children:

Mr. and Mrs. John Wigger  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wigger  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Haverkamp  
9 grandchildren

## ALL AROUND US

### FEDERAL AID TO SCHOOLS

For a considerable time the question of government aid to schools has appeared on the front pages of newspapers and in various articles in church periodicals. On the one hand, when Russia launched its first sputnik and the people of America were given a glimpse of the scientific progress of their enemy, the immediate reaction was to blame the American educational process for falling behind in the education of its children and young citizens. There were not enough schools, not enough teachers, not enough good education, not enough emphasis on science in the present schools. The solution to the problem was sought primarily in federal aid to education to step up the building program, raise the salaries of teachers to attract more and better people to the profession, and gear education to a scientific society. This issue of federal aid to education is still an issue today, and President Kennedy has made various proposals to Congress to accomplish this objective.

On the other hand, this question also affects those churches who operate parochial schools or whose parents operate private schools not supported by the government. These schools include primarily the Roman Catholic Schools, Baptist Schools, Lutheran Schools and schools of parents of Reformed persuasion. The parents who through societies or churches operate such schools not only must pay taxes for the existing public schools, but also support their own private schools through tuition, church collections and drives.

This whole matter is of importance also to our Protestant Reformed people who must, through taxes, support the public schools in their districts, but who must also support the schools to which actually they send their children. And most likely, taxes would go up if the federal government engaged in a gigantic spending program to aid public schools.

The immediate question is whether or not federal aid to education should also be given to private and parochial schools; and whether or not we would be justified in accepting such aid should it be offered. The proposals now before Congress specify only public schools. Francis Cardinal Spellman sharply denounced this entire proposal on the grounds that private schools had as much right to federal aid to education as public schools. He said in a recent speech,

"I cannot believe that Congress would discriminate against Lutheran, Baptist, Catholic or Jewish parents — Americans all — in the allocation of educational funds."

With these sentiments, Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffman of the Lutheran Churches did not agree. He responded,

"Let Cardinal Spellman speak for himself. He does not speak for us Lutherans. As Americans who accept the traditional American policy of Church-state separation, we Lutherans would not feel discriminated against if Federal funds were appropriated for public schools only. In fact, we think that

Federal assistance, if there has to be such assistance, should be restricted to public schools."

The whole problem does not simply involve, however, federal aid to private schools, but also involves the free transportation of children attending private schools on public school buses as well as the participation of private schools in the government's free lunch program. *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic action weekly, has gone on record in a series of articles as favoring federal aid to private schools as well as public schools. In answer to the objection that if people do not want to take advantage of the free education of public schools, but prefer the education of private institutions, they must pay the consequences, the Catholic press insists that this is denying the citizens of America their religious rights and freedoms. Because they chose to instruct their children according to their own faith, they are discriminated against, in the allocation of federal funds, and all but forced to send their children to public schools. This involves a violation of their rights to believe and teach as they please.

Whether the Catholics will be successful or not in gaining federal aid for their schools and all private schools remains to be seen. But should aid be offered to our own schools, the temptation would be very strong to accept this aid and relieve somewhat the burden carried by our people in supporting a school for their own children. Yet such an acceptance of funds from the government would be very dangerous and wrong. It is not difficult for one to see the justice of the government's giving relief to our people and others who support schools of their own through excusing them from taxes or through making tuition deductible on income tax returns. But direct aid by the government to our schools we should never accept. Certainly, in the first place, if we sincerely desire the distinctive education for our children which our own schools provide, we alone must pay the cost of educating them. It is our covenant responsibility, and therefore also our financial responsibility. On the other hand, it is impossible to imagine that the government would contribute sums of money to the operation and maintenance of our schools without also determining how that money should be spent. They have the right, and no doubt will exercise that right, to lay down certain conditions which must be met before the money can be used. This is especially true since the immediate occasion for the granting of federal funds rises from the fear that the Russians are out-stripping us in scientific technology. These conditions will involve not only the building of schools as such, but also what must be taught in the schools, and perhaps even what must not be taught in them.

Now also the government, whether federal or local, has a certain amount of control over our schools. They have a building code which must be met, and they even determine to a certain extent the curriculum which must be taught in order for schools to gain accreditation. This is bad enough, and has recently led to trouble for some of the existing

Christian Schools. We should be very wary therefore of any more government control of schools, for if we do not, we will gradually lose our own schools where our children can be and are taught the truth as we confess it. This may require considerable sacrifice on our part, but if we ever succumb to the temptation of letting the government direct what may be taught even through the allocation of funds, we are better off without our schools altogether.

### A COVENANT CHILD "ON HIS OWN"?

In *The Banner* of January 13, under the column "A Reader Asks," a question appears and is answered concerning the matter of when a covenant child is "on his own." Evidently the reader had been arguing with a Baptist about when a child reaches the "maximum age at which covenant children can still be regarded as being under the parental wing and therefore the object of covenantal promises made to parents and their children." The implication of this question is that there comes a time in the life of a covenant child when the promises made to his parents and therefore to him are no longer valid, and the child stands on his own, his salvation dependent upon his own personal commitment to Christ. This is evident from the fact that the question is phrased,

"Suppose a 17- or 18-year-old child of covenant parents dies without making public confession of his faith, is he lost since he failed to give confessional evidence of covenantal life by that age? Or may he be regarded as saved? At what age is the dividing line?"

After pointing out that the Baptists have as great or even a greater problem than the Reformed, the answer is given,

"There is no flat, definite answer that can be given. We cannot say, for instance, that at the age of 15 the promises per se cease and personal responsibility takes over. There are many factors that enter into this important decision of taking a public stand for Christ. There are some who reach maturity much sooner than do others. Our business as parents is to acquaint them with the riches of God's forgiving grace, remind them that they must personally plead for forgiveness and lay personal claim to the covenant promises in Christ, and urge them to follow through in the promises symbolized in their baptism by making a personal commitment to their Savior. There is no one set age to press these claims home. Some may be ready for it at 14 or 15; others are not. Evaluate their stage of maturity and when you judge that they have reached the level of responsible decision, bring to bear upon them these claims of Christ and pray the Spirit to impel them to confess before men that they are on the Lord's side."

It is obvious that the main point of the questioner, a point conceded by the answer, is that there is a certain period in a child's life when the promises of God are sufficient to save. But there is also a point which is reached in a child's development, somewhere in his teens usually, when these promises are null and void, and the covenant youth stands before God without the strength of these promises, his salvation now dependent from that point on on his own personal acceptance of Christ.

This is a very strange view and certainly not in harmony with Scripture. In fact, it is a principle concession to the Baptist's view of adult baptism and a capitulation to the

Arminianism inherent in the Baptist's position. All kinds of questions necessarily arise. When do God's promises cease to be effective? At the time when a child makes confession of faith? But what if he never makes confession of faith? Is he heir to those promises always by virtue of his not making confession of faith? Or does a child reach a certain age when suddenly those promises cease regardless of whether he makes confession of faith or not? Does this mean that once he was an heir to the promises of God, but suddenly ceases to be? And if only confession of faith will restore those promises to him, what did it mean in the first place when he had them? What good did they do him? Is it only in case he should die that the promises which he received through his parents were of any value? By what power does he make his personal commitment to Christ? Is this the power of his own will if it is not the power of the promise? Is it true then that the promises of God can be trusted to carry a child through only a brief period of his life, to be followed by a period in which he is thrown on his own resources?

Of course, it is evident that this position follows from the position which the Christian Reformed Church has taken regarding the character of the covenant. They have defined that covenant as an agreement between two parties, and by doing so have committed themselves to the position that the covenant is not in force until the child born within the church has accepted that covenant and entered into its agreement. But then it is also no longer true that that child can be carried through infancy on the strength of the promise of God. For where no covenant is, there can also be no promises. If the covenant is not established with children, as it cannot be if the covenant is an agreement between two parties, then the promises of that covenant cannot be claimed by children either. But then one must retreat to the position of the Baptists, for the ground for infant baptism has been destroyed. Baptism is a sign of the covenant, established in the line of generations. And this certainly means that the covenant is established with believers and their spiritual seed; that the promises of the covenant are to these believers and to their spiritual seed throughout their entire life; that these same promises of the covenant are the power in the hearts of the spiritual seed to lead them to confession of their faith and to cling to the cross of Jesus Christ. For these promises include also the gift of faith merited for the spiritual seed of the covenant, and given by grace alone. But then the covenant is not an agreement any more between two parties, but it is a gracious bond of fellowship which God mercifully and graciously establishes with us and with our children, and which He Himself maintains throughout life, yea, into all eternity.

To speak of the covenant as an agreement between two parties is to undermine the foundation of the whole of salvation. It is a position that must carry one into the camp of the Baptists and into the Arminianism inherent in the Baptist views.

H. Hanko

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

There was one lecture which the undersigned gave in 1960 which was not mentioned in the former issue of *The Standard Bearer* under "Missionary Notes." I refer to the lecture which was held by the undersigned in the American Legion Hall at Tripp, S.D. This lecture was held December 14, 1960.

Permit me to tell you something about this lecture and the experience we had at this city of South Dakota.

In the first place it should be noticed that Tripp, S.D., is on route U.S. 18. This is 99 miles straight west from Doon, Iowa. It is, therefore, in the southeastern part of South Dakota. Isabel is in the N.W. part of South Dakota. It is about 375 miles from Isabel to Tripp and about 200 miles from Aberdeen to Tripp. One should consult a map of South Dakota to appreciate this.

The town of Tripp, S.D., itself has about one thousand or more inhabitants. It has a Methodist Church, a Congregational Church, two Lutheran Churches (American Lutheran and Missouri Synod), Roman Catholic and a Reformed Church. This latter church, the Reformed, is really originally of the Reformed Church, U.S.A. (German Reformed) but has merged with the Evangelical Church so that this merged church since 1940 has been known as the *Evangelical Reformed Church*. Now this church has again merged with the Congregational Church and this new formation is called "The United Church of Christ."

In this town we found a very commodious auditorium in the American Legion Hall. We found it immaculately clean and the acoustics in it are excellent. A helpful printer gave us a front-page write-up, and we put a paid announcement in the paper, and had some placards made, advertising the meeting. We also made a few calls on people whose addresses we received from our people in both Isabel and Forbes.

Since it took a little time to get the ground-work laid here in Tripp and since I would not be able to preach, as yet, on Sunday, I returned for the week-end to Hull, Iowa, where Mrs. Lubbers and I stayed at the parsonage of Hull, the home of Rev. J. Kortering. We took charge of the catechism classes on Saturday, preached twice on Sunday and led the Y. P. Society on Sunday evening. Rev. and Mrs. Kortering and children were in our churches at Isabel and Forbes for three Sundays. Thus we had a good place of lodging and could employ the mimeograph of the Hull church for song-sheets for the lecture at Tripp. Rev. G. Van Baren graciously consented to cancel an evening of listening to a rendition of the oratorio, the "Messiah," and accompanied us to Tripp to serve as the chairman. He took along a goodly and representative number of the Sunday School pamphlets which we dis-

played at the Legion Hall. Incidentally there were several of the people who came to the lecture who also took one or more pamphlets with them. Wilmar Jansma from our Hull church accompanied us as the pianist and Mr. and Mrs. John Blankespoor also went with us.

It was a good evening. Eleven people came to hear the lecture in Tripp besides those who came with me from N.W. Iowa. The undersigned spoke on the subject, "The Infallible Earmark of the Last Hour," after being fitly and properly introduced by the Rev. G. Van Baren. After the lecture we drove back to Iowa yet that same evening.

The audience listened well. There was one individual who remained to talk with us. He told Rev. Van Baren that had he been aware of the nature of our churches and the calibre of the address he felt certain more people could have been made interested to come and hear the lecture.

Incidentally, none of the families and individuals we visited prior to the lecture made it a point to come to hear. I believe that the method of lecture and follow up is the only practically possible one. One could not very well work with a list of names and simply make personal calls, and then, should there appear sufficient interest, announce a meeting for a lecture. The method of announcing a lecture and then follow up has been designated by some as "from the top down." It is difficult to see the propriety of this designation, even from a formal point of view.

As of now your Home Missionary has a mandate from the Mission Committee to return to Tripp and hold other lectures. If possible we should also attempt a service on Sunday, after a few personal visits to those interested.

Until such a time as Sunday services can be arranged in Tripp, it seems to me, reason dictates that the Home Missionary seek to find a vacant pulpit in one or more of our churches in the vicinity. It would hardly do to sit in Tripp doing nothing when one can fill a pulpit in Doon on a given Sunday, when Rev. J. Van Baren is away preaching by classical appointment.

May I make a request? Will you remember this labor in your prayers? Sometimes I gain the impression that this is not always done. I only hope to be proved in error in this feeling.

Let us not forget that there are still Reformed people in those parts of South Dakota for whom the future, from a Reformed point of view, is the very opposite of being promising. They will be the victim of the maelstrom of church-mergers ever remerging. And in the process the Reformed truth disappears altogether.

G.L.

Bulletin Quote (Lynden's): God has always saved the church. He has always saved it, not by theological pacifists, but by sturdy contenders for the Truth.

— J. Gresham Machen

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Feb. 5, 1961

A new trio has been named by the consistory of Creston Church as follows: Revs. H. J. Kuiper, G. Van Baren and R. Veldman.

Rev. Lubbers has declined the call extended him by the Isabel-Forbes congregations.

From the Adams St. School "Announcer" we quote this paragraph from the pen of Mrs. D. Slomp: "It seemed like old times to be back again. I am sure we third graders are happy although we had to say 'goodbye' to Mrs. R. Veldman for a while. We hope she is having a good rest from her work at school and that the Lord will bless her and us." The Principal, Mrs. J. Veltman, rejoiced that the sixth graders are becoming aware of current events, in the following excerpt: "They are beginning to read the headlines, and we hope they will read the news articles, too. There is something in the Press besides the fun page and Ann Landers." From the last statement on Mrs. Veltman's page it appears that her children have learned to sing Psalm 42:1 in the Holland language!

We have heard that about 100 people came out to hear the lecture given by Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., at Hull, Iowa, Jan. 26. The size of the audience was especially appreciated by the Lecture Committee because of the fact that the temperature was 20 degrees below zero with a strong northwest wind to buffet the **brave visitors from the Hull, Doon and Edgerton congregations.**

The first transfer of membership papers of a member of one of our newest congregations was noted when First Church received Mr. Donald Hauch from the church in Forbes, North Dakota.

The January 22nd issue of Edgerton's bulletin carried this announcement: "The pastor and his wife would express their appreciation to the congregation for the well-wishes and the gift which they received at the recent adoption of their son."

The *Beacon Lights* Singspiration held in Southwest Church, Jan. 29, was followed by a singspiration in Hudsonville Church sponsored by a male quartet from that church, Feb. 5.

Here are a few facts of a financial nature furnished by the Station Committee of The Reformed Witness Hour which might be of interest to our readers, especially those who tune in each Lord's Day to this radio program: "The cost of our weekly broadcasts varies. Each station's charge for broadcast time is determined by the area and population it 'covers.' For example, radio station WFUR, Grand Rapids, Mich., is a non-directional station, which means that it beams at least 35 miles in every direction, and with favorable weather conditions can be heard up to 70 miles from origination. A con-

servative estimate of WFUR's *actual* audience is at least 100,000. Its potential audience is much larger than this figure. Broadcasting charges for this station each Sunday from 4:00 to 4:30 P. M. — \$27.00. Station KBOE, located in Oska-loosa, Iowa, covers a radius of about 50 miles and has a *potential* of 950,000 listeners — cost per half hour broadcast, \$16.60. Trans-World Radio, Monte Carlo, Monaco, which beams our Distinctively Reformed program to the British Isles and parts of Germany, France, Luxembourg and all of the Netherlands, costs the Mission Board of our Prot. Ref. Churches about \$100.00 per 30 minutes broadcast. Feb. 19 marks the 945th broadcast of the Ref. Witness Hour—which means that we as Prot. Ref. believers have been privileged to proclaim the Truth of God's Word for over 20 years by means of the air waves! May our gracious God continue to bless our radio work!"

Hudsonville's Church has a library of books which may be borrowed for home reading. We wonder if any of our other churches can duplicate this service.

The following changes in your Year Book may be noted: *New Clerks* — Peter Schipper, 263 E. 11th St., Holland, Mich.; M. Gaastra, 302 W. Lugonia, Redlands, Calif.; J. Flikkema, 18288 Ada St., Lansing, Ill. (South Holland's); P. Dekker, 108 Mayfield Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. (First Church); Donald Dykstra, 3885 Van Buren, Hudsonville, Mich.; B. Van Maanen, Hull, Iowa; L. Regnerus, 9245 S. 85th Ave., Oak Lawn, Ill.; Ted Engelsma, 2333 Clyde Park Ave., S. W., Grand Rapids, Mich. (Southwest). *New Treasurers* — J. Van Kampen, 315 W. 24th St., Holland, Mich.; W. Buiter, 9615 Nottingham, Oak Lawn, Ill.; John Flikkema, Jr., 448 Eleanor, N. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. (Southwest).

It is gratifying to notice that the spiritual well-being of the young people is of vital interest to their consistory, as intimated in a recent announcement in Redlands' bulletin calling a special meeting of all their young people — evidently to bolster up flagging interest in their Young People's Society.

The Young People's Society of Hull is currently engaged in the study of the Book of Esther, with a varied after recess program, usually announced in the bulletin.

In a January meeting of Oak Lawn's Y. P. Society a question was answered by Bill Rutgers regarding the harmonization of Psalm 139:21, 22 and Matt. 5:44. For your edification look up those texts and contemplate what your answer would be.

Growth and progress in Lynden's congregation was reported by two announcements; one, the birth of a son in the Andrew Vander Top family, and the other of the public confession of faith of Miss Alice Vander Meulen.

We see that the Hope School Circle is serving another soup and spaghetti supper in the Hudsonville Church parlors. The proceeds, as before, go to the fund being raised for the addition of one more classroom in their school.

, , , , see you in church.

J.M.F.