

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### GOD'S CHARGE

*"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." I Peter 5:2-4*

At this time a goodly number of new office bearers have taken their place in the consistories of the Church of Christ.

For variety's sake, I would like to write something about them, and not only about them, but also for those who are in and stay in for a while.

Peter, the Apostle of the Lord, was eminently fitted to write about the office of shepherd. He heard the Lord Jesus say to him: "Feed My sheep!", and: "Feed My lambs!" Hence, he calls himself an elder.

Neither is that all.

He is fitted to say something about the shepherding of the flock of God because he was led by the Holy Ghost to write the Word of God without error. The product of his writing is the infallible Word of God.

Let's listen to him.

\* \* \* \*

Did you note that this admonition is surrounded by a call to humility? Humility is stressed, emphasized in this section. Not only shall the younger be subject to the elder, but Peter concludes that "all should be subject to one another."

And his reason is one of the foundation stones of God's Kingdom: "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble!"

Let us look at God's charge to the elders with that in mind.

"Feed the flock of God," and the mentioning of the Shep-

herd, is language which is imagery. And it is imagery which is found repeatedly in God's Word. Both in the Old and the New Testament you find the church likened to a flock of sheep, and their feeding by shepherds or pastors, which is the same thing.

The world over, in all lands, among all peoples, we find this beautiful picture of the many flocks, together at night in the fold, called by the individual shepherd in the morning, returning at night to the fold again.

Yes, the picture of the woolly sheep, consisting of the ewes, the rams and the lambs, is a beautiful picture indeed.

And Jesus calleth His own sheep by their individual names. No, no, I do not mean the names which your father and mother gave you, but the names which the Holy Spirit and the Word of God gave you.

And being called by Jesus, they follow Him. Isaiah says: "He will lead His flock like a shepherd." Isa. 40:11. And Zechariah says: "Jehovah of hosts hath visited His flock, the house of Judah." Zech. 10:3.

In many lands there are many flocks, but they are going to the eternal fold, and they shall be one.

At that time the great Shepherd shall appear, and the office of the earthly shepherd shall come to an end.

\* \* \* \*

This great flock is called God's heritage in my text.

That sounds both sinister and beautiful.

Sinister, because heritage reminds us of death, and of bereavement. And that is correct.

It indicates the means by which God binds the church to Himself. Christ is the Testator who died in order to save the flock from eternal death and shame. It shows the preciousness of the flock.

But also beautiful.

Ah me, what shall I say of this? Words fail me! For over thirty-five years I have tried to explain this to the various flocks, and now I am approaching the end of my

work as shepherd, but I have only stammered a little of this most wonderful and fundamental part of my ministry.

Beautiful! The Great Shepherd dies for His flock! Jesus, that is, Jehovah God, in the human nature of Jesus, dies and dies and dies again and again, He dies the eternal death so that the sheep may be saved.

But then I have not said all.

He dies the eternal death and becomes an open shame before all the worlds, in order to show the whole Universe how inexpressibly lovely God is!

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the most lovely THING the Universe has ever seen, sees, or will see.

Christ, the Lamb of God, shall be displayed in the midst of the throne of God unto all eternity. All the hosts of heaven shall always look at that focal point in heaven and earth.

And no one there shall ever become tired of looking at that loveliness of God, nor grow weary of singing and saying to God: O God! we praise Thee and thank Thee for that Child Jesus!

\* \* \* \*

Elders!

Do you want me to tell you what you ought to do in the midst of God's flock?

Here it is: tell the church of that loveliness! And see to it that the minister among you, who is also an elder, tells the church ever of that loveliness of Jehovah.

I know, I know, your calling is to feed the flock, to guide the flock, to govern the flock, and to defend the flock.

And all the foregoing boils down to what I said before: tell the flock about Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Attend to this: 1) to feed the church is found in Psalm 17:15, "As for me, I will behold Thy Face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." And we all know that God's Face and His likeness is Christ Jesus our Lord. 2) to guide the flock is also Christ. This we find in Isa. 40:11, "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." 3) to govern the flock is also Christ: "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." Psalm 2:6. And 4) to defend the flock is Jesus: "neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:28b.

The charge of any elder in God's church is: see that Christ is given to the Christians!

The chief labor for an elder is, however, to feed the flock.

And that means that the Church of Christ receives that which belongs to its very nature. The church is born from heaven, and in that second birth they receive the Christ in

their inmost heart. And that Christ in the Christian is fed with Christ unto all eternity. In Him is all the glorious knowledge of God.

And Christ is, as we have said, the most beautiful THING in the whole Universe, both this one and the one to come.

\* \* \* \*

To do that in a way that God approves of demands certain requirements. And of them the text speaks.

Some are positive, some negative. Let's look at them.

You must take the oversight of the flock. Yes, I know that this is most difficult. You must stand above the flock and watch it with supreme interest. You must watch the flock and every one of its individual members, both sheep and lambs, and see to it that they walk according to Jesus Christ.

Moreover, you must be ensamples to the flock. What does that mean? It means that you stand before the Cross of Jesus Christ and adore it, speak of it, design your life according to it, and, most important of all, that you silently listen to that Cross, and let it instruct you. Yes, listen to the TRUTH of God without gainsaying, contradiction.

If you do that, it will be seen.

If you do that, the flock will love and respect you for it.

If you do that, the flock will follow you, and walk with you to heaven.

There are also negative requirements.

You must take, stand and walk as elders of Christ "not by constraint, but willingly." Oh, for elders that love their office! Some say: I have not the time for it! I dislike to be an elder!

Some say: I am not worthy of it! I like that. And I am sure that God likes that. For it is true: no one is worthy of the office of elder. That office is so wonderful, so beautiful, so soul-satisfying, that I can find no words for it. Of all work in this filthy world, there is nothing that can be compared to it.

Further, "not for filthy lucre." You should not have any mundane profit, money or otherwise, in your mind when you seek or receive that wondrous office of elder. You remember Simon?

Rather, you must do your work of elder "of a ready mind." That means that you love your office, and gladly, joyously do the work.

"Neither as being lords."

Oh, but that is an ugly thing. It is a cursed fault.

God means that you should not try to bring the flock under YOUR power. You should never try to subdue the members, to master them, to exercise sway over them.

For then the servant acts as though he is the Lord Himself.

Contrariwise, you should rule and speak and act in the Lord's Name always, and *according to His Word*.

Yes, they may hate you for it, but that is an honor, reserved for God's true and faithful servants. But let them never hate you because of your filthy pride.

\* \* \* \*

And now comes the most difficult part: your reward.

Difficult, not because it is vague, difficult to lay our finger on, either in the text or in the Bible generally. Oh no, it is found throughout God's Word, and in words easy to grasp.

But it is difficult for me to write on it for it is so unbelievable.

Imagine: we will get "a crown of glory" because we have been elders in God's flock! O God! of all miracles: how is this possible?

I have said more than once: anniversaries, and In Memoriams of elders and ministers are embarrassing!

Christ said: "And, behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be!"

Beloved reader! I am also an elder of Jesus Christ, and I assure you that I am speaking the truth: I feel so worthless after my work is done! I feel so unworthy of any honor at all, least of all to receive a crown of glory!

Allow me to go no further, except this yet: this reward is a reward of GRACE! And I can well believe that. Amen.

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

### Notice to all interested Teachers:

If you are eligible to teach and interested in obtaining a position in a Protestant Reformed Christian School, please notify the Teacher Placement Committee by writing to the following address:

Teacher Placement Committee  
852 Sigsbee St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

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## EDITORIALS

### "The Adam Question"

We were discussing the statement of the Reformed Church in America, which was also adopted by the General Synod of that Church.

The "Statement" was an answer to an overture from Classis Grand Rapids South about the historicity of Genesis. As we read this "Statement" we began to wonder what the Commission meant by "historicity" and "historical." And the farther we read, the more we become convinced that whatever they mean by these terms they certainly do not mean a record of events or facts as they actually happened. Just let us quote a little more:

"We would call attention, however, to the fact that the first chapters of Genesis are by their very nature unique, and deal with facts that can only be described in pictorial fashion. Both the beginning and end of history, as described in the Bible, are realities which we can only know from revelation, not from human experience. While many peoples have stories of creation, the biblical account is unique in that the inspired author, knowing himself a part of the history of God's saving dealings with the world, received a revelation concerning "the beginnings" and wrote from the perspective of the covenant faith. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he framed the story of beginnings in such a way as to provide a cosmic background for, and an introduction to, the story of God's dealings with His Chosen People. The perfection of God's creation, the fall, exile from the garden, family life torn apart by jealousy, the first city built by a murderer, the lust for revenge in Lamech's Song, the depth of sin in the incident of Gen. 6:1-4, the judgment of God by means of a flood, the oneness of the family of nations, the Tower of Babel, the renewed judgment of God upon man's bold defiance of his Creator—all this furnishes the background against which the story of redemption is told."

In all this we still have no answer to the question whether the Commission understands all this as history, as a record of what actually took place, or merely as a story invented by the author of Genesis under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But let us read on a little:

"In these accounts we are told the deepest truths about the world in which we live: it is God's world; its origin and orderly structure ultimately find their ground in the will of God; man, although created in the image of God, from the very beginning abused the freedom given him; instead of responding to God in obedience and faith, he fell into disobedience and revolt; sin, once gaining a foothold in the world, increased in intensity, bringing with it all sorts of degrading acts, until God Himself took the initiative to redeem man from the curse of sin."

This last clause beginning with *until* is rather strange.

In the sentence it means that first sin entered into the world, that it developed and that "it increased in intensity" and that then, after some time, God took the initiative to redeem man from the curse of sin. Perhaps, the commission does not mean it this way; and again, perhaps it does. But certainly, this "until" is not according to Scripture. God "took the initiative" immediately by announcing the victory of the "Seed of the woman" over the serpent and his seed. But, perhaps, this is history as the Commission conceives of it. Perhaps, Adam was not a historical person after all. Perhaps, instead of his being created in the image of God on the sixth day, he gradually developed into a being that bore the image of God, then fell away from God into sin and disobedience, became more and more sinful, and then "God took the initiative." After all this must be the intention of the Commission. Otherwise they could never have written that little conjunction "Until."

This also may give us a glimpse of what the Commission means by "history." It certainly is not a record of facts that actually took place. "Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit"(!), the author, since he knew nothing as yet of the theory of evolution, invented this story of the "creation" (?) and the "fall" (?) of man and of the development of sin and its increase in intensity, "until" (when?) God took the initiative to redeem man from the curse of sin!

But more about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

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### An Open Letter to the Rev. Henry Baker

Dear Rev. Baker:

I read your article in *The Banner* entitled "A Basis for Reunion" and I am constrained to make a few remarks in connection with it. (By the way, is it not a striking coincidence that there appeared an article in *De Wachter* on virtually the same subject and at the same time?)

First of all, I wish to point out to you, Rev. Baker, that there is no Protestant Reformed Church in the sense in which you refer to it. For, in the first place, we, i.e. the Protestant Reformed people, never speak of our denomination as Protestant Reformed Church but always as "Churches" in the plural. But, secondly, Rev. Baker, you are not addressing any Protestant Reformed group whatsoever but only a group of schismatics that deliberately attempted to destroy the Protestant Reformed Churches but failed and by way of reaction destroyed themselves.

It is in connection with this that I wish to make my first and also my main critical remark. It is this, and I will put it in the form of a question: Is the Christian Reformed Church stooping so low that they receive in their midst members and officebearers, yea, even churches, of whom they know or, at least, might know and should know, that they created schism in the Protestant Reformed Churches? Let me remind you of the bare facts:

1. A minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches preached heresy from his own pulpit. Protests were filed with the consistory. These protests were concentrated especially in two statements which I will not quote here now but which the minister admitted he made and which surely are heretical in the light of Protestant Reformed truth. The matter was brought to the attention of classis, the final result of which was that the minister and several of his elders were deposed.

2. No appeal was made to Synod.

3. Some delegates of the classis separated themselves from Classis East and formed a new classis which they claimed to be the true and only Classis East.

4. Classis West also took up the matter and justified the deposed minister and his elders to which they had, of course, no right at all.

The final result of it all was the schism in the Protestant Reformed Churches, the schismatics also claiming the right to the name Protestant Reformed.

Now, my question is: how can the Christian Reformed Church stoop so low as to receive in their midst members, ministers, elders and deacons and churches that are so evidently schismatic?

Mark you well, I say evidently schismatic, not because of the schismatic sermons that were preached by the minister to whom I referred above. As for this, it is quite possible that the Christian Reformed Church would judge that those sermons were not heretical at all, for they were quite in harmony with the contents of the "Three Points." But when I say "evidently schismatic" I am referring to all their schismatic actions from a church-political point of view. They trampled under foot all law and order. When the above mentioned minister and his elders were suspended and deposed, they acted as if they still had the right to be seated as delegates to classis. They never appealed to synod, but simply left when the classis told them that they had no right to be seated as delegates. A few ministers and elders separated themselves from the legal classis also ignoring a possible appeal to synod. The majority of classis West did the same thing. When the schismatic synod met they seated all these separatistic members without any further investigation. This is why I said that those of the separatists who seek membership in the Christian Reformed Church are *evidently schismatic*.

And this is also the reason why I am bold to say that the Christian Reformed Church is stooping very low, and I mean this in the ethical or moral sense of the word, when they simply accept them as members. What they should have done, before they received them, was to tell them: "first go to your respective consistories from which you separated and apologize for all the evil you have committed, and then, if you still wish to join the Christian Reformed Church, come back to us and we shall see what can be done."

Or, if they did not wish to do this, they could, at least, have inquired about the schismatics from us, I mean the

only real Protestant Reformed Churches, to find out about all the evil work the schismatics have wrought in our churches.

But nothing of the kind is done about this very serious matter. The schismatics are simply received!

O, yes, there is still the question of the "Three Points." About this the Reverend Baker writes rather elaborately.

But before I say something about this, I must mention another matter that I consider, if not so very serious, is, let me say, rather ironic. And I feel that you, Rev. Baker, are bound to agree with me. I am referring to the fact that even schismatic *ministers* are received in the Christian Reformed Church and are made eligible for a call. Now, in the first place, such ministers, except I believe three of them, have had but very little education outside of the seminary. Some of them did not even finish high school. But let this be. When I speak of the irony of the situation, I am not referring to this. But I am thinking of the fact that all the theological education the schismatics ever received was by the Rev. Ophoff and the undersigned. This, I think, may be called ironic indeed. In 1924 the Christian Reformed Church cast us out as heretics; in 1955-1961 the same Church gives their students a place in their pulpits! Was it not Cicero who exclaimed: *O tempora, O mores?*

But a word must still be said about the Three Points as cause of separation as you, Rev. Baker, conceive of the matter and present it in your article in *The Banner*.

You write:

"Our committee faced the question, can we propose to Synod to unite on that basis (i.e. on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions, H.H.) and completely ignore the fact that we have the Three Points? These occasioned the separation and kept us separate. But, does the existence of the Three Points necessarily constitute an insurmountable barrier? We believe it does not. Is it not possible to be joined together in spite of their existence? In our judgment it is."

And what is the ground for this judgment of yours? It may partly, at least, be found in the following paragraph:

"We are no longer in great disagreement with each other. The Protestant Reformed Church has declared in her last letter, 'We do not charge that the Three Points are Arminian and Pelagian.' She virtually grants that belief in common grace is not heresy. I quote from her letter, 'We should not so narrow the walls of the church that every usage of the term common grace would be automatically branded as heresy, neither that the denial of common grace would preclude from membership. There must be freedom within the boundaries of the Three Forms.' If I read this correctly, her position is that one can believe in common grace or deny it and not thereby do violence to our Confessions."

Finally, you rehearse the decisions of your Synod on the basis of which unification can be accomplished. The schismatics must agree that the Three Points are not Arminian and Pelagian; that they are not in conflict with Scripture and

the Confessions; that they will not agitate against official interpretations.

The rest of your article, Rev. Baker, is not very clear to me. You write that it was not required by the Synod of 1924 that all members and officebearers of the Christian Reformed Church should express full agreement with the Three Points. Literally you write: "Neither did Synod expect that all ministers, officebearers, and members would be in full agreement with every statement in its pronouncements. It was fully aware of the fact the Rev. Henry Danhof disagreed. Synod knew also that the Rev. Herman Hoeksema and his followers did not agree with its decisions." All this is true. But does this mean that the Revs. Danhof and Hoeksema could ever write or preach anything against the Three Points as it was their calling before God and the churches? We know better and so do you, Rev. Baker. Just read, e.g. the decision of Classis West *in re* the Danhof case, Jan. 1925. Here it is; the Consistory must require of its minister: "1. That he declare himself unequivocally whether he is in full agreement yes or no with the three points of Kalamazoo. 2. An unconditional promise that in the matter of the three points he will submit (with the right of appeal) to the Confessional Standards of the Church, as interpreted by the Synod of 1924, i.e., neither publicly nor privately propose, teach or defend, either by preaching or writing any sentiments contrary to the Confessional Standards of the Church, as interpreted by the Synod of 1924, and in case of an appeal that he in the interim will acquiesce in the judgment already passed by the Synod of 1924." The same was the decision of Classis East. On this basis the Revs. Danhof, Ophoff and undersigned were deposed. But the same thing you, Rev. Baker, write too in the same paragraph which I quoted above: "What Synod (of 1924, H.H.) expected and had the right to expect was, that they abide by the decisions and consider them binding until they had been proved to be contrary to the Scriptures and the Forms of Unity."

But do you not see, Rev. Baker, that this is an impossible position, especially for a minister to take? The Three Points are fundamental errors. They declare something concerning the grace of God, concerning the question whether grace is general or special. In connection with this they declare something about the preaching of the gospel, namely, that this preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear. They declare, moreover, that God sore strains sin that the natural man is still able to do much good. These are, in my opinion, very fundamental errors. How, then, would it be possible for any minister that is convinced in his heart that the Three Points are errors to promise that he will submit to them, that he will keep still about them, that he will not agitate against them? If he preaches one sermon he must either preach the Three Points or contradict them. There is no other alternative.

This is the reason why it is not honest on the part of the Christian Reformed Church to leave the impression that one

that does not agree with the Three Points but promises not to agitate against them may become member or even minister in that Church.

Why not simply say: if you want to become member in the Christian Reformed Church you must agree with the Three Points.

And you can never grant the request of the schismatic synod to retract the Three Points or to declare that they are binding no longer.

H.H.

## AS TO BOOKS

*A Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church Fathers*, by Robert R. Williams. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Price \$4.00.

This book is exactly what it promises to be, i.e. a guide to the teachings of the early church fathers. It is not a church history, it is not a history of doctrine, it is not a history of symbols — though it necessarily partakes of all of these. But it describes the struggles of the early church fathers during the first four or five centuries of our era. And this it does very ably and rather thoroughly. The style is lucid and I can recommend this book not only to the theologians but also to the intelligent layman.

The book is written from the standpoint of orthodox theology.

I will quote just a paragraph at random to give the reader a taste of the contents and style of the book. The paragraph draws a comparison between Origen and Augustine as follows:

"As compared with Origen, the greatest of the Greek Fathers, he is less theoretical and more practical. Origen had a Christian upbringing. Augustine was in his thirties when he was converted. Origen knew of no conflict within himself. Augustine was conscious of a struggle between the heart and the mind. Both men tried to reconcile faith and thought. Origen followed the process from faith to thought: Augustine, the process from thought to faith. Augustine knew but little Greek, and was less versed in Greek philosophy than Origen. Theology had its beginning with the Alexandrian. Like Origen, Augustine went beyond the ideas of his own age. Both were innovators and creators of new conceptions." . . . P. 156.

Heartily recommended.

H.H.

*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, by D. Martyn, Lloyd Jones, II Volumes. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price per volume \$4.50.

These two volumes contain a complete series of sermons on the Sermon on the Mount. The author himself informs us how they were made ready for publication. They were taken down in shorthand and almost literally, i.e., without any ap-



preciable changes, given to the printer. Dr. Lloyd Jones is minister of the Word of God in Westminster Chapel, London. In a preface to the first volume he writes:

"I am profoundly convinced that the greatest need of the Church today is a return to expository preaching. I would emphasize both words and especially the latter. A sermon is not an essay and is not meant, primarily, for publication, but to be heard and to have an immediate impact upon the listeners." The author then continues to point to certain characteristics that follow from this fact. This he does in order to explain why these sermons were just about literally published as they were spoken.

As to the contents of these volumes of sermons, I may say that the author shows that he believes that a sermon ought to be expository. But although this is true, the sermons are also practical. They provide spiritual reading in the good sense of the word. Hence, I may and hereby do recommend these books to our readers. H.H.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

The year of our Lord, 1960, has come to a close. For the undersigned it was definitely a different year from the previous five that he might labor as the Lord's servant as Home Missionary. During the first five years the lion's share of the time was spent in Loveland and in Isabel and Forbes. However, this year, although largely spent in and around Pella, was definitely quite different.

When reflecting upon the past year I think that I can say that it was a year characterized by "lecturing," preaching and writing and visiting. According to the diary kept by Mrs. Lubbers I see that, all told, I lectured no less than 13 times during these twelve months on such subjects as:

1. "Can You Quote the Ten Commandments?"
2. "The Serious 'Confrontation' in the Preaching of the Gospel."
3. "God's Unchangeable Marriage Ordinance."
4. "Christian Stewardship in a Democratic Society."
5. "Calvin and the Reformed Faith."
6. "The Infallible Earmark of the Last Hour."
7. "The Raging of Satan in History."

It may interest the reader to know that your Home Missionary lectured once in Oskaloosa, Iowa, in the American Legion Hall; twice did he lecture in Pella in the American Legion Hall; twice he lectured in Prairie City in the High School; once in Sully, Iowa, and once in Kilduff, Iowa, an adjacent town of Sully. A lecture was given in our churches on the above-named subjects in Loveland, Colorado, Isabel-Forbes, S.D., Randolph, Wisconsin, Hull, Iowa and Holland, Michigan.

Looking at the record I notice that some two thousand pieces of mail were sent out, Standard Bearers, brochures, pamphlets, Beacon Lights and leaflets, composed by the undersigned. It was also the privilege, upon request, to type out material for a pamphlet on the subject "God's Unchangeable Marriage Ordinance." It is hoped that this pamphlet will be from the press in the near future.

No less than 21 essays were written by the undersigned this year from "Holy Writ" which entailed a very fruitful research for the undersigned. Incidentally, I believe that it has not happened before that the Home Missionary of our Churches filled a rubric in *The Standard Bearer* for six years. The Lord gave strength all during this time. It did not happen, I believe, during all this time that sickness prevented me from preaching one sermon. And during the year 1960 I might preach not less than 105 times.

All during these labors, lectures, preaching, sending forth of literature I experienced the sustaining grace of God. His strength is made great in our weakness. It requires much strength in soul and spirit to preach for small audiences of people, ranging from "three or four" to about twenty-five. And, yet, the marvel of it is that they were and are joyful experiences. A day of "small beginnings"? Surely such it is for us in Pella. But a day of "small beginnings" is far better than a day of stark pessimism and fruitless speculation. Ever there are the "many" that say, "Who will shew us any good?" And, if ever any little group would be tempted to thus wail and whimper it would be those "two or three" in Pella! But when those who look at things "objectively" come and see things from afar in Pella and then say to their soul "who will shew them any good" in their lot, it is simply a marvel that they say, in hope against hope, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!"

What a joy to be present in a little group with strong faith, where none complain because they attempt not to walk by sight but by faith. For my own spiritual refreshment this morning I read what Spurgeon has to say on Psalm 4:6: "There were many, even among David's followers, who wanted to *see* rather than believe. Alas! this is the tendency of us all! Even the regenerate sometimes groan after the sense and sight of prosperity, and are sad when darkness covers all good from view. As for worldlings this is their unceasing cry. 'Who will shew us any good?' Never satisfied, their gaping mouths are turned in every direction, their empty hearts are ready to drink in any fine delusion which imposters may invent; and when all these fail they soon yield to despair, and declare that there is no good thing in either heaven or earth. The true believer is a man of very different mould. His face is not downward like the beasts', but upward like the eagles'. He drinks not from the muddy pools of Mammon, but from the fountain of life above. The light of God's countenance is enough for him. This is his riches, his honour, his health, his ambition, his ease. Give him this and he will ask no more. . . . Oh, for more of the indwell-

ing of the Holy Spirit, that our fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ may be constant and abiding."

That was also what we might enjoy in the year which has gone by.

In Pella the *Reformed Witness Hour* is heard each Sunday morning at 7:30 o'clock. And many, many are they who listen to it and enjoy this hour. I have had abundant occasion to know this in my contacts with people in Pella and surrounding areas! The testimony of this radio ministry is simply wonderful for them. Dear reader, have you ever lived in such straits for your very life's sake? Do you look forward with longing for the Reformed Witness Hour, or do you miss it (if you live around Grand Rapids, Mich.) due to your afternoon nap?!! I know people who wait for it with the breaking of the dawn, even as watchmen look for morning light.

Just this week I received a note from Pella: "Sunday we had services; the usual group was present." This means that on Sunday afternoon about 8 people gather in the Legion Hall and listen to a sermon taped in First Church and are led in the services by elder C. Vander Molen. This is true when they have no classical appointment and when the undersigned is not present.

Yes, a day of small things.

Let them not be despised. No church is so small that it can be put in the class of "Plant No. 4" that does not pay off!

G.L.

### 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*

### Christian School Teachers and Teachers-To-Be:

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

GILBERT GRIESS, *Secretary*  
Route 1, Box 282  
Loveland, Colorado

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

#### *The Fall of Babylon*

#### Revelation 18 (See your Bible)

And finally, this leads us to our third observation on the fall of Babylon as such, namely, the time of her destruction. The chapter itself does not indicate any time. It simply tells us of the destruction. But, in the first place, it may be remarked that the very completeness and finality of her destruction already makes us think that this is one of the scenes of the last days, when all that have exalted themselves against Him, shall be destroyed by the appearance of the Mighty One. And from chapter 16, verse 19, we learned that this destruction of Babylon falls within the events that constitute the realization of the seventh vial. Driven by God's own counsel, the devil shall have bewitched the nations to war against the Lamb. And at the outpouring of the sixth vial, Euphrates shall be dried up and the way of the kings of the east prepared. The thrones of the kings of the beast shall be darkness, indicating that there shall be internal unrest within the kingdom of Antichrist itself before the great day of Armageddon comes. They shall strike at the center of the anti-christian dominion first of all, and she shall be overcome. All these things constitute the tremendous events that must take place at the end of time. And it is at that very last that also Babylon shall be destroyed, that she shall fall and her sins shall be remembered in the sight of God.

As to the significance of this fall of Babylon for the world in general we may be brief. Her fall simply means the fall of the entire antichristian kingdom. This is already clear from the very nature of the case. Babylon is pictured as the very center of antichristian power. She is pictured as the throne and heart of the kingdom. Without her, as we mentioned, there is no commerce and no industry, no business, no science, no art, no philosophy, no riches, and no pleasure and joy. In a word, the entire structure of the kingdom rested on Babylon as its cornerstone. And therefore, when she falls, the kingdom falls. It is all done with her greatness and her joy, her riches and her abundance, her pleasure and luxury. The power of Antichrist is completely broken through the fall of Babylon.

This is also indicated symbolically by the weeping and wailing of the kings of the earth and the merchants and the shipmasters and sailors. First of all, the kings are mentioned. They are pictured as standing afar off and weeping over the fall of Babylon. These princes of the earth had all



their power concentrated in Babylon. The fall of that city is their fall. It is the end of all world power. It is the end of kings and princes and of all rulers of the earth. Then the merchants, the great businessmen and corporations of the world, are mentioned. They had all their riches in Babylon — their gold and their silver and precious stones, and all the articles of their merchandise. They also stand weeping for the reason that no one from now on can buy their merchandise any more. It is the end of materialism, the end of the god of this world, the end of all greed and lust and gain, the end of that power that would buy from and sell to only those that had the mark of the beast. And, finally, the people that work for these merchants, the shipmasters and sailors, that depended on Babylon for a job, are also pictured as bewailing the fall of the great city. And therefore, it is very plain that the fall of Babylon implies the downfall of that entire beautiful structure of the dragon which was pictured in chapter 13 as having dominion over all things and over all the nations of the world. With Babylon, so chapter 16, verse 19 tells us, all the cities of the nations fall together. And therefore, whether we take it that Babylon shall be a real center or whether we look upon her as the symbolic center of antichristendom, certain it is that her fall is the last of Antichrist.

Finally, in regard to the relation of the people of God, we must observe, in the first place, that they are admonished to separate from Babylon. No doubt this is first of all meant in the spiritual sense of the word. A voice comes to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Literally they shall not be able to separate themselves from Babylon, for she is everywhere. Even if in her final manifestation she shall reveal herself as a literal city, which is not at all impossible, the fact remains that she will be sitting upon many waters and that her sway and influence is felt all over the world, yea, that she is present in every city, in all business and commerce and in every shop and store. If she would literally separate from Babylon, the church would have to go out of the world. And therefore, a spiritual separation is meant, in the first place. And this is plainly indicated by the words "that ye may have no fellowship with her sins." The people of God must know Babylon. They must see her true character. They must realize that her hope is outside of Christ, that her hope is altogether in this world, that she is antichristian and serves the devil, that she tramples under foot the blood of Christ. However beautiful and Christian she may appear, they must discern her true nature and refuse to have fellowship with her. And instead, they must with might and main cling to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. They must maintain that Christ is King and that His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom in glory. But although this is true, nevertheless I do not doubt that also a literal separation is implied in these words. I imagine, as we have had occasion to notice before, that before the last judgment shall be inflicted upon wicked Babylon,

the voice mentioned here will go forth with power and the people of God shall be taken away from the world. Not indeed as if a long period would intervene between the removal of the last of God's children and the end of the world; but they shall be removed. The voice will become powerful, will become irresistible, and will call powerfully the faithful and chosen from the midst of the arena of strife and tribulation to be with Christ in glory forever. How this is to be performed the text does not tell us; but that it is to be done is very clear. And the purpose of this removal of the children of God is plainly indicated in the words "and that ye receive not of her plagues." They shall not partake of her judgment. Before the final punishment is inflicted on Babylon, the children of God shall be no more in the world.

In the second place, the judgment on Babylon and on the antichristian kingdom in general will be a cause of great joy to all them that love the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the text this is indicated, as also in the next chapter. A voice shouts: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." vs. 20. No wonder! It is in Babylon that the blood of all the saints is found: for she is the culmination and highest realization of the power of opposition in the world of all ages. It was in Babylon that these saints were in tribulation, that they were made a laughing-stock because of their antiquated ideas and other-worldly hopes. It was Babylon that laughed at them when they testified of Jesus and of the hope that was in them, when they refused to believe in all the hopes and expectations of the world, refused to help along in the building up of the world. In a word, the apostles and prophets and the saints were always the mockery and laughingstock, looked upon as fools and idiots who knew not how to value things at their right estimation. And therefore, they must be set right; and it must become apparent that they were right and true. Even as for a long time they laughed at Noah and his message and his building of the ark, so also the world for ages laughed at all the people of God and their message and the building of their ark of hope in Christ Jesus. But even as Noah was justified when the world of wickedness was destroyed, so shall the saints and the apostles and prophets be publicly justified when this world and all the glorious harlotries of this world shall be destroyed and its calamity shall come in one day. Rejoice, therefore, ye saints, even in anticipation! Have no fellowship with the sins of Babylon! For the New Jerusalem alone shall stand and have the victory forever! But Babylon and all its abominations shall fall and be desolate forever!

H.H.

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Then, safe within Thy fold,  
We will exalt Thy Name;  
Our thankful hearts with songs of joy  
Thy goodness will proclaim.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Moses' Return to Egypt

*And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.*

*And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. Exodus 4:19, 20*

With mixed feelings Moses saw the fire of God's presence fade from the bush on Horeb, looked at the gentle sheep quietly grazing about him, gathered them together, and began his journey back to the camp of Jethro. He had stood in the presence of the Most High God, and with awesome wonder he pondered the fact. He had heard that Israel was soon to be delivered, and he rejoiced exceedingly, for he had ever hoped for such deliverance to come. He had been commanded to go forth and lead the children of Israel, and he trembled at the thought, for through the years he had learned to know his own weakness and sin. But Moses went. He had no choice. The Lord his God had commanded him.

Upon returning to the camp of Jethro, he went immediately to his father-in-law. When he had joined himself to the household of Jethro, he had placed himself under Jethro's rule. Now that the time had come for him to leave, it would not do for him to ignore the rights of this man. Respectfully he spoke, "Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive." Only in the most general terms did Moses intimate his real reason for returning to Egypt. He had learned through the years that Jethro, although undoubtedly a child of God, had no real understanding of or concern for the need of Israel being delivered from Egypt. Jethro was of the sons of Keturah, and through the years they had lost much of the feeling for the importance of Israel in bringing to pass the promised redemption of God. Thus Moses did not deem it wise to share with his father-in-law's family the deep, spiritual experience and revelation through which he had just passed. Nonetheless, Jethro was satisfied with Moses' request and answered, "Go in peace."

Still Moses did not leave the land of Midian immediately. Was it perhaps fear of the task that lay before him that made him linger unnecessarily long in the home of Jethro? But God was watching Moses, and with Him there was no allowance for such procrastination. He came and spoke to Moses to urge him on and to assure him against all unnecessary fears. "Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life." God had waited over four hundred years in bringing Israel forth out of Egypt, but now that the time was come there was no more room for delay. Moses

must learn to respond promptly to the commands of the Lord. It was not for him to linger.

There was solemnity in the occasion when that small group of people set forth from the house of Jethro. Upon a beast of burden sat a woman with two small children; before them walked the man with a shepherd's crook in his hand. The children were young and did not yet realize what was taking place. The woman was clearly troubled. She too did not understand, and she felt no desire to leave her father's home for the alien land of Egypt. She was going only because her husband said it was necessary. The man was lost deep in thought. He pondered the duties and responsibilities which were lying before him. In his hand he held the shepherd's crook, but not carelessly as he had in former years. This rod had taken on a new and special significance for him. It had been appointed of God as a symbol of his newly acquired power and authority. With an awe approaching reverence he held his staff as they traveled.

They had not gone on very far before the Lord came once again to Moses. Moses had been called to a very special position as the prophet of God. It was to become a very frequent, at times almost daily experience for him to receive special revelations from God. This intimate communion with God was to characterize his life more than that of any other man. It would be written of him, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). Through these repeated revelations God gave to Moses constant guidance and assurance in the tremendous task. In this particular revelation He instructed Moses with a general outline of the working out of the gospel as he would experience it in the immediate future.

First God said to Moses, "When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand." These works would be of utmost importance in establishing Moses as the prophet of God and in setting forth the truth that Moses was sent to proclaim. God would reveal Himself in Egypt as the I AM THAT I AM, the Almighty God Who always performs His own will. Moses would come as God's prophet with the rod as a symbol of God's power in his hand. Each work performed in the Name of God would be unmistakably adapted to show forth the greatness and the power of God. Only the blind would refuse to acknowledge the God of Moses to be the I AM THAT I AM whose will can not be withstood.

But to this God added a warning concerning the reaction of these works upon Pharaoh. "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." Pharaoh was of the blind of the world, who have eyes but will not see, who have ears but will not hear, who have hearts too hard to understand. God had raised him up and set him upon the throne of Egypt just exactly to reveal the immense perversity of the human heart. With the truth so clearly set before him in unquestionable signs and wonders, he would deny that it was real. He

would not acknowledge it to himself or to anyone else. He would suppress the truth and hold it under in unrighteousness. In utter folly he would in the face of the truth uphold the lie. But let no one think that by so doing he would be withstanding the will of God. This, indeed, Pharaoh would try to do. His boast would ever be that he did not need to recognize the Lord, that he could withstand the God of Israel; but that very fact would be the highest illustration of the pervasiveness of the almighty power of God. Behind the hardened heart of Pharaoh was the eternal counsel of God which had ordained that it should be so. This God made clear to Moses by telling him before it ever happened, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."

Finally God added these instructions, "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." This was the ultimate meaning of the truth that God would reveal through Moses. The expression of God's love would not be without purpose and direction. It would be directed in Fatherly love and affection to His son. Israel as a nation was dear to Him. In the seed of Abraham it was chosen and adopted to belong to Him. So it had been from eternity; so it was and would be in time. When Pharaoh persecuted Israel, he persecuted the object of God's love. When he would refuse to let Israel go, he would be seeking to deprive God of the rightful service of His own son. Thus in righteous judgment God would strike back. With many infallible proofs He would show His love for His chosen. He would show His power over Pharaoh by depriving him of his son.

In this way God was preparing Moses for the conflict which was to come. The powers of evil were already arrayed for battle. In the days to come they would exert themselves to the utmost. But the outcome was sure. The power of God's love would be made known. The lines of battle were before-ordained in the divine counsel. Unto Moses it was made known what they would be that in due and proper time the glory might be only unto God.

While pondering this all, Moses stopped for the evening at an inn on the road to Egypt. His mind was still full of all that he had heard, and therefore it was quite unexpected that the Lord came to meet him again at the inn. But this appearance of God was quite different. This appearance was not to Moses individually but to Zipporah his wife as well. Moreover, this appearance was not primarily concerned with Moses' future work, but with his present personal life. The Lord appeared and sought to kill Moses.

Moses had entered into married life while dwelling in the house of Jethro. There true faith in God was maintained, for Jethro was a descendant of Abraham through Keturah. However, in certain matters of faith this household had become weak and wavering. One of their most grievous short-

comings was the failure to maintain the rite of circumcision. It was a bloody ritual which they considered too painful to observe. Thus they failed to maintain the outward sign of the covenant which inwardly they still kept. Thus, when Moses' two sons were born, Zipporah had opposed the subjecting of her children to this painful operation; and Moses had submitted. This had been his sin.

But now Moses was returning again to the children of Israel to lead and instruct them in the will of the Lord. One of the things which he would have to teach the people was the necessity of circumcision. But how could he insist that others observe what he had not observed himself. One primary requirement of effective leadership is that a man do his utmost to observe himself what he would require of others. This Moses had not done. In the most forceful terms God pointed this out to Moses. He told Moses and Zipporah his wife that if Moses would not strive to live blamelessly before the ordinances of God, he would be of no use to Him at all as a leader and redeemer of the chosen people. In fact, if Moses in his household did not keep the commandments of God he would die.

Zipporah had no choice. While the Lord threatened the life of her husband, she took a sharp stone and performed the required operation. But in her heart she held only resentment and bitterness. Among her people this bloody practice had not been observed for many years. She could not understand the need of it and she detested the thought of subjecting her own children to such a painful practice. Her inner feelings boiled in rebellion. She had not wanted to leave her father's home, and now she was required to treat her own children with cruelty. The Lord withdrew His threatening hand from her husband, but her bitterness remained. She cast the bloody foreskins at Moses' feet and said, "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me, because of the circumcision."

To Moses it became evident that he could not go on in this way. A wife who resented the high duties of his calling could only interfere and not help. Sadly he returned to the home of Jethro with his wife and children, there to leave them until his work had been completed. He could not allow even his own wife to stand in the way of the calling which he had received from God. Again he left for Egypt, alone.

God saw the loneliness of Moses' heart and made provisions for him. He appeared to Aaron, Moses' brother, in Egypt and said, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." There on the way the two brothers, separated for so many years, met. With joy they kissed each other and went on together. As they went Moses related to his brother all that he had learned of the Lord, and Aaron encouraged Moses in his calling. With this brother by his side, Moses would have the courage to stand in the great and wonderful calling which was his.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 18:15-20

b.

It should be remembered, that, in the matter of seeking to restore the lost sheep that strays from the fold, we are not simply trying to win a brother to ourselves, but that we are seeking to restore him into the favor of God; it is a matter which is very "serious," a matter of what is "bound in heaven" and what is "bound on earth." It is a matter of discipline. The German language calls this "Busszucht." It is a chastisement to bring to confession of sin and guilt and to true sorrow of having sinned against God. Wherefore our fathers always stressed that there must be *evidence* of true sorrow for sin before a man can be re-admitted into the kingdom of God.

As soon as we see the *seriousness* of sin, guilt, the wrath of God and eternal punishment for sin, we shall see how serious is this matter of "seeking to restore the brother."

Hence, the matter in judgment must be "established"!

When our brother has sinned against us, or when he has sinned in general, it is first of all sin against God! He has broken the commandments of God and did not walk in love from a pure heart, in a good conscience and in faith unfeigned! He must be reconciled to God, and, thus, to his brother. And, conversely, if he is not reconciled to the brother whom he sees he cannot possibly be reconciled to God whom he does not see. The Lord is not mocked.

Hence, it is really a walking into the tribunal of the Lord when we go to the brother to convict him of sin. It is before His face, the face of Him before whom *all* things are naked and open. For He judges the reins and hearts, and He it is that searches the intents of the heart. And this intent of the heart, whether this be purity of heart in confession or of filthiness and stubbornness of heart in refusal to confess, must come to light. The truth of the matter must be *established*.

And when once it is established and ratified before the tribunal of God in the hearts and consciences of those who are "convicted," this conviction stands. Nothing changes it; no arbitrary setting aside of the tribunal and circumvention of the statutes of God avail aught.

It is therefore paramount that we take notice of the solemn "Amen, I say unto you" in both the verses 18 and 19 here in this passage. Jesus underscores in this implied oath the solemnity and the seriousness of this restoration of a brother from sin.

For it is not simply a playing church. It is not simply a human transaction upon earth at which the God of heaven laughs or looks down upon without taking it seriously or

without having his divine sanction. For what happens upon the word of two or three witnesses has validity in heaven. Surely such handling of the "Keys of the Kingdom" is dreadful reality.

However, it all depends upon the truth being established that a man is unrepentant or repentant. For a man perishes not because he sins but because he refuses to confess his sins. If the mere fact that a man is a sinner would cause him to perish then all would perish and none would be saved. The unrepentant show that they are evil men who will not inherit the Kingdom!

And it is for that reason that there is rule in Israel, in the church, that, when one has "risen up" against a brother in judgment, he shall take with him *one* or *two* witnesses.

In the first place we should notice that a "witness" here is not one who knows certain facts from hearsay but one who knows from *personal* knowledge. What he testifies to be the truth, he knows because he has *seen* it and *heard* it. He is a witness in a twofold sense. He is a witness because he has witnessed the happening. And then he is a witness because he *attests* to the truth of what he has seen or heard. That is the *sine qua non* of a witness. None other can qualify.

Then, too, there is an interesting feature here in the text which should not be overlooked. It is a matter of arithmetic. We are enjoined to take *one* or *two* with us as witnesses in order that every word may be established by *two* or *three*! The point is that the one who takes the witness with him, be it one or two, is himself represented by Jesus as being the original witness. He cannot slip out from under the matter in which he has "risen up" in judgment against the brother. He will needs have to cast the first stone. He is one witness. When he takes one witness with him there are a resultant *two* witnesses and when he takes two witnesses with him there are *three* witnesses as a result. Two witnesses are sufficient and three are allowed.

There is here a deep *principle* which must be seen.

It is underscored by Jesus when he is accused by the Jews of his day as not having a true witness because he testifies of himself! Jesus had said: "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." John 8:12. The Jews attack Jesus on this principle of "two or three witnesses." And Jesus takes up the cudgel.

There is an implied syllogism in the reasoning of the Jews. It is as follows: 1. Self-testimony by itself is not valid (major premise). 2. Jesus testifies concerning self (minor premise). 3. Jesus' testimony cannot be held to be true and valid (conclusion).

When Jesus replies to this accusation of the Jews he concedes the major premise under 1 but denies the minor premise under 2, and, therefore, the conclusion that his testimony is not true, does not hold. For in "the law" it is indeed written "that the testimony of two men is true." However, Jesus

does not transgress that ordinance in Israel. On the contrary, in His case this ordinance is fulfilled in the highest and most exalted sense. Jesus' word as the Mediator, the sent one, is corroborated by the testimony of the Sender, our Father in heaven, the triune God. And this testimony from heaven is not merely a voice from heaven, but it consists in the signs and wonders, as well as in the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore we read in I John 5:7: "Because there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are into one" (testimony)!

Hence, Jesus also submits to the rule of two or three witnesses.

And thus His word and work is established. It is thus established in the hearts and consciences of men and angels, both good and evil.

And it is this principle that is enunciated by Moses in Deuteronomy 19:15, where we read: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established." And that is the rule which Christ cites also in Matthew 18:15-20. Only when a matter is thus established shall it stand. Order in the court, the tribunal of God, and all things in strictest justice! Strictest justice both to the accused and to the accuser. For justice is a two-edged sword. He who picks it up must beware he does not cut his hand upon the sword he would wield.

Strictest justice also toward the brother who has sinned against us, or as the text has it, "against you." For none is interested in self-vindication or personal avengement, but in "winning" the brother for the Lord and his Church.

And thus if the brother does not hear you, take with you one or two witnesses.

The term here for "does not hear" really is a bit stronger. It really means that he ignores the evidence of the case. He acts as if the evidence did not point the accusing finger at him. He refuses to hear; he hears without heeding, and thus wholly disregards. He is disobedient.

And now he must be convicted once more in his heart and conscience of his "sin," and this time before two or three witnesses, the original prosecutor included. And the sinfulness of his sin must be pointed out, together with the command to repent in heartfelt sorrow before the Lord. And the one or two who accompany the original "witness" must be eye- and ear-witness and thus, if the man remains unrepentant, his guilt must be established together with his unrepentance. For in this court of the Lord the sinner may be guilty but when he confesses his sin he is pardoned. And that is the point toward which we labor. It is Busszucht!! It is not simply punishment, but it is reconciliation in the blood of the Lamb!

And if it thus stands established before two or three witnesses that a man, a brother, is guilty and unrepentant, the

matter also thus stands attested in heaven. For, in this smallest gathering in God's church, Christ is in their midst. He is also a witness there. He puts his approval upon this "establishment" of the truth; it has his sanction! Amen, I say unto you!

Now if the man refuses to heed the admonition of the original prosecutor before two or three, then it becomes a matter for the entire church. It must be told to them by the two or three witnesses. And the word of two or three witnesses stands as established!

Then the brother must be admonished of both his sin and unrepentance before the church. If he heeds, the brother is gained. But, if he refuses to heed the admonition, then it is not so that nothing is done about it. The man is then not forgiven in Christ's name. He is bound in his sin; it is declared to him that until he repents he has no place in the kingdom of heaven. See the *Form Of Excommunication* in the back of the Psalter and also the *Form Of Readmittance*.

Now this is serious business.

One may well tremble before the Lord when one declares a man to be "unto you a heathen and a publican." On the other hand well may one tremble too if one does not declare the unrepentant to be outside of the kingdom. For the church which does not exercise *Christian Discipline* is like the bride who has lost her veil! Her glory is departed. Her meaning is lost.

Let it not be overlooked that when Jesus says, "Let him be unto thee a heathen and publican," that this is not merely a permissive word. It is not simply then a matter left to us to take it or leave it. It is the declaration of the Judge of heaven and earth, determining a man's status of guilt. It is thus bound (momentarily) on earth and it is thus a constant reality in heaven. (The Greek text here employs the future paraphrastic perfect tense: action fulfilled up to the present.) In heaven it is constantly then thus viewed and it is thus "established." When presently the books are opened, thus it shall be as established, and thus it is stipulated in the books of God.

This is true whether the congregation is large or small. For the matter is not established by popular vote of the people. It is established according to the commandments before two or three witnesses.

Let it not be forgotten.

It is serious business. Woe to the church which does not conduct the business of the King. And also woe to the church where this matter of discipline is neglected and not taken seriously.

Only that church gathers the sheep and seeks the lost which will insist that sin be confessed and forgiveness received.

She goes upon the mountains to find the sheep that was lost, and rejoices when it is found!

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### The Whether of Our Weather

By the time these lines appear in print for general distribution the world in these northern climes will be or will have recently been in that period of the year when men turn to such a silly thing as an irrational ground hog for predictions as to the length of the winter that still holds sway over our land at the present time. Maybe it is not that ground hog so much as it is the sun that shines or fails to shine brightly that day. Or perhaps it is even the cloud cover that prevents the seeing of a shadow that determines the weather for the next six weeks. At any rate all kinds of superstitious beliefs will be voiced.

That it might be cloudy over an area of some two, three hundred miles, and all the rest of the country has bright sunshine that day, would mean that just this particular area will have a different weather pattern for the next four to six weeks, must not be considered. It spoils the fun of dreaming and having *things* in which to put our trust. After all it is more delightful for the flesh to live in the fear of things than in the fear of the Lord. It seems more rational for this fallen man to look to a ground hog than to an all-wise and sovereign God. It is more flattering to the pride of that depraved man to depend even upon such an irrational beast's antics than upon a mighty and holy Creator Who must be loved and served with all our heart and soul and strength and with all our life and possessions. And we would rather make a hog our god than to be subject to a jealous God Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate* Him. It is more enjoyable and less humiliating — so the corrupted mind of man reasons — to worship the creature rather than the Creator. After all, we do have some control over that creature. And we can kill him if we like. If he bothers us, we can get rid of him. But a mighty God Who controls all things and upon Whom we depend for every breath of life is a threat to our carnal joy that we like to reason away or banish from our thoughts.

O, indeed, there are signs in the creation God has made that do indicate a change in the weather. There are signs that winter's grip upon us is slowly slipping away. (And even that statement is not the language of faith. It is not winter's grip that is upon us. And it is not that the grip of God upon us in the blasting wind, the severe cold and driving snow is slipping. It is God Who controls and sends all these things. And it is this same God Who changes the seasons and the weather for us by a sovereign decree and an almighty hand. It is not winter's grip that lessens, it is God Who changes these things for us in faithfulness to His promise given to Noah that seed time and harvest, winter and summer would come in their proper order as long as the

earth would stand.) But there are signs which will indicate to us that God is changing the weather picture for us and the seasons as well. As a child we were always taught to say, "Red in the morning is sailor's fair warning; red at night is sailor's delight." Jesus also rebuked the unbelieving Jews in Matthew 16:2, 3, "When in the evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Indeed God gives signs in the sky of what He intends to do next. Today meteorologists can warn us that conditions are such that in a certain area tornadoes are apt to be spawned. No, they do not know whether they will or not. They cannot tell just where in this wide area such a tornado may form and where it will strike. But there are signs that they can read which indicate that such violent storms are a distinct possibility. Of course you never hear these meteorologists declare that, the Lord willing, a tornado might appear in such an area. How strange that sounds even to our ears! The Lord willing, a storm of fierce destructive powers might strike this region or that!

We are accustomed to use that expression for pleasant experiences. The Lord willing, we will live and make a safe journey to see our loved ones. The Lord willing, we will live to see our 80th or maybe 90th birthday this year. The Lord willing, we will graduate from high school, college, seminary or celebrate our 20th, our 25th year in the ministry of God's Word. But to say, The Lord willing, destruction shall come and death shall strike us down, does not sound so good to our ears. But it is true nevertheless. All things come by His appointment. It is always His will that is executed. "The Lord reigneth: let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubim; let the earth be moved," Psalm 99:1. And He rules the sky. The weather is His concern and His work. Not the ground hog, not the sun or the cloudy cover determines the length of our winter, but the God Who made and controls these things. He has them in His hand, and He uses them as He sees fit. The Lord willing, it will be an early spring with balmy winds and pleasant days. But the Lord willing, it will be a long winter and a cold, uncomfortable spring just as well. And if the Lord is willing to give us just such a spring, there is nothing that you or I can do about it. Indeed it is an ungodly statement that everybody talks about the weather but no one does anything about it. However do not forget that no one does anything about it exactly because no one is able to do a single thing about it. The weather is God's servant, His tool which He uses as it pleases Him.

In fact the weather has played an important part in the lives of God's people and in the history of His Church here below. God poured forth a torrent of rain and opened the windows of heaven to send a flood through which He saved His Church from the ungodly world. For Noah was saved



BY water IN the ark. The Lord was willing to send such a terrible destructive power and to turn it loose upon the first world. And the Lord was willing to stop that rain after it had accomplished His good purpose. When it pleased Him the sun stood still and the moon remained in its place while Israel fought victoriously against the enemy. He sent hail to kill the enemies of His Church. Twice He sent violent storms upon the Sea of Galilee, while His Son tabernacled amongst us, in order that He might teach us important truths for our comfort. A mighty tempest was sent and was pleasing unto Him while His Son was fast asleep in the ship with His disciples. Sometime later a powerful contrary wind made the trip of the disciples alone impossible. They rowed all night long and got nowhere. They could not reach the other shore till Jesus came walking upon the water and spoke words of peace unto them. A deceptive calm prevailed, and then a roaring tempest buffeted the ship on which Paul was travelling to Rome. The Lord willing, that storm came. And because the Lord willed it so, that calm prevailed so that the captain of the ship made the foolish decision to try to get to a better haven for the winter. Indeed, the weather is an important thing. For it is the work of our God. And "this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death," Psalm 48:14.

Whether it will be cold or hot, whether we shall have weather that is pleasant or unpleasant for the flesh is the decision of the Living God. The whether of our weather is expressed in that statement: The Lord willing. Think it over. And whether you agree or not, the whether of all our weather is the whether of God's will. If you do not agree, try to change it. You will fail miserably. Whether we like it or not, we have absolutely nothing to say about the weather. God decides and **we receive.**

But wait a moment. Whether we like it or not, we have absolutely nothing to say about the weather. Indeed, but we DO say something about it, do we not? We have absolutely nothing to say about it in the sense that we do not have our say as to how it will be or what it will be. We cannot say what we shall receive. And we have absolutely no right to say what it shall be. We have no say in the matter at all in that respect. But we say an awfully lot about it. We grumble and complain. We find fault with it and speak evil of it. And in it all we rebel against God. The Lord willing, we have miserable and uncomfortable weather. And we find fault with His will. So bold and proud we are that we dare to do that. Even in such a matter as the weather, over which we have absolutely no control, we find it so hard to say, Not my will but Thy will be done. We behave as though the world turns on us, as though it exists solely for our good. Our attitude towards the Living God is as those who consider Him to be our servant instead of our being His servants. We were created to be His friend-servants, who could and did enjoy His covenant friendship by the tree of life only as long as we obeyed Him as His servants. And we were servants of

the Living God who were blessed with His friendship and covenant fellowship. But now, after we broke this relationship and became enemy-rebels, we go out in all our thinking and activity by nature from the principle that He is our servant and exists solely for our good. And if He does not will that which we deem to be good and conducive to our pleasure and joy, we curse Him, we blaspheme His name and talk exceedingly proudly.

You do not?

Come, come, commit not that additional sin of trying to hide your sins. That likewise is not in His fear. But examine your own soul and observe carefully your own speech the first little bit of inclement weather we get. And remember that when we complain, we are complaining against the God Who is pleased to send us exactly that weather.

Feel the discomfort? Of course. And we must also. But in His fear we do not find fault with God in these storms and bitter cold, these unrelenting rains and burning heat. We find the fault in ourselves and we humble ourselves before God and say, Yea, Lord, shouldest Thou deal with me according to what I deserve, then these calamities and miseries are yet so very minor. Yea, I know these things and all misery are in the world because of sin. But I flee to the cross with the confidence that I am redeemed from the curse. The Lord was willing to send His Son into the storm of hell that I might presently live in the wonder of the heavenly Canaan, the Paradise of Christ. It will always be fair weather there.

Whether I shall enjoy that fair weather depends on whether He wills to bring me there. Whether I shall enjoy the comfort of belonging in that fair land depends upon whether He gives me grace to believe. Indeed, the whether of all my joy in the life to come and all my peace and comfort in this present life depends upon His will. How wonderful those words: The Lord willing.

Walk in His fear and you shall have its joy.

J.A.H.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 11, 1961, our dear parents

MR. and MRS. JOHN DOCTER

will, the Lord willing, commemorate their 35th Wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our covenant God for His lovingkindness in sparing them these many years for us and for each other. Our sincere prayer is that they may continue to experience the Lord's richest blessings in their remaining years.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Docter  
Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Hoekwater  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Docter  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bakker  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hoekstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Docter  
Bertus Docter  
Henrietta Docter  
and 20 grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

Rationalism is that system or theory which elevates Reason above the Scriptures. Of course, the Reformation did not deny the activity of the mind, did not maintain that faith is unreasonable or irrational. But Rationalism elevates Reason above the Word of God. It does not believe because the object of its faith is set forth in the Scriptures, but because that object of its faith falls within the scope and boundaries of its ability to comprehend and understand. It accepts only that which is reasonable, humanly comprehensible. Hodge, in his Systematic Theology (Vol. I, page 34, f.f.), informs us that Rationalism has appeared under different forms. There is, for example, a certain kind of Rationalism which simply denies all supernatural or Divine revelation, simply denies that there is such a thing as a Divine revelation as in the Scriptures. These rationalists are known as Deistical Rationalists. Other rationalists, however, do not disregard entirely the Scriptures. However, as far as this latter group is concerned, things are not true because they are contained in the Word of God, but they are contained in the Word of God because they are true. And, although it is undeniably true that "things are contained in the Word of God because they are true," this statement has an altogether different meaning when uttered by the rationalist.

Rationalism does not necessarily deny the existence of God. This, we understand, would be Atheism. Deistical Rationalism denies the possibility of revelation and is therefore deistical. Deism is that system or theory which separates God from the world and the creature. God, then, according to this theory, made the world but then has nothing to do with it anymore. The world, according to this conception, can be compared to a watch which, when wound, runs of itself. God made the world, and also man, and He made the world in such a way that it is able to control and direct its own affairs. Any other conception, it is claimed by the rationalists, would be an injustice to the living God. If the Lord made this world in such a way that it would be necessary for Him to interfere constantly in its affairs, then that world would be imperfect; and if the Lord created an imperfect world this would imply imperfection on the part of the Lord. Hence, when the Lord made the heavens and the earth, He made them in such a way that they could control and direct their own affairs. This also applies to man. Man

needs no revelation outside of himself to attain unto life and happiness. His mind or reason is well equipped unto this end. He is surely able to reason his way out of all his difficulties and problems and to guarantee his own peace and salvation. No revelation of God is necessary.

This Deistical Rationalism is, in the first place, surely contrary to the teachings of Holy Writ and the infallible Word of God. Now I realize that the rationalist does not care about this argument. He denies the objective revelation of the Word of God. He claims that the Lord has so created man that man, by his own reason and intellect, can realize his own peace and salvation. Nevertheless, be this as it may, I want to say in the first place that this is contradicted by the Divine Scriptures. The rationalist may not care about the inspired Word of God, but we do. We must understand that, although, for the sake of argument, we may distinguish between Deistical Rationalism and Atheism, so that, whereas the latter denies the existence of God and the former may wish to maintain that there is a God, the former is nevertheless for all practical purposes fundamentally atheistic. Deistical Rationalism is, of course, Agnosticism. Agnosticism denies the knowability of God, maintains that God cannot be known. A God Who does not reveal Himself cannot be known by us. And a God Who cannot be known by us simply does not exist as far as we are concerned. What do we have to a God Whom we cannot know? However, that man can reason and think out his own salvation is surely denied by Holy Writ. Notice what we read in Isaiah 59:16-17, and we quote: "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him: and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." This passage of Holy Writ is surely pertinent. The rationalist may claim that he is well able to reason his own way out of his difficulties and problems and attain unto peace and happiness. But here it is emphatically stated that the Lord saw that there was no man, no intercessor who could intervene in behalf of the children of men unto their salvation. The only possibility of salvation, according to this passage out of Isaiah, is that the Lord Himself brought salvation by His own right hand. Notice, too, what we read in Ps. 14:1-3, and again we quote: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Here we read that none does good, all have gone aside, and that all men have become filthy and corrupt before God. Please note also, in this passage, that it is the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. And of interest in this connection is, of course, that

remarkable passage of the apostle Paul in Romans 1:20-32. O, it is true that also in Romans 8 and in Ephesians 2 the same apostle sets forth the utter hopelessness of the natural man, when we read that the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God and cannot be subject to that law, and that we are all conceived and born dead in sins and trespasses. But of particular interest is the passage in Romans 1 which we now quote in its entirety: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them." We do well to remember that the apostle is writing these things to the church at Rome, and that he is describing in these verses the highly civilized world of his day. We must not overlook this. The highly developed so-called culture and civilization of the old Graeco-Roman world continues to be the object of the world's admiration even today. People still love to speak of Athens, that wonderful center of learning and culture. And what did this civilization bring to man? Romans 1 is a terrible description of it. And the apostle Paul, as learned and educated as he was, was surely well able and in the position to describe this filth and iniquity.

Secondly, this presentation in Holy Writ is surely verified by history. Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt. Indeed, one cannot very well deny that civilization had

reached a high peak during the time of the old Graeco-Roman world. One can surely marvel at the accomplishments of the Romans and the Greeks of that day. Viewed from a purely natural point of view, the mind of man could well point to many imposing and remarkable accomplishments. What a development in art and what the world loves to call culture! In the field of mathematics, of philosophy, of language and of law man could boast of great things. All this, however, merely serves to make the picture so much darker from a spiritual point of view. The natural accomplishments of mankind only serve to bring into sharper focus its complete and utter collapse and bankruptcy. Moral corruption and spiritual decay and rottenness were the order of the day. Behold proud man, exulting in his achievements and pointing with pride to his knowledge of the heavens above and of the earth beneath, yet bowing his knee before gods of wood and stone and even creeping things! Christ is born in the moment which Scriptures call the "fulness of time," and this surely also means that the world, naturally, had reached a pinnacle of learning and culture on the one hand, but that it, spiritually, had fallen into the depths and abyss of corruption and complete bankruptcy. Indeed, if this moment of the fulness of time demonstrates anything, it surely proves, among other things, that the natural man when left by the God of heaven to walk in his own ways, can only plunge himself into greater chaos and misery. The proud rationalist may proclaim that he can reason and think his own way out of his present misery and distress; history only proves that the mind of the natural man can only gather for itself greater treasures of corruption and misery and the wrath of God. And, does this not also apply with even greater force than ever to our present day and age?! Has mankind made any progress whatever in its seeking after life, liberty, and happiness? Is it not true of our present age that fear and terror gnaw at the very heart and mind of man more than ever before? Are not crime and debauchery the order of the day? Is not our present civilization, from the viewpoint of the so-called elite, characterized by shameless corruption and immorality?! And today all mankind stands in mortal fear and dread of the end of our present civilization! One must surely come inevitably to the conclusion that the rationalist knows not whereof he speaks when he claims himself and his natural mind to be endowed with the ability to translate himself and this world out of its abyss of shame and misery into life and glory and happiness. Yet, this is the absurd claim that is made by the rationalists and the wise of this world. The Word of God and all of history surely deny this claim. The world is surely gathering for itself treasures of wrath in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

H.V.

On Old Year's Day, Lynden's pastor, Rev. Harbach, preached on "Lynden Time," Station WPUG, using Ezekiel 36:11 as the text under the theme, "Old Estates and Better Beginnings."

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Belgic Confession

#### INTRODUCTION

(Note: At its last annual meeting the staff decided that the undersigned should continue with this rubric and treat our *Belgic Confession*, sometimes called *The Netherlands Confession*, or simply *The Confession of Faith*. There was an earlier treatment of this creed beginning in Volume VII of *The Standard Bearer*. However, this was in the Holland language; and besides, it was very brief. It is, therefore, surely not amiss that this important and precious Reformed document be studied anew. And it is our hope that these studies, under the blessing of our covenant God, may serve for the deeper understanding and the maintenance of the faith once delivered to the saints.)

Four hundred years ago, under cover of the night on November 1, 1561, a small packet was thrown over the wall of the castle at Doornik (Tournai), in the southern Netherlands, which at that time included what is now Belgium and northern France. That packet contained a little book and a letter. The former was a confession of faith composed by Guido de Bres; the latter was addressed to the commissioners of the Spanish regent, Margaret of Parma, who had instituted an investigation of the new religious movement in Doornik and had instructed her commissioners to arrest all who were suspected of heresy. De Bres in his letter and his confession defended the believers against the dual charges of revolution and heresy. For this reason the confession itself was also introduced by a letter to Philip II, the Spanish and Roman Catholic king who claimed authority over the Lowlands at that time. Some two hundred printed copies of this confession were later found; and de Bres himself had distributed some of them. Thus our *Belgic Confession* first saw the light of day.

The story of the *Belgic Confession*, therefore, is the story of Guido de Bres. And the story of Guido de Bres is the story of the Reformation in the Netherlands. And the latter is a story of bloodshed and horror, of tyranny and persecution, of inquisition and torture. But it is also a story of martyrdom and faithfulness unto death. It is the story of the victory of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the story of the triumph of God's grace, whereby He preserved His truth and His church.

We cannot tell that story in all its details here. Volumes have been written about it, and it is so long that to tell it would take us far afield, away from our purpose of studying the *Belgic Confession*. Nevertheless we cannot properly understand nor rightly appreciate this confession without knowing something of its history. And the salient features of that history we shall try to view, in connection with the personal history of Guido de Bres.

Luther's theses had already been nailed to the door of the

church at Wittenberg in 1517 when de Bres was born. Although many of the details of his life are cloaked in obscurity, historians agree that 1522 was the most probable year of his birth and that the place was Mons, in the southern Netherlands, now Belgium. His mother was a zealous Roman Catholic. And it is reported that she prayed fervently that her child might grow up as a preacher of God's Word, and not a heretic, because shortly before his birth she had listened to a travelling monk who had preached powerfully against the rising heresy of the day. Indeed her son grew up to be a preacher, but not as his mother had expected and desired! Little is known of de Bres' youth and early training. But apparently he was converted some time before 1547 through the reading of the Scriptures, as well as through the means of the Reformation literature that was so widely distributed especially in the Lowlands.

But the time of de Bres' conversion was a period when the ecclesiastical and political climate was not favorable for any who adhered to the faith of the Reformation. Charles V, the son of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, ruled what remained of the Holy Roman Empire, including the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. And Charles was determined to maintain his authority over this rich territory. Besides, he was a staunch ally and supporter of the pope, undoubtedly to a large degree for selfish and political reasons. However, not only were these provinces of the Netherlands determined to maintain their economic and political freedom over against Charles' attempts to exploit them, but this was also the period when the Reformation had made considerable inroads into this part of Europe. First the Lutheran Reformation had had its impact; and even though there was never a large number of Lutherans in the Netherlands, Lutheran literature had its influence. About the same time the teachings of the Anabaptists had their effect. And the Anabaptists succeeded in stirring up rebellion and dissatisfaction with Spain and Rome. Soon after, the Calvinistic Reformation made tremendous inroads into the Lowlands. The amount of literature that was disseminated in the provinces was vast. The number of converts grew. The inevitable result was a clash between the Roman Catholic Charles V and the Reformation-minded Lowlanders. And the Spanish Charles determined to invoke the terrors of the Inquisition against his heretical subjects. By the year 1540 the property of all "heretics" was subject to confiscation, and the death penalty was invoked upon all such heretics and upon any who supported them in any way. And so in 1547 Guido de Bres was forced to flee for his life to the safer religious climate of England, where, in the days of Edward VI, the Reformed refugees from Roman Catholic persecution were welcomed. Here he remained for about five years. And it was in England that de Bres became prepared for his life's work as a preacher of the gospel and as a leader in the Reformed churches in the Lowlands. At London there was the Church of the Refugees, of which John a Lasco was the

pastor. With him and with Petrus Dathenus and other famous Reformed leaders de Bres had contact in these years; and through this fellowship he learned much.

When Mary ascended England's throne and England itself witnessed a bloody Romish persecution, however, de Bres returned to his homeland. And from 1552 to 1556 he became a travelling preacher, with Rijsel as the center of his labors. But in 1556, one year after Charles' successor, the cruel and absolutistic Philip II, became the Spanish ruler, a heavy persecution broke out, necessitating flight once more. At Frankfurt am Main, his next city of refuge, he came into contact again with a Lasco, and also with Calvin, who is said to have visited three weeks in Frankfurt that year. One year later we find de Bres in Switzerland, at Lausanne and Geneva, where his schooling was completed. In 1559 he returned to Doornik (Tournai), apparently a hot-bed of heresy in Roman Catholic eyes and under careful scrutiny by the Spanish authorities because of its pro-French leanings. Here de Bres took up his ministry with vigor and effectiveness. Here too he married Catherine Ramon, by whom he had several children. But this Reformer was destined to have little peace and quiet in his brief life span. In September of 1561, needlessly and against the warnings of de Bres himself, a number of the inhabitants had staged one or more chanteries, psalm-singing parades. If, as is reported, they were seeking martyrdom and attempting to fan the fires of persecution, they succeeded well. For the wicked Margaret of Parma sent her commissioners to investigate and to punish all those who were guilty of violating the royal edicts. Heretics were to be arrested. Finally the persecution waxed so hot that de Bres was forced to flee again. But before he left, he tossed his little packet over the castle-wall at Doornik for the benefit of the commissioners, of Margaret, and of Philip II. His house was burned, his library was destroyed, and he himself became an exile for whose head the Inquisition would pay a goodly bounty.

France became the next scene of his labors. And here he stayed, with the exception of a few brief and secret trips to Belgium, laboring in various cities where the Reformed faith had gained a foothold. But the Reformed believers in the southern Netherlands urged his return. And in 1566 he deemed that the time had come for that return. After a brief stay at Antwerp, he settled at Valenciennes. Here he labored for less than two years along with Peregrin de la Grange. Through their labors it came about that more than two-thirds of the citizenry became adherents of the Reformation-faith. But at the occasion of the iconoclastic riots of this time, in which the people of Valenciennes also took part, persecution broke out anew. The violation of Roman Catholic sanctuaries and the destruction of Romish images and relics stirred the authorities to a frenzied rage against the Calvinists. In December of 1566 the city was declared to be in a state of rebellion. Noircarmes laid siege to the city with his Spanish soldiers. And after three months, because no

succor came from the outside and because the city was not prepared for a long siege, surrender came. The two preachers were the object of intense search, and were captured while fleeing. First imprisoned at Doornik and later brought to Valenciennes for imprisonment and trial, de Bres underwent intense questioning at numerous hearings. His faith never wavered. He rejoiced more than ever in tribulation. Condemned to be hanged, on the last day of his life, May 31, 1567, before he left the prison, he is said to have addressed his fellow-prisoners as follows: "My brethren, today I am condemned to death for the doctrine of the Son of God. Let Him be praised for this. I am very glad on account of it. I never thought that God would show me such an honor. I feel my heart swelling with grace, which God causes to descend upon me more and more; and I am from moment to moment strengthened. My heart springs with joy within me." To the gallows in the public marketplace he was brought. At the foot of the ladder de Bres wished to pray, but he was forbidden. Then he admonished the people to remain steadfast in the truth. And thus he died the death of a martyr.

From this brief account we may learn, in the first place, that the *Belgic Confession* is no dead letter, coldly and academically composed, but the expression of the living faith of the church, rising from the very heart, written, as it were, in the blood of persecution, and maintained at the cost of death. To make a confession of faith when skies are blue and no clouds of persecution appear is one thing; to make it mid the storms of tribulation and persecution is quite another. Guido de Bres paid for his confession with his life. And thus did thousands upon thousands of children of God in his times. Reliable historians tell us that far more martyrs died in the Netherlands during the reign of Charles V only than died in the first three centuries of the Christian era in the Roman Empire.

Four hundred years have passed! Can it be said today that the *Belgic Confession of Faith* is as precious today to those of the Reformed churches as it was in yesteryear? Judging by the growing trend toward doctrinal indifference and ignorance, not to speak now of outright departure from the truth, one could not make this estimate. But how about you and me? Do we know what we believe? Will we maintain it? Do we live it? Do we count the faith once delivered to the saints an incomparably precious heritage? Do we live according to it in such a way that we would be willing to die for it — yes, and by it? H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Isaac Korhorn, in the loss of his brother,

JOHN KORHORN

May our God comfort the bereaved in their sorrow.

In the name of the Society  
Rev. H. Hanko, Pres.  
H. Mensch, Sec'y

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Subjects of Baptism?

Our Church Order answers the above question by stating that baptism is to be administered to "*children of Christians*." This answer is rather general. Its indefiniteness creates the possibility of raising various questions and it is of little value in solving the problems that arise in abnormal circumstances. Rev. Ophoff suggests an improved formulation to read: "*Unto the seed of believers, that is, unto the seed of the covenant*." In 1564 the wording was simply, "*to the children*." Though this wording was retained for fourteen years, its obvious defect lies in the possible interpretation that this can mean that all children are to receive baptism regardless of their parentage or the faith of their parents. This, however, was not the intended meaning of those synods that approved this wording. To make this clear the wording was changed in 1578 to read: "*to the children of Christians*." The Synod of Middelberg then further amended this to read: "*to the children of baptized Christians*" but in 1586 the adjective "*baptized*" was again elided so that today we still have the general reading although the Christian Reformed Church has in their proposed revision the change: "*to children of communicant members*."

In all of these possible formulations the one main general principle is plain. This is that God establishes His covenant of grace with believers and their children in continued generations. The children of believers, therefore, that is, of those who profess faith in Christ and who manifest that faith in an upright walk, must receive the sign of the covenant which is baptism. These children are "*sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of His church ought to be baptized*" (Baptism Form). In Reformed churches this is understood and in normal circumstances no question or problem arises irrespective of which of the above wordings is adopted. By normal circumstances we mean a situation where both parents are members in full communion and in good standing in the church. Such parents do not question whether their children should be baptized. They present them for baptism as soon as that is possible.

However, problems arise in regard to this question when the circumstances become in one way or another abnormal. We shall discuss some of these situations that have arisen in the church in the past and also some of the problems that are still with us today.

The first question is whether the church can administer baptism to the children of Christians who are members in some other church denomination. From a practical point of view this question is not very serious today. It is not likely to arise but this was not the case in the sixteenth century. Shortly after the Reformation there were people who at heart were in sympathy with the Reformed position but who never made a break with the Roman Catholic Church. Sometimes

such people would request baptism for their children in a Reformed church. When the question arose at the synod of 1571 it was referred to the theologians of Geneva, ministers and professors. Beza wrote that the rule should be that only children of church members should receive baptism and this was generally accepted as the rule in the Reformed churches. However, it was also granted that in abnormal times, as when the church was in the process of being reorganized, or when severe persecutions were raging, exceptions to this rule might be made. Children of weak and fearful parents might be baptized under these circumstances though not without certain stipulations and promises. This is a decision of convenience rather than of principle. To make such concessions is to pave the way for all kinds of exceptions and the eventual outcome of it is that the principle rule cannot be maintained. The rule of Beza is sound and should be maintained. Baptism should be administered only to those children whose parents are members of the church.

Maintaining this rule, we must next ask whether baptism may be administered to parents who are under discipline or who have been excommunicated from the church. As to the latter, we may say that their children cannot receive baptism since those who have been excommunicated are not members of the church. This, of course, applies only where both parents are involved in the excommunication. If one of the parents is still a member in good standing in the church, be it father or mother, that one could have the children baptized.

In the case of parents who are under discipline it might be argued that their children are entitled to baptism since their parents are still within the church. However, it must not be overlooked that unless the parents of these children repent of the sin or sins for which they are being censured, the baptism of these children will be without meaning. It will simply be an empty form. These parents are not able to assume the obligations and responsibilities of baptism. They cannot answer to the baptismal vow requiring them to give their children the training and instruction that harmonizes with the significance of baptism. The church may not administer the sacrament that way for to do so would be to trifle with the holy things of God. Besides, when a member of the church is under censure, that member is temporarily denied all the rights and privileges of church membership and this would certainly include the right and privilege to the sacraments. These privileges are again restored only when confession of sin is made and repentance is evident. At such time these parents may have their children baptized. Otherwise baptism must be denied these children even though they are born historically in the line of the covenant. If, in later life, such unbaptized children give evidence of faith and seek affiliation with the church, they will be baptized as adults upon their own, rather than their parent's responsibility.

Another question that must sometimes be faced in the church that is still not perfectly delivered from sin is whether



children that are born illegitimately, i.e., out of wedlock, are or are not to be baptized? It is impossible to give a definite yes or no answer to this question because of the complexity of circumstances which may be involved in situations of this kind. Suppose, for example, that the mother of such a child is herself a spiritual minor, a baptized member of the church. Apart from other considerations, this alone would make it impossible for her to have her child baptized. Then there is the question as to what is going to become of the child and who is going to assume the responsibility for its up-bringing? Is the mother going to do this? Are, perhaps, the grandparents or some other relative going to take the child and bring it up or maybe even legally adopt it? Or is it going to be placed in a home to be adopted at random? All this would not only affect the baptism of the child but also the question as to who would present the child in baptism and assume the baptismal vows. Then, too, suppose that the mother is a full member of the church and the father of the child is an unbeliever. Suppose that this couple marries and the father, after the child is born, strongly opposes having the child baptized and instructed in the Christian faith. Apart now from the question as to how a God-fearing mother could possibly live in the marriage relation with such a man, can the church baptize under such circumstances? From a practical point of view this would be very difficult, if not impossible. However, if the mother requested baptism and was able to show that it is possible for her, under the circumstances, to keep the baptismal vows, her request could not be denied. It would appear though that this would never be the case unless the father changed his attitude or that a separation was effected in which the care of the child was entrusted to the mother.

All of this, however, is still contingent upon one fundamental thing. In the baptism of such illegitimate children, the parent or parents requesting baptism would first have to confess their sin and give evidence of true repentance. If there is no confession of sin there can be no administration of the sacrament.

Another question that concerns us even more, that is, from the point of view of frequency of occurring, is one that arises from the situation where the father and mother are members respectively of different churches. The question is: "Where must the children be baptized? Must the husband's church or the wife's church administer baptism to the children in such cases?" This problem is very difficult and to it we can offer no ready-made solution. It involves far more than the mere question of baptism. Rather than attempting to discuss this problem I will point to some conclusions which Rev. H. C. Hoeksema drew a few years ago in a speech which he gave before the Eastern League of Protestant Reformed Men's Societies. In the first place it should be pointed out that this is basically a problem of the parents involved. Although it may become a matter in which the church becomes involved, the parents are responsible for its solution.

Secondly, it is not a problem that can or may be solved on the basis of convenience though this is often done. One or the other parent gives in for the sake of the peace of the family. Or some mechanical and arbitrary agreement is reached in the form of a compromise with the husband taking some of the children and the wife the others. All such attempts are not solutions. The only way is that the problem be faced and resolved on the basis of sound principle.

In the third place, this means that the principle to be followed is that expressed in our Confessions, namely, "*that everyone is bound to join themselves unto the true church.*" This means, of course, that the true church must be determined by the distinguishing marks of the church, which are the pure preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline. Both husband and wife, in seeking a united church affiliation, must be guided and moved by the desire to join the true church according to this standard. "Nothing else," in the words of Rev. Hoeksema, "may control them. Nothing else may move them to affiliate with any church. They must be convinced that in the church to which they join themselves here on earth, the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached. They may not do anything else. To do anything else is to live the lie!"

Fourthly, suppose that no solution can be reached; that both insist on remaining in their own church. Then the unhappy situation prevails of a divided home. Concerning this situation, we agree with the following point brought out in the speech of Rev. Hoeksema:

"But supposing that the husband is the dissenting party and that he is insistent on his position on the rights of his headship in the family. I maintain then and I believe that that is correct in the light of Scripture and in the light of all the Scriptural teaching concerning the marriage relation that no one can or may prevent him from having the children baptized in his church. The wife, even though she disagrees and continues to disagree with her husband and expresses her disagreement and tells him that in her heart she can never consent to have her children baptized in his church and brought up in his doctrine, she, nevertheless, is called to be in subjection to her husband in his God-given position as head." To this I would add that it must then also be evident that the *responsibility* for this insistence, right or wrong, also rests upon the husband.

Finally, this conclusion must be remembered. We quote from the same speech. "Further the problem must not be approached in the attitude that *we can solve it*. After all it is of the very essence of our position that is such a dissenting husband or wife is to see the light — to understand the truth as we believe it — *that is not our work! It is God's work; the work of His irresistible grace!* And in dependence, therefore, upon Him, as true children of God, together as husband and wife, praying earnestly for a solution to their difficulties, a solution must be sought in the love of His truth, in the love of Christ toward one another."

G.V.d.B.

## ALL AROUND US

### THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

The year 1961 marks the 350th anniversary of the King James Bible. It is this anniversary year which has been marked as the year for publication of the New English Bible. This is a new translation prepared by scholars of the non-Roman Catholic Churches in England, Scotland and Ireland and heralded as one of the best translations to appear in modern times. There have been many of these new translations; e.g., the Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version, the Moffatt Bible, translations by Goodspeed, Knox and Phillips. This version, however, is claimed by those involved in the project to be superior to them all.

A rather elaborate system of committees and panels was set up in order that the translation would be as accurate and yet as beautiful and understandable as possible. A sixteen man committee was in charge of the whole. This committee in turn appointed three panels to be respectively responsible for the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Apocryphal Books. Each panel, in turn, appointed individual translators to translate either one book or a portion of one book. The translator with his panel would then discuss the translation, often spending days discussing one verse. These panels were backed up by a fourth panel of literary advisers who were responsible for the grammar and literary styling of the translations. The finished product was then submitted to the joint committee for final approval.

Only the New Testament is scheduled for publication this year, the Old Testament to be published sometime in the future. The entire venture was begun in 1946, so one can form some estimate of the time consumed in making this new translation.

Whether it will be an improvement over the King James Version remains to be seen. The King James Version has become the beloved Bible of English-speaking Christendom. It has served remarkably well throughout its 350 years. It has been memorized extensively by saints and their children; its passages and lofty style have become familiar to countless people of God; it has been and remains today a source of strength and comfort and spiritual renewal to God's people in all the circumstances of life. It would be a most remarkable achievement if this new translation is so good that it takes the place of the beloved King James Version in the lives of the saints and in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Although the translation has been kept secret until it is published, a sample is printed in *Time* magazine. The sample is the first three verses of the First Epistle of John. You may compare it with your present versions.

- 1) It was there from the beginning; we have heard it; we have seen it with our own eyes; we looked upon it, and felt it with our own hands; and it is of this we tell. Our theme is the word of life.

- 2) This life was made visible; we have seen it and bear our testimony; we here declare to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us.
- 3) What we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you and we together may share in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

The Synod of our Churches was contacted in 1958 and asked to cooperate in a new translation of the Bible. The request reached our Synod through a letter addressed to us by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches, a letter sent to various Church groups throughout this country. The Synod of 1958 adopted a motion which reads, "To appoint a committee and to tell the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church that we will cooperate with them in this matter." Between the meetings of the Synods of 1959 and 1960 a long questionnaire was received in which the basic principles of translation and various related points were defined, and our reaction to them asked. The committee appointed answered this document which answers were approved by the Synod of 1960. The document also asked whether our Churches felt the need of a new translation. The Synod adopted the answer of the committee which is worth quoting here.

"Our answer to question 1 is negative, on the ground that we do not feel the pressing need for a new translation or revision.

- 1) It is our opinion that discoveries in the field of textual criticism do not warrant a new translation or revision. Such questions as there are in regard to the text are relatively few, and they may be taken care of by means of comment and exposition.
- 2) Although we grant that certain words in the Authorized (King James) Version have undergone a change of connotation, there are not sufficient words of this kind to warrant a new translation. We are of the opinion that the Authorized Version comes as close to what the document calls a 'timeless English' as is possible.
- 3) There is a danger that a new translation in popular style so departs from the style of the Authorized Version that the Bible becomes common and loses its distinctive character."

Without denying the benefits of a new translation, there is something deeper at issue than a mere desire to improve the King James Version when all these new versions appear on the scene. It leaves one with the very distinct impression that this also is a sign of the unrest and superficiality of our age. There is also the very grave danger involved that new translations become a means of introducing the false religions and private opinions of individuals and groups. For oftentimes a translation is deeply colored by the views which the individual translator may hold.

Yet, on the other hand, it is undoubtedly impossible, and perhaps not even desirable that man be completely objective and rid himself of all his doctrinal beliefs as he begins the work of translation. The only conclusion then is that only a man who believes the truth and who humbly and faithfully walks in the truth can be a successful Bible translator. One's faith has as its content the Scriptures; but it must be this same faith in the truth of Scripture which moves him in his translation of God's Word.

### NEWS FROM THE KOREAN CHURCH

Up until several years after World War II, there was one large Presbyterian Church in Korea. This Church was large and influential, and in fact included about 75% of all Christians in Korea in its membership. In the last decade, however, several splits have taken place in this denomination. In 1950 a group left the Presbyterian Church and became known as the Koryo Presbyterian Church. At present it composes about 15% of all Presbyterians in that country. It is with this group that the Christian Reformed Church has fraternal relations. They have given financial aid to the Church, have maintained a relationship of correspondence and have exchanged fraternal delegates at their Synods.

In 1954 another group left the main Presbyterian Church and became known as the Kichang Presbyterian Church, composing about 22% of all Presbyterians. This group was, according to reports, decidedly liberal in theology.

In 1959 the main Korean Presbyterian Church again split, this time almost down the middle. Although the issues even up to now have not been clearly defined, there have been several attempts made to bring about a reconciliation. Some of these attempts have been reported in past months in *Christianity Today*, and, in fact, several of those connected with *Christianity Today* have worked in Korea to realize this reconciliation. All attempts failed, however, and the two groups continue to live under separate denominational roofs.

Last year, the Koryo Group which has contact with the Christian Reformed Church and the so-called NAE Group formed by the split of 1959, have discussed proposals to merge. A committee met successfully, the vote in a joint assembly was recently taken, and it seems as if this merger will be realized.

Some years ago the Consistory of Hope Church met with a student from the Koryo Presbyterian Church. At that time, if my memory serves me correctly, this student spoke of the worship of the emperor of Japan forced upon the Korean Churches during the Japanese occupation, as being an issue in the split. Some ministers and laymen, to escape persecution, agreed to worship the emperor and tried to justify their actions after the occupation came to an end with the end of World War II. It was over this issue primarily that the Church first split. However, he also spoke of the inroads of modernism in the Church, and the resulting departure of what is now known as the Kichang Presbyterian Church.

It seems now as if the more conservative element of the Korean Presbyterian Church and the Koryo Presbyterian Church will effect a merger shortly resulting in a comparatively conservative denomination in Korea.

### THE POSSIBILITIES OF REVIVAL

There appeared recently in *The Biblical Research Monthly* an article which discussed this question appearing above. The magazine which goes under the name *Biblical Research Monthly* is a periodical which devotes most of its

contents to the question of premillennialism and tries to show how history continually affirms the viewpoint of those addicted to this view.

The article in question discusses the possibility of a national or world-wide revival, and answers that such a revival certainly cannot be expected. The author, Dr. David L. Cooper, goes to considerable pains to show that such a revival is a dream incapable of fulfillment, either on a national or international level, at least not before the rapture. He gives his reasons in the following quotation:

"But I am going to tell you that there can be no revival — even on a small scale, even though God wants to save men, even though the godliest of men are on their knees pouring out their souls and hearts to God in earnest prayer, and even though there are men proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, unless there are sinners who are thirsting after God and who want the truth. All the praying, all the preaching, and all the personal work cannot change the situation unless there are lost men and women who at least are honest and want the truth. God never forces a man's will. If men are not willing to receive truth, but are set against it, all the prayers, all the preaching, and the efforts made in their behalf are of no avail. . . . God will use moral suasion and influence to the utmost to bring man to a saving knowledge of the truth, but He always stops short of forcing man's will. Then we see that though we meet the conditions of revival, sinners must want the truth."

But Dr. Cooper is not completely pessimistic about a revival. He writes later in the article:

"Is all hope for revival gone? No. There is to be a world-wide revival in which multiplied hundreds of millions of people will come to a saving knowledge of the truth and of Jesus Christ. The prophets have told us when and by whom that world-wide revival will be conducted. When will it be? It will be in the Tribulation period. . . . You have heard it said that it takes a great deal to awake some people. The world is traveled so far from God, spiritually speaking, that He has to arouse it. How? By sending His judgments. . . . Revelation, chapter 7, shows us that there will be 144,000 Jews — Jews to whom we are now giving the truth of the gospel — who, after the church is raptured, will accept the truth and will give it out to the entire world. The gospel must be given to them while the church is here to do it, even though they will not accept it until after the Tribulation begins. As the result of the preaching of these 144,000 evangelists, untold multitudes 'which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues' will be brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. It will not be just a national or continental revival, but a world-wide revival — a genuine turning to God."

It has always been difficult for me to understand why people adopt the position of premillennialism. Clearly the whole view is contrary to Scripture, and does violence to those portions of Scripture on which it is supposed to be based. This in itself is somewhat understandable, for misinterpretations of Scripture are common enough. But, while such errors as Arminianism and Pelagianism appeal to the carnal desires of sinful man inasmuch as they exalt man and deny the holiness and sovereignty of God, premillennialism does nothing of the kind. Its sole interest seems to be in the national salvation of the Jews.

Yet a partial explanation can perhaps be found in this article. For this article is not only decidedly premillennial, but it is also representative of the worst sort of Arminianism. It openly affirms that God cannot save men without the co-operation of their wills. By strong implication, it teaches that

men, by their own power and goodness, can love the truth, thirst after it and crave it with all their hearts. Such blatant denial of the power and sovereignty of God one seldom finds. But the conclusion of the matter seems to be that Arminianism and premillennialism usually go hand in hand. Although all Arminians are no doubt not Premillennialists, it seems that inherent in the position of premillennialism is the error of Arminius and Pelagius. H. Hanko

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

January 20, 1961

Rev. G. Van Baren, of Doon, declined the call from Grand Haven. — Lynden's pastor, Rev. R. C. Harbach, declined the call he was considering from our church in Randolph, Wisc.

### *Report of Classis East meeting held January 4 at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church:*

Rev. A. Mulder led in opening devotions and declared Classis properly constituted when all the credentials of the various delegates were received and accepted. Each church was represented by two delegates.

Rev. M. Schipper then took the chair and Rev. Mulder transcribed the minutes.

Much of the work of classis was of a routine nature. Reports of the Stated Clerk and Classical appointments were received for information. Classis also treated subsidy requests from the following churches: Holland, Creston, Grand Haven and Kalamazoo. Classis decided to advise Synod to grant these requests. Also there were three requests for Classical appointments. Classis adopted the following schedule: *Grand Haven*, Jan. 15 — G. Vos, Feb. 5 — M. Schipper, Feb. 12 — G. Lanting, Feb. 26 — H. Hanko, Mar. 5 — A. Mulder, Mar. 19 — C. Hanko, Mar. 26 — G. Vos. *Creston*: Jan. 29 — A. Mulder, Feb. 5 — C. Hanko, Feb. 19 — G. Vos, Feb. 26 — M. Schipper, Mar. 12 — R. Veldman, Mar. 19 — G. Lanting, Mar. 26 — H. Hanko. *Randolph*: Jan. 15 — G. Lanting, Jan. 29 — H. Hanko, Feb. 12 — R. Veldman, Feb. 26 — C. Hanko, Mar. 19 — M. Schipper, Mar. 26 — A. Mulder, Apr. 9 — R. Veldman.

Classis spent considerable time treating the protest of a brother against his Consistory. Classis advised that the Consistory was in error, and should rectify the error.

Delegates were chosen to attend the 1961 Synod as follows: *MINISTERS* — *Primi*: M. Schipper, G. Vos, C. Hanko, H. Hoeksema. *Secundi*: H. Hanko, G. Lanting, A. Mulder, R. Veldman. *ELDERS* — *Primi*: H. Meulenberg, T. Engelsma, R. Newhouse, H. G. Kuiper. *Secundi*: J. Swart, G. Pipe, R. Ezinga, P. Schipper.

Chosen to serve as delegate ad examina: *Primus* — M. Schipper, *Secundus* — R. Veldman.

Rev. G. Vos was appointed to thank the ladies of Southeast Church for their excellent catering services.

Classis decided to meet next time on April 5, 1961 at Hope Church.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

Rev. G. Vos closed this meeting with thanksgiving, a meeting which was marked by the usual congenial and brotherly spirit. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

Doon's Jan. 8th bulletin carried this paragraph: "Rev. and Mrs. G. Van Baren rejoice in the birth of a son on Jan. 4." Their new church directory lists his name as Gerald Wayne.

In Doon's Jan. 15 bulletin the following adv. was found: ". . . . *Lecture*: 'The Covenant Witness.' *Speaker*: Rev. H. Hanko, dynamic, powerful, zealous. *Note*: The speaker travels more than 1500 miles and over 24 hours in order to address us of Doon and members of our Hull and Edgerton congregations. Would it be too much to ask of us that we travel perhaps 30 miles and spend a few hours to attend this lecture? . . . ."

First Men's Society was host to that of Creston Jan. 16. Mr. Peter Koole, of the visiting society, gave a paper on "Satan the Fallen Angel." An interesting discussion followed which showed those present that Scriptural proofs are very meager to build up any sort of doctrine of demonology. The paper did serve to put us on our guard "Lest Satan should get advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." II Cor. 2:11. Truly our expectation is in the fulfillment of Rev. 20:10.

Southeast's new auditorium was the place of the mid-winter Dutch Psalm Sing held Jan. 15. The Adams St. School Mothers' Club sponsored the event and the proceeds went to that Kingdom cause. Like Old Settlers' Picnics, Dutch Psalm Sings seem to attract fewer survivors each succeeding meeting.

The members of our Redlands Church have re-organized their own local Prot. Ref. Christian School Society, a constitution was adopted, and the name "Hope Christian School Society of Redlands, California" was chosen. Officers for this year are: T. Feenstra, E. Gritters, W. T. Feenstra and B. Meelker.

From Southeast's bulletin we learn that their serviceman, Homer Teitsma, is near the trouble spot, Laos, so often in the news these days.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," Psalm 119:54, was the text of the sermon Rev. Vos preached at the funeral of Mr. Bernard Lubbers, who at the age of 79 met with a fatal "accident" in the last week of the past year.

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.