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MEDITATION

THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH

"To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke 1:77-79

The Dayspring from on High!

Whoever He may be, He came to dispel the gloomy darkness of death.

Oh yes, when Jesus came it was night. Also that is divinely ordained. Jesus must be born in the depth of night in Bethlehem. That is in keeping with the state and condition of those whom He would visit.

And what a night!

There was deep darkness in Zion.

Darkness is absence of the light, and spiritually it is absence of all goodness and virtue. And it is also presence of all evil and wickedness.

Darkness is utter impotence to see, to walk and to live.

And by Divine decree: those that walk in darkness shall not have the light of life.

And the objects of this wonderful song of Zacharias are those that "sit" in darkness and in the land of the shadow of death. The picture is horribly complete.

A horribly complete picture, for that word "death" tells us the terrible quality of the darkness and the gloom that surrounds them.

Darkness of death! It is the folly of the natural mind, the crookedness of unrighteous souls, and the corruption of the entire nature of man. It is the very opposite of the beautiful image of God which adorned us originally.

Such is the night of Bethlehem.

Oh, let us not gloss over this awful fact. If you do, you will never be able to sing the Christmas carols of the heavenly host of angels. Exactly in the measure that you see the gloom of the night of sin and guilt, do you see also the glittering and the shining Light of the Dayspring from on High.

The song of Zacharias is about those people that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death!

* * * *

But attend to the name which he gives to them, a name that spells singing and rejoicing, the jubilant cry and the God-given anthem of praise.

What is it? It is the name "His people"!

That possessive pronoun means infinitely more than mere possession. Does not God possess everything and everyone, be he wicked or good, be he elect or reprobate?

They are His people because He loved them from all eternity. It is a possessive pronoun indeed, but it tells us of the relation of loving possession. It tells of a love that never knew a beginning. As old as Jehovah is, so old is the love which sends you your Christmas, and your Christmas-Child, and your Christmas joy! You are His people, and it is for that reason that the Dayspring from on High will visit you again and again.

And that Dayspring, whoever we mean, will visit you because you became a sinner in time, and since He loves you eternally, He loves you even when you were sinners, and sat in the darkness of the shadow of death.

You dare not speak any different on that glorious day when you remember the song of the angels. One of the most important of the heavenly host has told it to Mary: "for He shall save His people from their sin!" And the host of angels sang of the "men of God's goodpleasure."

It is because the "people" are so blessed that we commemorate the days of advent and the Christmas day.

* * * *

Look, if you can, into the Face of that Dayspring!

I say: if you can, for it is tantamount with looking into

the golden lustre of Divine mercy! The Son of God comes with the glory of God's unspeakable pity and commiseration.

Let us look at that Dayspring!

Yes, it is imagery. It is the sun in his rising. The Dayspring from on High is the sun when it appears at the horizon and sheds its golden lustre, prophesying of a day when all shall be bathed in light, light, glorious light, all the Day of Eternity! I would shout it from the housetops: There shall be no night there! And why not? Because it is the place where the Dayspring has run His course. Eternally He shall stand and shine at the zenith of the heavenly heaven of God.

Oh yes, it is Jesus Christ the Lord.

You knew it all along. You have heard of Him so much and so often. When you could scarcely speak, they told you of that Christ-Child. It was the theme of the whole life of your forebears, of your progenitors, your teachers, your pastors, your friends, your whole world of thought, expression and action. Oh yes, we knew it! The Dayspring from on High is the blessed Son of God who comes to us with healing in His wings. Shall we then not make merry on Christmas eve? If we did not, the very stones and the rocks would organize their Christmas programs.

And we will continue to look into the golden lustre of Divine mercy, for that is Jesus Christ.

It is in the text: look at it! Through the tender mercy of our God!

Mercy! Divine compassion! It is God, tenderly commiserating with the miserable object of which we spoke above. Mercy always has to do with misery.

Jesus is the Mercy of Triune God!

And this mercy has visited us. God came to you "on company."

He did so, long, long ago.

First, in the Word of Promise in the First Paradise. Oh, that seed of the woman! Well, here she is: the final woman: Mary the mother of Jesus.

The "people," *His* people, clung to that promise throughout all the ages with their attending death and darkness. They loved to bring forth children, and they hoped for the redemption of Israel.

Second, He came in the humble city of Bethlehem. There is the Dayspring from on High. Careful, do not stumble here in this smelly barn. Come, do not be afraid, come closer if you want to see the "golden lustre" of a Sun that shall shine unto all eternity! Oh yes, you are right: He lies in the sour-smelling manger, the place where beasts of the field slaver and munch and eat their fodder. Oh yes, you are right. There is no mistake.

All this misery, this poverty, this degradation is a picture of the darkness of the shadow of your and my death.

But it is also the visiting of that Dayspring. It is the eternal mercy of your and my God, blessed forever!

He came.

He visited me.

And He proved His mercy in His coming. The dirty stable, the animals, the sour-smelling manger, the swaddling-clothes, the poverty-stricken and forsaken mother and "father" are so many proofs that He came in order to shine on me, and to continue to shine on me, until all my darkness is gone and I do not have to spend my eternity in the outer darkness of hell. He went there for me.

Such is the Light of the Dayspring that visited you and me.

In accents sweet it is a song of mercy of God. He was moved with our misery and absorbed it. Yes, that is the right word. It is absorbed. In all my afflictions He was afflicted. Carry over this cipher and carry it over and over again, unto all eternity, for He bore our eternal sorrows. Reason why His name is also Man of Sorrows.

Shall we then not sing on Christmas eve?

We shall sing and we shall teach the little ones to sing until the sun and the moon shall shine no more.

And then He shall continue to shine.

Oh yes, shine on Christ of God, Sun of righteousness, Golden lustre, Bearer of Divine mercy of Thy God!

* * * *

And the result?

Has Christmas a fruit?

Zacharias shall sing also of that.

Listen to him: To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of sins . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace!

To give knowledge of salvation *by the remission of sins!*

Who is there among you who has not tortured himself with the thought of his or her terrible sins? Do you remember the nights when sleep fled and slumber vanished from your tearstained eyes? Do you remember the nights when you uttered unheard groanings, shed "dry" tears, gave vent to sighing and murmuring?

Man! No matter who you are: do you know your sins and misery?

And have you learned to bewail them before the Face of Him who KNOWS ALL AND EVERY SIN YOU COMMITTED! A good question to begin your festivities when the days of advent are over and when the ADVENTED ONE came!

Well then: this is the Gospel of Christmas. This is the result of the shining Dayspring from on High: He took all

your sins away, never to return. There is remission of sins.

It means that when you appear before the Judgment Seat, you shall hear Jesus say to God: I will not that this one and that one and all the others there and here, descend into the pit: I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM!

Remission of sin means that when finally you will see the glorious Face of God, that this Face will be wreathed in smiles of goodpleasure in you, and you, and you!

He will be silent in His love regarding all your sin, and He shall be voluble in His words of welcome on that first day in heaven. At the door you will hear Him say: Welcome home, my son, my daughter! Your sins are forever gone. Come in and enter into the joy of your Lord!

And why?

Because of Christmas!

And that knowledge He gives. And that knowledge we embrace.

And though we smile in that knowledge through our tears of suffering, here in the midst of devils and wicked men, we smile nevertheless, for Jesus gave us the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our grievous sins.

* * * *

But there is more: to guide our feet into the way of peace!

Peace is the harmony between your heart and the heart of God. When His heartbeat and yours beat in unison, and you know that, then you taste peace. In a figure: when you sing a song with God and when your voices merge and you sing as one. Then you have peace.

The way to that peace is the Christ-Child.

His name is the Prince of Peace.

And He has made peace through His heart's blood.

He is the great Peace-maker.

And Christmas tells me that He takes your hand and leads you on the way of peace to the place where your peace will eternally flow like a river!

Blessed night when Jesus was born!

G.V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Christmas Day, December 25, 1960, our dear parents,
MR. AND MRS. JOHN LANNING
will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

With grateful hearts we thank our heavenly Father for His loving kindness in sparing them these many years for us and for each other. Our sincere prayer is that the Lord may continue to bless them, and keep them in all things, in their remaining years.

Mr. and Mrs. James Lanning

Terri, Tammi, and Tricia

Mr. and Mrs. Robert TerMolen and Jodi
Wayne Lanning

Ruth Lanning

Anna Lynn Lanning

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EDITORIALS

About Being Protestant Reformed

Recently my attention was called to an article in the *Missionary Monthly* of Nov. 1960 written by Dr. Jerome De Jong. And since in that article he also mentions the Protestant Reformed Churches I must needs reflect a moment on it.

By the way, I used to receive the above mentioned magazine regularly. In fact I thought it was an exchange paper with *The Standard Bearer*. But for a long time now I received no more. Perhaps, Dr. De Jong will put forth efforts that the exchange is renewed.

I cannot quote the entire article since that would require too much space. However, I will quote sufficiently for our readers to know what it is all about.

First Dr. De Jong expresses the opinion that "the glory of the Reformed theology is also its downfall." He explains this statement by saying that Reformed people and especially, I presume, Reformed theologians, like to set their own conception and interpretation of Scripture on the foreground and condemn those as heretics that do not agree with them.

And now I will quote him somewhat at length:

"No doubt some of this interest in theological precision is good, for a lack of understanding may very well lead to broadmindedness of the type that must find truth in everything regardless of cost. However this strong impetus toward theological precision has also been disastrous in the life of our Reformed Churches. One group separated from a previously united church in the Netherlands on the tenuous doctrine of presumed regeneration. In our own country the subject of supralapsarianism with all its consequent logical results brought about the division of the church and saw the coming of the Protestant Reformed Churches. In that same circle there was again a difference of opinion on the well-meant Gospel offer which again precipitated a crisis in the church and another division in the church of Jesus Christ. It is not the business of this article to press the one side or the other, but we want to think of the necessity of Reformed people taking moderate views on these subjects lest, for the sake of doctrinal purity, thousands go to hell every day. Here is basically the tragedy of a divided Church, millions remain unreached. How can a doctrinally pure church of 3000 members or of 100,000 or of 200,000 for that matter ever expect to make an impression all by itself on the millions lost and without Christ? Years ago when William Carey first plead for India (1792) some clergyman repelled him by saying, 'when it pleases God to convert the heathen he will do so without your help.' If this is your attitude then it bears careful scrutiny. I have heard good Reformed people lay

such stress on the grace of God that human responsibility was simply an academic concern."

Here I first of all want to make a few comments.

1. First of all, what Dr. De Jong writes about the origin of our Protestant Reformed Churches is not quite true. In 1924 it was not a question of infra- and supralapsarianism. How could it be? We all know that the Three Forms of Unity are infralapsarian. We all know too that in spite of this fact the supralapsarian view was allowed in the Reformed Churches. So, that was not the question in 1924. No, but it simply was the question of the well-known Three Points. And these Three Points were and are not Reformed but Arminian and Pelagian. We could not subscribe to them. Yet, we would not have left the Christian Reformed Church if only the Classes had not demanded that we should subscribe to the Three Points or, at least (in my case), keep still about them. And because we could not conscientiously do this, we were cast out. It, therefore, was not a question of supra and infra, but of being Reformed or Arminian and Pelagian.

2. Secondly, I would like to ask Dr. De Jong a question. It is this: does Dr. De Jong agree that it must be the constant effort of any church, its members and its officebearers, to keep it as pure as possible? I think that Dr. De Jong, considering the underlying note of his article, would answer positively to this question. But this raises another question. It is this: is it, then, not the calling of the members of any church, particularly of its officebearers, to protest against the preaching and teaching of false doctrine? And now the third question. It is this: if protest in the legal channels is of no avail, so that it becomes evident that the church condones false doctrine or a worldly life, does it then not become the calling of the faithful members and officebearers to break with such a church and organize a separate church? I hardly think that Dr. De Jong is in a position to answer this question positively. If he did, he could not remain in the Reformed Church.

3. I do not believe what Dr. De Jong writes about a doctrinally pure church and missions. According to him such a church cannot make an impression "all by itself" on the millions lost. In fact, he evidently is of the opinion that this doctrinally pure church is responsible for the fact that millions go to hell. Now, first of all, I wish to emphasize that I do not take that responsibility. To be sure, we as Protestant Reformed Churches believe that it belongs to the calling of the Church to preach the gospel to every creature and to all nations over the whole world. I do not believe that we may shirk that calling and responsibility by saying as that man did to William Carey: "When it pleases God to convert the heathen he will do so without your help." Nevertheless, in the first place, I believe that God will show the way and a place to work to preach the gospel to the heathen. In the second place, I do not believe that millions go to hell if a doctrinally pure church is not definitely shown a field of labor for the time being or is as yet too weak in numbers

or otherwise to preach in a foreign field. And in the third place, and above all, I believe that only a doctrinally pure church can perform proper mission work, because no other church can preach a pure gospel and God will call His people out of the world, even out of heathendom, only by the pure gospel. Even to the heathen must be preached the whole counsel of God and nothing more or less. Only through that whole gospel will God save His own elect and harden the rest. And I do not believe that any of God's elect will go to hell because of a doctrinally pure church no more than any reprobate will go to heaven by any compromise gospel.

This is the correct conception of mission work.

This is the Reformed view of mission work because it is the only Scriptural view.

4. We all admit that the absolute sovereignty of God, on the one hand, and the responsibility of the rational-moral creature, on the other hand, constitutes a problem which we cannot solve. But this does not mean that we may place them side by side, as Dr. De Jong would have it. For that would mean that, in this respect, we would place God side by side with man. This explanation always leads to a virtual denial of the sovereignty of God. Dr. De Jong writes: "I have heard good Reformed people lay such stress on the grace of God that human responsibility was simply an academic concern." But if we simply place the sovereignty of God side by side with human responsibility the inevitable result is that the former becomes an academic concern and is soon entirely forgotten. It is true that the Bible does not solve this problem for us. But it certainly sheds sufficient light on it to show that God sovereignly works out his counsel even by and through His rational-moral creature in such a manner that His sovereign counsel is realized while the creature remains responsible when it, too, willingly or unwillingly, works out the counsel of God. This is the clear teaching of Scripture everywhere. Let me quote just one passage. It is found in Acts 4:24-28 where the Church speaks as follows: "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

There is more in the article of Dr. De Jong.

For, although he wrote first that "It is not the business of this article to press the one side or the other," he, nevertheless, does exactly this in the rest of the article.

He first speaks briefly of "general revelation" and then he makes this general revelation "common grace." Note what he writes:

"General revelation is a necessary condition for all mis-

sionary activity. I believe that we also shall have to admit that the grace of God to all His creatures is also a great blessing for missions. We call that grace common grace. Perhaps it was the designation 'common' that caused the difficulty. All grace is, in a sense, supernatural. I doubt that anyone would quarrel with that statement. The fact that God permits the Gospel to be preached to all men everywhere is a token of His grace . . ."

In other words, Dr. De Jong, evidently, subscribes to the Three Points of 1924: the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear it. That is, of course, his privilege. But I wish that Dr. De Jong would answer a few questions.

1. Does Dr. De Jong believe the truth of election and reprobation, whether in the supra- or in the infralapsarian sense of the word, as it is expressed in the Canons of Dordrecht chapter I not only in art. 15, but also, for instance, in art. 6 of the same chapter where we read: "That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it proceeds from God's eternal decree . . . According to which decree, he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe, while he leaves the non-elect in their own wickedness and obduracy." Will Dr. De Jong, then, explain how the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear the gospel, also for those that, under the preaching of the gospel are left in their own wickedness and obduracy?

2. Does Dr. De Jong believe that there is no preaching of the gospel except when God Himself sends out through the preaching by the preacher His own efficacious Word and that by the efficacious Word of God He not only powerfully saves the elect but also hardens the hearts of "the others," that is the reprobate? How, then, can the preaching of the gospel be grace to all those that hear?

3. Does Dr. De Jong subscribe to the teaching of the Canons in II, 10, where we read: "But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversion, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord according to the testimony of the apostles in various places." And I ask: what grace do they obtain who do not receive this grace of repentance and faith under the preaching of the gospel? Or, in other words, what sort of grace is that so-called "common grace" whereby they are hardened?

There is still more in this article of Dr. De Jong. But this must wait for our next issue.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Mystery of the Beast

Revelation 17:7-14

How then shall the final formation of the beast come to its realization? In order to understand this, we must, in the first place, understand the expression that there shall still be a seventh powerful kingdom which has not yet been. For a time it was thought by some—and personally, we have been inclined to think—that Germany might become that seventh head. But evidently that is not the way in which God has it. Germany's aim was extension of her own power and the Germanizing of the world; and that was not the purpose of the Almighty. No, but a mighty nation is still to appear, it seems, in an entirely different light. For if we take in connection with this picture of the seven heads the symbolism of the ten horns, and read that they are all of one mind and shall give their power to the beast, we receive the impression that the future realization of the kingdom of Antichrist shall rather be by way of confederation than by way of conquest. Taking these two statements together, then, it seems that we are justified in drawing the following picture. The text speaks of a seventh mighty power that is still in the future. It had not yet received its dominion at that time. But there can be no question about the fact that it shall receive its dominion. For a short while it shall show its power as a separate power. For it must continue a little while in the midst of all the other kingdoms or powers that may exist together with it. But after this little while is finished, whatever may be the history of it, the other powers, indicated by the ten horns, shall give their power to the beast together with that seventh head, thus forming the great, final confederation or league that shall constitute the ultimate form of the antichristian world-power. It shall be a league formed of the seventh head together with the ten horns. And then we can also understand the expression, apparently so difficult to grasp, "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven." That is, the beast in its entirety, as a confederation of world-powers, all being of one mind and one purpose, and all giving their power to the beast—that one great league is, in the first place, as such an eighth power. It is distinct from all the seven heads separately, for they formed no confederation. It is the old kingdom of Nimrod over again in modern form. First, therefore, the seven great powers, but the seventh culminating in the final manifestation of the antichristian world-power, which as such shall be the eighth. And, in the

second place, that great, final world-power is of the seven in the sense that it is the culmination and the consummation of all history, the climax of the history of these seven powers, the combination of all that Egypt and Assyria, Babylonia and Persia, Greece and Rome, and all the powers that followed have ever stood for and realized. It shall be the ultimate product of all the aims of the powers of the world. To recapitulate in brief, therefore, there are to be eight world-powers in all. Six have been, in Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The seventh is not yet, or, if it is today, it has not yet become plainly manifest. Its existence shall be peculiar in this respect, that it shall aim at the unification and combination of all the powers that exist at this time. And this shall lead to the final league of nations to realize the kingdom of Antichrist.

Spiritually, our text plainly characterizes this league, this final realization of the beast, as standing in direct antagonism against the Lamb and His people. For our text tells us that these confederate kings shall make war with the Lamb. Of course, they shall not fight Him in body: for the Lamb is exalted in heaven. But they shall attack all that stand for the Lamb in this dispensation. They shall fight the Lamb by fighting His Word, His worship, His name, His blood, His cause, His kingdom, His people. They shall deny the truth of His revelation. They shall refuse to believe His Word. They shall refuse to accept His authority. They shall not worship Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, and they shall instead worship the beast, deify their own power, and set up the image of the beast. And so they shall also fight His people. Notice how beautifully and significantly these people of the Lamb are designated in our text. They are the called, the chosen, the faithful. Because of their own effectual, irresistible calling they are also faithful. It is because Christ has called them that they consciously belong to Him. And it is because they are the chosen of God that the Lord has called them. Objectively, their faithfulness rests in the eternal counsel of God. They shall be faithful even unto death because the Lord Jehovah has chosen them to be His people. And subjectively, their faithfulness is assured in the irresistible calling of Christ Jesus, which can never be changed. And therefore the people of God shall be faithful also in those days. They may not be able to buy or sell, as it is expressed in the preceding chapter; but they shall faithfully cling to the name of Jesus because Jehovah of Hosts has chosen them, and because they have been called by the Spirit of Christ irresistibly. Hence, in the midst of tribulation, persecuted and pressed from all sides, as social outcasts in the world, they shall maintain, "The Lord Jehovah is our God, and Christ alone is King."

And they shall not be ashamed. Three times we are assured in the words of our passage that the victory shall be ours. In the first place, we read in verse 8 that the beast shall come up out of the abyss, but shall go into destruction. The same expression we read in verse 11. And finally, we read in verse 14 that the Lamb shall overcome them. How,

in what way, we are told in a later connection. Now we are simply told the fact that also this final attempt of the devil shall fail. And at the same time we are informed as to the reason why: the Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings. And that explains it all. He stands on Mount Zion as the great victor, as the Anointed of God, destined to rule over the kingdoms of the world. And when all these kingdoms, though striving to establish the kingdom of opposition, shall have served the purpose of Jesus Christ, He shall consume them by the breath of His mouth, establish the new heaven and the new earth, the kingdom of His people, and reign in glory over them forevermore. And therefore, the picture is rather clear, especially with a view to the times in which we now live. Watch, therefore, and cling to the name of Jesus; and have no fellowship with the great sin of Babylon, namely, to be carried by the beast. For then you shall have no fellowship with her judgment. And be comforted with this thought: the Lord is King of kings and Lord of lords! Our Lord is mightier than they all! The victory is assured!

The Kingdom of the Beast

Revelation 17:15-18

15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

The harlot and the beast with the seven heads and ten horns we have now discussed. And what remains to be considered is the relation between them and the judgment of the harlot as these are pictured in the entire chapter, and more particularly in the words of our present passage. The woman as such, so we found, is, first of all, the symbol of the church in this dispensation, the wife of Jehovah, the bride of Christ. But the woman pictured in the words of our passage is a harlot, and therefore a woman that has forsaken her rightful husband and lives in most intimate, but illegal, relationship with strangers, that are not her husband. And as such, the woman is symbolic of the apostate church, that has forsaken her rightful husband, Jesus Christ, has fallen away from the truth, and now surrenders herself as an institution to the service of the world and of Antichrist. But still more, this woman is also the figure of a great city that is to have dominion over the world and over the kings of the earth. And we found that even as the true church is destined to develop into a city, the New Jerusalem, that is to come down from heaven, so also the apostate, or false, church is to develop into a city, a great center, that is representative of her real char-

acter, and at the same time the embodiment and center of the antichristian kingdom.

The beast, so we found, is the same as the one that was pictured to us in chapter 13 and that was already mentioned in the eleventh chapter of this book. Plain this was, so we found, from its description as the beast with its seven heads and ten horns, as well as from its origin as the beast that rises up out of the abyss, and finally, too, from his relation to the inhabitants of the world and the saints of Christ. The former admire this beast and wonder after him; the latter stand in opposition to him and refuse to bow before him as their rightful king. It is therefore the world-power from its political aspect, as it shall finally give rise to the antichristian kingdom and all that it implies. Only, we also found that the point of view is different, and that we learn different details of this antichristian kingdom in the words of the passage we were discussing before. And we came to the conclusion that this beast is here pictured both in his historical development and in his final formation. His historical development is evidently pictured to us in the seven heads that represent, according to the interpretation of the angel, seven different manifestations of the antichristian world-power in the history of the world, one of which existed in the time of John, five of which had already risen and vanished before that time, and one of which is still to come. And we found that if we started from the safe assumption, that the one that is was the Roman Empire in all its glory, as it existed in John's time, the five that had already fallen could be none other than the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian empires, which had successively existed before that time, and all of which had already perished. And we found too that it is a striking characteristic of the period of this dispensation after the downfall of the Roman Empire in 476 that not one great empire has succeeded in obtaining and holding sway over all the world, something that became well-nigh an impossibility after the discovery and settlement of the new world had become an accomplished fact. The seventh power has not yet revealed itself in its full manifestation, but must still be revealed. And in the ten horns we have the picture of ten minor powers that shall exist simultaneously with the seventh head, exist side by side for a short time, but ultimately shall give their power to the beast. That is, with the seventh head, under its leadership, they shall come to one great confederation of nations, thus realizing the beast that was in Nimrod's time, never was again, but again shall be in the future. That world-power shall stand antithetically against Christ and His people, shall make war against Him, but shall be overcome by Him and by the called and chosen and faithful, who shall reign with Christ in the New Jerusalem.

In the present passage we find the judgment of the harlot. I think the general meaning of the words of our passage is so plain that after all we have discussed, it is scarcely necessary to give any direct and special explanation. In brief, they tell us that the ten kings and the beast, that committed fornication,

tion with the harlot for a long time and that made the best of her for their own interests and lust—that these shall finally bitterly hate the harlot and destroy her very appearance, kill her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. And the text explains that this they do because God has given it in their hearts to do so and perform His will, come to one mind, the mind of the beast, and destroy the harlot they first loved. And it is only after the angel has spoken of the destruction of the harlot as such that he explains the symbol of the woman once more as the great city, which hath dominion over the kings of the earth. And in the next chapter the destruction of the city is pictured to us. Just as we have learned to distinguish, therefore, between the woman as the harlot-church and the woman as the mystic city, so we shall also have to distinguish between these two in their end. And the order of events will evidently be thus, that the apostate church as a separate church institution will be done away with first of all, so that the church shall no more exist, and that exactly this destruction of the church apostate shall lead to the final unification of all so-called religion, and culminate in the religion of the beast, without any church as such, but with Babylon, the great city, for its leading center. I think this order of events stands beyond all doubt, and is exactly as the text describes it to us, and therefore as such really needs no explanation. Yet we must make an attempt, in the light of what we see in the history of the world today, somewhat to explain the possibility of this order, and try to picture to ourselves how things are to develop, as far as we are permitted to see. And in order to obtain a clear understanding of these things we must try to explain what is really meant by the harlotry of the church with the beast.

And then it will be necessary, first of all, that we obtain a clear picture of the realities that are symbolized by the woman, as well as by the beast. The woman, we must remember, in her outward appearance is the instituted church of Christ on earth. Outwardly she is nothing but the church in her entire appearance in the world. In every respect she looks like the true church externally. She calls herself church of Christ. She has her church edifices, just as the true church. In those sanctuaries the congregation gathers, at least on every sabbath, for worship. As you enter, you find that on the pulpit lies the Word of God, the Scriptures, just as it is in the true church. There is no difference. Behind the pulpit stands the regularly ordained minister of the Word. Regardless now of what use there is made of that Bible on the pulpit, regardless too of how the minister accomplishes his task of administering the Word, fact is that outwardly there is no difference. The Bible on the pulpit and the minister of that Bible behind it, pretending to administer the Word of God to the congregation, and that congregation too, in outward appearance look like the true church. They sing and pray, confess, and listen to the preaching of the Word. And as they go, they receive the benediction in the name of God. Regardless, again, of the nature of their worship, they evidently gather for the worship of God in

their sanctuary. Yea, you will find that not only the Word but also the sacraments are administered. The members of the church are baptized; and occasionally they gather around the table of communion solemnly to celebrate the supper of the Lord. We may have our scruples as to the significance attached to these things. Fact is, nevertheless, that the sacraments as well as the Word are administered, as always and just as well in the true church of Christ. In a word, the harlot woman represents the church, the church of Christ, with the Word and the sacraments, as she comes to manifestation here upon earth. The woman is the church as we know her. Just as well as any real harlot outwardly looks just like any other woman, so also does the harlot-church look like the true Church of Christ on earth in her entire appearance.

The same we must remember of the beast. In itself, the beast as pictured in the words of our passage is nothing wrong. It is simply the regular state with its regular, instituted government, as we all believe in the legality and necessity of its existence in this dispensation. This is very plain from the heads. They are seven kings, and they constitute seven manifestations of different states and governments. As such there was nothing wrong with them. God wills that they shall be there. God has Himself instituted government for this dispensation, just as well as He has established and instituted the church. It makes no difference now what form of government is meant. It does not make a particle of difference for our purpose whether the governments referred to were empires or monarchies or republics. Fact is that they are regularly instituted governments, with their heads and officers, with their power and authority, with their laws and maintenance of these laws, with their armies and navies. So also the ten horns inform us: they shall be ten kings, or ten governments, in the world. And therefore, also these represent nothing but regularly instituted, orderly, God-willed governments, institutions of God in the world. And therefore, outwardly, as to the form of this woman and of this beast there is nothing wrong. The woman represents the church as an institution of God; and the beast with all his heads and horns represents worldly government as God has willed that it should exist. Regardless now of their degenerate character, there is as such nothing wrong in either of them. They are both institutions of God. They both have their work and their purpose in the world. And without neither could this dispensation continue.

But the purpose of our chapter is undoubtedly to picture these two in a most wonderful combination, in a most intimate union. And it is exactly the nature of this union, or confederacy, between the instituted church and the instituted government which makes of the woman the harlot and of the beast the antichristian kingdom. This is symbolically portrayed in the fact that the woman is sitting on the beast—a most intimate relation and combination of the two.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Moses in Midian

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian. EXODUS 3:1

With anguish and confusion weighing upon his soul, Moses made his way toward the wilderness of Midian. He wandered almost aimlessly. His thoughts were not on the place to which he was going but upon all that he was leaving behind. Behind him were all of the privileges of his childhood. No longer would he know the luxuries of Pharaoh's court, the schooling which he had enjoyed and mastered, the servants anxious to do his every bidding, the countless opportunities of influence and advancement. Behind him were all the dreams of his youth. More and more through his young life his mind had been dominated by plans of what he would do for the children of Israel. He had thought to unite himself with them. He had thought to lead them in a glorious demonstration of power. He had thought to be their savior. But now these dreams were all shattered and were being left behind. Behind him, and this hurt most of all, were being left the people of God. The Israelites were his brethren and the fellow objects of God's promises. His heart had cried for them in their suffering, and his prayer had been for their deliverance. But now he was leaving the land, and they were being left behind in bondage.

Quite conscious was Moses all of the time that he had made an irretractable choice. He was not sorry that it had been made, but moment by moment he began to realize the more the greatness of the consequences. By fleeing the land he was acknowledging before everyone that he was guilty in the murder of the Egyptian taskmaster. It meant that a member of Pharaoh's own household had taken the part of the Israelites over against the Egyptians. It was a personal disgrace to Pharaoh and surely aroused his greatest wrath. Pharaoh would have been willing, even anxious, to have Moses remain and deny the charges so as to spare the reputation of the royal court. But that would have implied a false denial on Moses' part, and because he feared God Moses knew that the present course was best.

Weary from pondering this all, Moses came to rest at the side of a well in Midian. Little did he realize how carefully the invisible hand of God's providence was guiding him. While in Egypt Moses had been close to the people of God. Perhaps he had been allowed from time to time to return to the spiritual fellowship of his parents' home. Now he was leaving this sphere of covenant fellowship to go, as it were, into banishment alone. But God would not leave one of His chosen vessels completely isolated from the communion of saints. In Midian there dwelt the descendants of Abraham through Keturah, a small remnant of which still remained

faithful to the faith of their father. Chief among them was Reuel, a friend of God as his name implied. He served in the capacity of priest to the faithful. It was toward the home of this man Reuel that Moses by the hand of God's providence was being led.

As Moses sat by the well, the daughters of Reuel approached to perform the daily task of watering their father's flock. There follows a meeting which reminds us of the experiences of Eliezer and Jacob in Haran. There were also those in Midian who were antagonistic to Reuel and his household. It was their custom when Reuel's daughter came to water the flock to drive them away, forcing them to wait until everyone else was finished. So did they also on this day when Moses sat watching. However, within Moses there was a heart of kindness such as is peculiar to the people of God, whether Rebecca, or Jacob, or Moses. He could not endure merely to look on amid such apparent rudeness and injustice. Although weary, he still presented an imposing figure as he approached the men. There was the dignity of one raised in the royal court. There was the confidence of one who understood full well what he was doing. There was the determination of one incensed with a feeling for justice. With a few sharp and threatening words he sent the men scurrying away. Nor did his regal bearing prevent him from stooping to the menial task of filling the troughs with water. With dispatch the daughters of Reuel were soon on their way. Enthused, as only young girls can be, they related to their father how they had been saved by an Egyptian from the customary rudeness of the shepherds. Not wanting in hospitality and gratitude, Reuel quickly sent the girls again to invite the man to come to their home and stay.

Surely it was not long before Reuel and Moses discovered the common ground that lay between them. They feared and worshipped the same God. Soon Moses discarded his courtly robes for the clothing of the field to engage in the duties of the household. Time went on and Moses was united in marriage with Zipporah, one of Reuel's daughters. God had provided him with a place where he could dwell. In the household was the fear of God, and Moses could remain there without fear.

Still, although Moses was supplied with the needed communion of saints, there was a facet of his spiritual life which neither Reuel nor Zipporah could share. They were descendants through Keturah and could not appreciate the central place which Israel and his children held in the covenant of God. They felt no special sympathy for the Israelites who labored in the bondage of Egypt. They had no strong desire for the day when the children of Jacob would be delivered from the hand of Pharaoh. They did not see the need for Israel being returned to Canaan. But these were the things that dominated the mind of Moses. Moses tried to explain his concern to them but they could not seem to understand, and even resented the prominent place which Israel held in his heart and mind. Moses soon learned that

this burden of his heart had to be borne alone. More and more he began to withdraw himself with the flock into the solitude of the wilderness, there to commune with his God all alone.

The early years of Moses' sojourn in Midian were hard and bitter years. Outwardly he seemed to have adapted himself to the quiet life of a herdsman, but inwardly his heart was often in turmoil. The royal robes of the court could be laid aside, but a man's nature can not be shed like a garment. The dreams and ambitions of his youth had been many years in developing; they lingered with him still. As he guided Reuel's sheep, he thought repeatedly of the greater flock which he had longed to lead along those same roads. With pent-up feelings approaching resentment, he questioned why it could not have been so. Had not he had the ability, the preparation, the qualifications to lead the people of God? And according to prophecy was not the time drawing nigh when Abraham's seed should be delivered? Earnestly Moses sought for the answers. With a sorrow so great that it hurt, he thought on his rejection by the Israelites. Why had they refused to receive him as one of their brethren? Why had they defended the Egyptian over against him? Perhaps he had been a bit hasty. Maybe he should have been more careful. But was that sufficient reason for them to treat him as they did? Time and again Moses felt as though he should hasten back to Egypt to see if he could not establish himself again. But he could not. Pharaoh would seek for his life; and his brethren would not receive him. Those were to Moses years of banishment. He felt rejected on every side. A son was born to him and he named the child Gershom, "for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land."

Slowly the years passed by, and with them Moses' outlook made a change. His confidence began to waver and slowly to slip away. Amid the solitude of the wilderness the ability he had thought himself to possess did not seem quite so convincing. He had been mighty in word and in deed while attending the schools of Egypt; but was that sufficient to lead the people of God? A voice from the past which had long remained in the mind of Moses as an uncomfortable whisper began to grow into a loud, accusing roar, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" Those had been the last words spoken to him in Egypt and for them he had never found an answer. Try as he might he could not escape their implication. How long did he try to forget them? How often did he try to resist their meaning? We of course do not know; but if we may deduce from our own experiences, the admission was hard in coming. But Moses was a child of God and the time of confession had to come. He had been an impostor. He had gone beyond his right. There was no more room for bitterness. There was no more room for resentment against others. If he was in banishment, it was only a banishment that was just.

That was undoubtedly the time of Moses' greatest

anguish. His days were dark from the sorrow of sin; his nights were sleepless from the light of God's holiness. He had learned to know himself as never before. He was a sinner. He had sinned, not so much against the Egyptian, nor against the Israelite, but against God. How presumptuous it had been for him to endeavor to establish himself as a leader in Israel; how foolish to think that he could save the people of God. It would have been just had God allowed him to die by Pharaoh's sword. Salvation would come to Israel, but not by his hand; it would be solely by the hand of the Lord. Moses came in repentance to God, and there he found peace. Was it not in that day when his second son was born? He named the son Eliezer, "for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Forty years passed by in Midian, and Moses was a changed man. Gone was the refinement, the eloquence, the dignity of the court. In its place appeared a common man, almost crude after the manner of a shepherd. His clothes were poor, dirty, and torn from much wandering in the wilderness. His words were simple and few. Self-confidence had given way to timidity. The years had left their mark. The ambition and enthusiasm of youth had subsided into quietness and patience. He now was a man content to be a mere shepherd. To all appearances the advantages of Moses' youth had been wasted. What good was all of his schooling and royal upbringing out here in the barren wastes? Where in it all was the wisdom of God?

Also inwardly there had come a change. Still there was the same faith and hope which had been with him from his youth. The instruction of his parents had not been forgotten. Still his love was with Israel in bondage. He longed for Israel's deliverance; he prayed for it from day to day. But Moses himself no longer figured in these visions of deliverance. What could he possibly do, a mere sinner? It was a work that only God could perform. The dreams of his youth were but folly. The most for which he dared hope was that, if he lived, he might join himself to the people of God in their deliverance. If the grace of God would allow, he longed to go with Israel to the promised land.

We look back over the ages, and at first glance we too are apt to dismiss the years in Midian as of little account, a marking of time, a mere waiting for the proper time. Yet for Moses those years were the most important of all. In Egypt he was taught of man, and that had its importance and value. But in Midian he was taught of God. Moses learned to know himself as a sinner. He learned patience and complete reliance upon God.

B.W.

The God of salvation shall righteousness give;
That man ever blest of Jehovah shall live,
For this is the people, yea, this is the race,
The Israel true that are seeking His face.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I John 2:18-21

d.

This essay will be the last that we write on this section from the pen of the apostle John.

We have noticed in the three former essays that John points out to his readers that it is the "last hour." We have found that the last hour must be understood in the light of the Old Testament prophetic writings. It is the last hour from the vantage-point of the Seers. We have also noticed that we must remember the meaning of the term "hour" in the writings of John to see the peculiar point John is making when he speaks of the last hour. The term "hour" we saw refers to the God-appointed time when His Son will be revealed in the flesh, through suffering and death, and in his glorious resurrection. It is the hour when God himself shall be glorified in the Son and when the judgment shall come upon the earth, the "krisis" to make separation between the living and the dead. And then, thirdly, we also noticed that John points out that the coming of the Antichrist, and the going forth of many antichrists from the bosom of the church is an infallible sign that it is the last hour.

Concerning this last element, namely, the *earmark* of the last hour we must say just a word yet.

Writes John: "and even as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, and now many antichrists have gone forth. Whence we know that it is the last hour."

There is a truth of Scripture which we really meet on every page of the sacred record. It is the phenomenon that there are always so "many" that leave the bosom of the church, depart from sound doctrine and deny the very Christ of the Scriptures. And we ask: whence is this? How must that be accounted for? Is this a setting aside of the intent and purpose of God in His Son? Is this contrary to the plan and design of God? Has the word of God fallen out?

The answer to this question is clearly given us in Holy Writ.

We have but to recall the Word of God through the aged Simeon in the temple to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Remember that Simeon here was the mouthpiece of the Lord. He was a prophet. And holding the child Jesus in his arms he speaks of the "salvation prepared before the face of all the nations, a light to enlighten (by revelation) the nations, and the glory of God's people, Israel." And what is said besides this? This: "behold this child is set (appointed of God) for a fall and rising of many in Israel, and unto a sign that will be contradicted." Luke 2:29-35.

It will be "many" in Israel which shall contradict this

child. This is noteworthy. For do we not read in the Scriptures that "many are called but few are chosen"? And therefore for the phenomenon that "*many antichrists have gone forth*" should not be viewed by us as if the word of God had fallen out. Rather it must be noticed that also herein not one of God's words falls unfulfilled upon the earth.

That this child shall be "contradicted" does not simply mean that people will differ in opinion with Him (perish the thought), but it means that they will deny His very person; they will deny that He is God, the Son come into the flesh! Did the Jews and chief-priests not cry "crucify him, crucify him" when He made the good confession that He is the Son of God? Then He is declared worthy of death.

Thus only can it be understood that "many antichrists have gone forth." They are men and women who heard the word of God, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come—and have fallen away! They are those who it is impossible to renew unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame! Heb. 6:4-6. They are like the earth that having drunk in the rain bringeth forth and beareth thorns and briers, and is rejected.

Such are these antichrists!

They are liars. Intentionally and consciously they corrupt the truth being condemned of themselves. Theirs is a bitter hatred against God revealed in Christ. And in their hatred they have gone forth from the church. Up to the very moment in which John writes this is an accomplished fact. In the first century of our Christian era this was already true. And it is always the same "antichrists" who depart from sound doctrine.

And that these went forth from the church is as it should be.

Writes John in verse 18, "Now" they have gone forth.

And he adds, "Wherefore *we know* that it is the last hour." The entire church has a sure evidence and earmark in this departure of these apostates. The church knows, *experiences* that it is the last hour. She lives through this event. She sees the date on God's calendar. She counts and numbers her days in the light of the great plan and purpose of God, in the light of Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord God Almighty. And she is not unduly disturbed by it all. She knows God's times and purposes and his intent in all of history. And she knows and experiences in the departure of these apostates from the faith that it is the last hour. And she is not mistaken!

She hears the Lord of glory above it all say: be still and know that I am God . . .

For God's *purpose* is worked out in this "going forth" of the antichrists. Says John in verse 19, "They went out from

us for they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have remained with us." The word of God is not fallen out. God hath never forsaken the people whom he foreknew. Rom. 9:6; 11:2. For it is ever of grace. There is ever a remnant according to the election of grace. Thus it was in the days of Elijah when he thinks that he alone is left. Then the answer of God to him is, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Rom. 11:4; I Kings 19:10. For those whom God had foreordained he hath also called, and those whom he hath called he hath justified, and those whom he hath justified he hath also glorified. Rom. 8:30.

When those who go forth are antichrists then we must not desire to keep them! Not those who declare by confession and walk that they are *anti*-christ. They must go forth. It is the divine intent to "manifest" them, to show them up for what they really are. They went out that it might be manifest who they are. The chaff must be separate from the wheat. When that happens it has come to the end of the season. It has become harvest time. And in this dispensation when we have the first-fruits of the full harvest, we also see the first-fruits of the final manifestation of the judgment, the "crisis" of God. That is a part of the "hour" of the Son of Man, the *last* hour!

We all must be *manifested* before God's throne. II Cor. 5:10.

Indirectly it is also true, when the antichrists leave, that those who are true believers are brought to manifestation. Such is the divine *crisis* in this last hour. Does not Paul write in I Cor. 11:19: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you."

The true believers become manifest.

They are the "little children" whose sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake, and who know the Father and overcome the evil one in the battle of faith. They conquer the world. The Evil One does not lay hold on them. And since anyone in whom the seed is planted cannot "sin unto death," they cannot belong to the numbers of those who are "antichrists."

Had any of those who left, these antichrists, truly been of the elect number, living members of Christ by true faith, they would never have left. They would surely have remained.

But now they are simply dedicated to the negative principle that they are *against*. They are against all the doctrine of the Scriptures, corrupting them to their own destruction. Thus Paul warned the church of Ephesus as recorded in Acts 20:28-30: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the

flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Such is ever the history of God's church in every age.

It explains also our own recent experiences!!

There is one more thing that we must here notice.

I refer here, of course, to the fact that there is a principle of knowledge in the church. The church knows the truth. Reformed people have "Gereformeerde voelhorens." They have spiritual knowledge. They have the anointing of the Holy One. They have the mind of Christ.

Recently when I patiently set forth the Reformed position in the matter of the "promise" as taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort, and when I was all finished the party with whom I was speaking said: "If theologians cannot agree, how will I know." Well, he did not stop the world and get off. He took the side of those who want a promise to all.

Now this is not what John teaches here. The "little children" have the unction of the Holy One. They are not like the natural man, the *psychical* man, who cannot put spiritual things with spiritual. It is revealed to the little children. They are not separated from the life of God. They are indwelt by the Spirit of the Son, the Holy One. And thus they even know the truth. And since no lie is of the truth, they very well distinguish the error of those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God, from the truth that He indeed is the Son Who came into this world. It is true that this is all foolishness to the natural man. By his wisdom he cannot know God. But we are enlightened. We *all* know.

There is a difference of reading. One reading has "and ye know *all things*." The other is "and ye *all* know." Personally I prefer the latter reading. And "ye all" know. All the believers have the spirit and are prophets. It is the office of all believers. This does not mean that they need no instruction. But when instruction is given they know whether this is according to the rule of faith or not. The church is not an orphan. She is led into all the truth. And when those who deny the central truth in Christ speak out, they are known by all to be *antichristian*.

John writes them no unknown truths. He writes them because they know, and because of what they know. And they must abide in the truth. They are established in it and they must remain standing. Then they shall not be ashamed in that day.

For in this day, right now we know the time. It is the "last hour." We will know our times. And if for us to live is Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, then death will be our gain. We shall then rejoice in the great love of God, and look for that day when we shall be like Him and see Him as He is.

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Children of Our Age

(2)

Last time we began to point out to you how much indeed we are the children of our age.

Our flesh, we pointed out, is not simply like the flesh of this world, it is a part of that world. It is no different from the flesh of the unregenerated, and in itself it has all the potential of evil that the world has. We do not always have the same occasion and opportunity to sin. Many of the ungodly have little opportunity to sin compared with others. Even Adam in Paradise after he fell had not the same opportunity that you and I have today. We have not only many more means, but we also live in a far more complex world. Adam for a long time could not commit adultery and never came to the point where he had to honor the earthly authorities that were above him. There simply were no authorities over him. All honor had to be ascribed to him by Eve, Cain, Abel and all his grandsons and great-grandchildren. He did not have the opportunity to evade the income tax laws or any other forms of taxation.

But how things have changed today!

We have such an abundance of things wherewith to sin against God and so many situations in which we can practice our evil and work out the evil dictates of our hearts and minds. Not only is this so with the worldly entertainment of which we spoke last time, and which is so easy for us to reach even while sitting comfortably at home in our living room; but there are also so many other areas in which we have such abundant opportunity to follow the bent of our evil lusts and wicked hearts. We wish at this time to point out several other instances of the fact that we are children of our age in that we walk in its sins, and even that we try to defend these evils of our age. For that is the tragedy of it. Not only do we do the things but we find delight in them that do them. As Paul writes to the church at Rome, "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," Romans 1:32.

It is thus so sadly true, even though it is often stated somewhat humorously, that whereas in another age the missionaries found it their task and calling to tell the heathen to put off their paint and to put on more clothing, today the heathen can point to our lack of modest clothing and ridicule our painted faces. Not only must the lips be an unnatural bloody red or other unnatural hue but there must be green on the eyelids and delicate shades of purple in the corners of the eyes. The toenails even must come in for their bloody red or green or blue decorations. And this in the church!

Well, the age does it and being children of the age, we do it too. But spiritual strangers in this earth whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost one would never imagine us to be. O, we do not want to be a peculiar people even though God through the mouth of Peter declares that we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people" that we should show forth the praises of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, I Peter 2:9. We must not be different from the age in which we live. Our flesh which is part of that world wants to keep up with the world in all its fashions, its customs and habits. It is so much easier and more pleasant to drift with the tide. That we are, by God's grace, children of the eternal age, we are so reluctant to display. We wish to have the world consider us to be one with them.

And the same thing, of course, may be said of our clothing as we are children of our age. No, we do not mean the fabrics as such. In our age we have, indeed, some wonderful fabrics which the children of former ages never knew. We have our nylon and our dacron together with a whole array of wonderful synthetics that serve us so wonderfully in many ways. Nylon has all but caused our silk to disappear. And in our age we have grown up to accept it in the place and to like it for our clothing purposes. And dacron which sheds its wrinkles so easily and keeps such a fine press for us for so long a time is also well received and finds a welcome place in our clothing needs. Children we are who have access to many of these wonderful things.

However it is not these things from that point of view that we have in mind. Nor is it simply style and design of the clothing of this age that interests us at the moment. To be sure these styles differ from those of ages gone by. Many a laugh, or at least much amusement, can be had by looking at the styles of clothing in ages that are past. Those high button shoes compared with our slim and graceful low-cut shoes of today are to us in this age ridiculous. And our loud colored shirts with their large figures are a far cry from the subdued and stiff shirts of long ago. And so it is with dresses and suits, not to say anything about ladies' hats. What a difference! Yet about all this we do not write even though as far as these things are also concerned we are children of our age and would not think of going back to those styles! Nor would we advocate it and call it wrong on our part to dress differently than our great-grandparents did.

It is that clothing and those styles that have ethical and spiritual significance. And so much of it today does exactly have such moral and ethical meaning. Much of it is designed with corrupt morals in mind. Much of it is bold and daring in its feeding of the lust of the flesh and glorification of uncleanness. Need we even mention the matter of swimming suits? Or perhaps the lack of them is a better way to put it. Contrast them with the swimming suits of ages gone by. And then you may giggle or chuckle to see those hideous, styleless garments of yesteryear. But you will have to admit that they

were worn and designed with quite the opposite ethical motive from that which hatched the modern batch of peek-a-boo wear that leaves very little to the imagination.

O, you say, but we get so accustomed to such things that we are not affected by them the way children of ages past would have been. It is such a common thing today that it no longer offends. And we find other ways to try to defend it. Shame on us. Why should we try to deceive ourselves? What greater folly is there than to practice self-deception? Is it because we are so accustomed to these things and they are so commonplace that we live in such an adulterous age? Is it so that by making sin a more common thing we will no longer be tempted by sin? Where do you read that in the Holy Scriptures? O, wretched children of our age that we are, we try to defend all this wickedness and find pleasure in those that commit it.

And we could continue and call your attention to other spheres of our lives wherein it becomes very plain that we are children of the age in which we live. It is an age of disrespect for the authorities, an age when man clamors for freedom, and then he means freedom to do as he pleases and away with all laws and restraints. That is, away with all laws and restraints for himself, but let there be laws and restraints for his protection. The women clamor for a place on the level with man. They must be his equal in every sphere and domain where God has elevated the man above her. But she will still feel insulted if you do not treat her as a lady. She will claim to be able to do a man's day of work and take his place in the office, in the shop and in almost every department of life. But then when weary men come home from work, and the bus or commuter train is crowded, she will expect you to forget that she is your equal and that she should be given a seat. The days of yore when this was done, when a man tipped his hat in politeness and removed it in the elevator is gone. The woman has clamored for a place equal to man, and she is getting it in ways that have their sting.

But also as far as government is concerned. There is not that honor of the authorities that God demands in His Word and that could be seen in ages past. No, we must have freedom of expression and we must be given permission to make any derogatory remarks we please about those through whom God is pleased to rule us. And we may freely poison the minds of our children against the God-given authorities, even though the thing comes back on our own heads so that we find our children growing in disrespect also for us. Such is the spirit of the age in which we live. And as children of that age our flesh approves of all this and seeks it in the slogan "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Music and painting also express this lawlessness. The rhythm and harmony must be free from the restraint of the laws of music as man has always known them to be. Suggestive syncopation and delirious dissonance which to write a man must be drunken and to play requires also a spirit of

alcohol and of devilishness, is what this age listens to in order to "soothe" its morally perverted nerves. And yet you hear it in the homes of God's people! Do you? Or is it in the homes of those who profess to be God's people? Can the new man in Christ, can that which is born from above and is a citizen in the kingdom of ethical perfection enjoy that stuff? Would you find Enoch and Elijah, Peter and Paul carrying transistor radios along with them to hear that banging and clanging and jumpy, off-beat and off-color excuse for music? And so is this age corrupted in these things that a pocket radio, a portable radio is necessary to insure this scrapping, hissing, perverted sound every waking hour of men in this age. And our flesh will find a good word for it also.

Pleasure mad, fun crazy and amusement minded is the age in which we live. Let the Church of God suffer want, let it be financially in difficult straits, but my money must be put aside for these things of the flesh. A long and expensive vacation I must take, because that is the thing that is done in this age. In that too we must keep up with the Joneses; no, I must keep ahead of them. It is too bad that the cause of Christ has to take less than I am willing to spend on that vacation, on my sports, for my smoking pleasure, for my weekly bowling, my concert tickets or football game expense. Too bad that I do not have anything left for the Church and that the Church will have to be satisfied with what I might have left after I have satisfied my flesh; but that is exactly what my flesh as part of the evil world in which we live says.

O, wretched children of this age, take stock of yourselves. Stand foursquare before the Word of God. In His fear do a little self-examination and take good inventory. We ARE children of our age. But let it not stop there. Let us resolve by God's grace to fight this evil and to walk as children of light, imitators of God, children renewed after the image of Christ. And let us by all means cease trying to defend all this corruption. Instead let us begin to condemn it and fight it.

J.A.H.

The Lord is good in all His ways,
His creatures know His constant care;
To all His works His love extends,
All men His tender mercies share.

Thy works shall give Thee thanks, O Lord,
Thy saints Thy mighty acts shall show,
Till o'er the earth the sons of men
Thy kingdom, power, and glory know.

Eternal is Thy kingdom, Lord,
Forever strong and ever sure;
While generations rise and die
Shall Thy dominion still endure.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

In our preceding article we called attention to the many objections against the theory of False Mysticism. We noted that this Mysticism has no support in the Scripture. We also called attention to the fact that it is contrary to what we read in the Scriptures. And, in the third place, we noted that it is contrary to fact and experience. We will now continue with the listing of these objections.

Fourthly, we must reject the doctrine of False Mysticism because it deprives us of the only true criterion, the only true standard for what is right and wrong. Are we going to determine what is right or wrong, true or false, orthodox or heretical simply by the inner operation of the Holy Spirit? Shall we believe a man who defends and proclaims a certain doctrine or a certain way of living simply because the Spirit told him what to believe or do? What must we believe when there are varying opinions and convictions among men who all claim to have been led by the Spirit of God? Besides, is it not possible that a man may be the victim of a delusion, of his own imagination? How can we know that he was led by the Spirit of God, especially when he differs from others who also claim the guidance of the Holy Spirit? And how shall we test the spirits whether they be of God? What will be our standard, our criterion? Our own subjective feelings and emotions? There is only one certain criterion, standard by which we shall test whether the spirits are of God: the infallible Word of God. And this principle was maintained by the Reformation over against this False Mysticism.

Finally, we must reject False Mysticism because it has certainly led to all kinds of irregularities and evils. Mysticism has always been productive of evil. It has led to the neglect or undervaluing of Divine institutions — of the Church, of the ministry, of the sacraments, of the Sabbath and of the Scriptures. History shows that it has also led to the greatest excesses and corruptions. Of course! If we depart from the Word of God as the only lamp before our feet and the only light upon our path and become a victim of subjectivism, we will invariably become a law unto ourselves, for we have departed from the Scriptures, the only law, God's sole guide to lead and direct our path.

THE REFORMATION VS. RATIONALISM

We have noted in previous articles that the main prin-

ciples of the Reformation are usually considered to be two and are distinguished as the formal and the material principle. The formal principle implies that the Reformers acknowledged only one source of authority: the Holy Scriptures. With this principle they stood opposed to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism, and also to Rationalism. We have already discussed the opposition to and their rejection of Roman Catholicism (Rome acknowledges, besides the Scriptures, also Tradition as a source of authority), and False Mysticism. We will now call attention to the Reformation's rejection of Rationalism.

Rationalism and False Mysticism are closely related. There is one thing they have in common. Both lower the Holy Scriptures to a subordinate position. Both deny to Holy Writ the unique position that it alone is a sole rule for all life and conduct of the Church and of the people of God in the midst of the world. False Mysticism elevates the so-called faculty of feeling (we do not speak of feeling as a third faculty of the human soul; we believe that the human soul has two faculties, the mind and the will, and that our feeling must be subordinated to them) above the Scriptures. False Mysticism emphasizes the importance of the inner voice and assigns to this inner voice an importance greater than the written Word of God. False Mysticism, therefore, elevates our feeling above the Bible and subordinates the latter to the former. Rationalism elevates man's mind or reason above the Scriptures. Hence, both (False Mysticism and Rationalism) reduce the Word of God to a subordinate position. And many of our readers will undoubtedly know that also our Protestant Reformed Churches have been accused of Rationalism. We have been accused of this sin in our approach to the Word of God and in our refutation of the theory of Common Grace and Arminianism as both of these departures from the truth are embodied in the Three Points of 1924. We have been accused that we are rationalistic in our interpretation of the Bible, that we have permitted our Reason to control and dominate this interpretation, that we have attempted to explain the Word of God so that that Word of God would fit into our framework of human thinking and logic. This, if true, would surely be a most terrible thing. It is surely terrible for insignificant man to force the Word of God into the framework and "straight jacket" of his thinking and reason, to allow and teach only such exposition of the Scriptures which he can comprehend and understand. We surely reject this accusation with all our heart and believe that we want only the Word of God to be its own interpreter. This does not mean, however, as we shall note in due time, that the Word of God is irrational, and that our reason has no role to perform in our approach to the infallible Scriptures.

Philip Schaff in his *History of the Christian Church*, has an interesting chapter on "The Reformation and Rationalism" in Vol. VII, pages 26-42, and we quote this passage now in full.

The Reformation and Rationalism.

The Roman Catholic Church makes Scripture and tradition the supreme rule of faith, laying the chief stress on tradition, that is, the teaching of an infallible church headed by an infallible Pope, as the judge of the meaning of both.

Evangelical Protestantism makes the Scripture alone the supreme rule, but uses tradition and reason as means in ascertaining its true sense.

Rationalism raises human reason above Scripture and tradition, and accepts them only as far as they come within the limits of his comprehension. It makes rationality or intelligibility the measure of credibility. We take the word Rationalism here in the technical sense of a theological system and tendency, in distinction from rational theology. The legitimate use of reason in religion is allowed by the Catholic and still more by the Protestant church, and both have produced scholastic systems in full harmony with orthodoxy. Christianity is above reason, but not against reason.

The Reformation is represented as the mother of Rationalism both by Rationalistic and by Roman Catholic historians and controversialists, but from an opposite point of view, by the former to its credit, by the latter to the disparagement of both.

The Reformation, it is said, took the first step in the emancipation of reason: it freed us from the tyranny of the church. Rationalism took the second step: it freed us from the tyranny of the Bible. "Luther," says Lessing, the champion of criticism against Lutheran orthodoxy, "thou great, misjudged man! Thou hast redeemed us from the yoke of tradition: who will redeem us from the unbearable yoke of the letter! Who will at last bring us a Christianity such as thou would teach us now, such as Christ himself would teach!" (This reaction of Rationalism, of course, need not surprise us. Man would free himself from the tyranny of the church for the same reason as that which prompts him in his desire to be free from the "tyranny" of the Scriptures. Man simply would be his own lord. — H.V.)

Roman Catholics go still further and hold Protestantism responsible for all modern revolutions and for infidelity itself, and predict its ultimate dismemberment and dissolution. But this charge is sufficiently set aside by the undeniable fact that modern infidelity and revolution in their worst forms have appeared chiefly in Roman Catholic countries, as desperate reactions against hierarchical and political despotism. The violent suppression of the Reformation in France ended at last in a radical overthrow of the social order of the church. In Roman Catholic countries, like Spain and Mexico, revolution has become a chronic disease. Romanism provokes infidelity among cultivated minds by its excessive supernaturalism.

The Reformation checked the skepticism of the renaissance, and the anarchical tendencies of the Peasants' War in

Germany and of the Libertines in Geneva. An intelligent faith is the best protection against infidelity; and a liberal government is a safeguard against revolution.

The connection of the Reformation with Rationalism is a historical fact, but they are related to each other as the rightful use of intellectual freedom to the excess and abuse of it. Rationalism asserts reason against revelation, and freedom against divine as well as human authority. It is a one-sided development of the negative, protesting, antipapal and antitraditional factor of the Reformation to the exclusion of its positive, evangelical faith in the revealed will and word of God. It denies the supernatural and miraculous. It has a superficial sense of sin and guilt, and is essentially Pelagian; while the Reformation took the opposite Augustinian ground and proceeded from the deepest conviction of sin and the necessity of redeeming grace. The two systems are thus theoretically and practically opposed to each other. And yet there is an intellectual and critical affinity between them, and Rationalism is inseparable from the history of Protestantism. It is in the modern era of Christianity what Gnosticism was in the ancient church — a revolt of private judgment against the popular faith and church orthodoxy, an overestimate of theoretic knowledge, but also a wholesome stimulus to inquiry and progress. It is not a church or sect (unless we choose to include Socinianism and Unitarianism), but a school in the church, or rather a number of schools which differ very considerably from each other.

Rationalism appeared first in the seventeenth century in the Church of England, though without much effect upon the people, as Deism, which asserted natural religion versus revealed religion; it was matured in its various phases after the middle of the eighteenth century on the Continent, especially in Protestant Germany since Lessing (d. 1781) and Semler (d. 1791), and gradually obtained the mastery of the chairs and pulpits of Lutheran and Reformed churches, till about 1817, when a revival of the positive faith of the Reformation spread over Germany and a serious conflict began between positive and negative Protestantism, which continues to this day.

1. Let us first consider the relation of the Reformation to the use of reason as a general principle. The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation from Philip Schaff in our following article.

H.V.

Though in life he wealth attained,
Though the praise of men he gained,
He shall join those gone before,
Where the light shall shine no more.
Crowned with honor though he be,
Highly gifted, strong and free,
If he be not truly wise,
Man is like the beast that dies.

SHOULD OUR ADOLESCENTS BE ENCOURAGED TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

(2)

At the conclusion of our previous article we stated that our answer to the first question, namely, "Should covenant youth of 12 to 15 years old be encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper before they make confession of faith?" was a decisive *No*. The reasons for this negative answer we now state.

1) *This plan would be contrary to all Reformed precedent and contrary to the historic position of the church ever since apostolic times.*

Let us begin with Calvin himself, and at the same time dispel the idea that he ever taught any such thing. Writing in connection with his treatment of the Romish sacrament of Confirmation, he states in his *Institutes*, IV, 19, 4: "It was an ancient custom of the church for the children of Christians after they were come to years of discretion, to be presented to the bishop in order to fulfill that duty which was required of adults who offered themselves to baptism. For such persons were placed among the catechumens, until, being duly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, they were enabled to make a confession of faith before the bishop and all the people. Therefore those who had been baptized in infancy, because they had not then made such a confession before the church, at the close of childhood, or the commencement of adolescence, were again presented by their parents, and were examined by the bishop, according to the form of the catechism which was then in common use." This quotation at once teaches us that it was the practice in the ancient church to require of those baptized in infancy a period of catechetical instruction and a confession of faith prior to admission to the Lord's Supper. And church historians all confirm this. Baptized infants were instructed along with adult converts—such instruction being along the trinitarian lines of the baptism formula and later following the lines of our present Apostles' Creed—and upon confession of faith were admitted to communion.

And that Calvin himself was committed to this rule is plain from the following quotation (IV, 19, 13): "I sincerely wish that we retained the custom, which I have stated among the ancients before this abortive image of a sacrament made its appearance. But with not such a confirmation as the Romanists pretend, which cannot be mentioned without injury to baptism; but a catechetical exercise, in which children or youth used to deliver an account of their faith in the presence of the church. Now it would be the best mode of catechetical instruction, if a formulary were written for this purpose, containing and stating in a familiar manner, all the articles of our religion, in which the universal church of believers ought to agree, without any controversy: a boy of ten years of age might present himself to make a confession of his

faith; might be questioned on all the articles, and might give suitable answers: if he were ignorant of any, or did not fully understand them, he should be taught. Thus the church would witness his confession of the only true and pure faith, in which all the community of believers unanimously worship the one God. If this discipline were observed in the present day, it would certainly sharpen the inactivity of some parents, who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children as a thing in which they have no concern, but which, in that case, they could not omit without public disgrace. There would be more harmony of faith among Christian people, nor would many betray such great ignorance and want of information; some would not be so easily carried away with novel and strange tenets; in short, all would have a regular acquaintance with Christian doctrine." Here it is evident, therefore, that Calvin pleads for an early confession of faith, not for admission to the Lord's table prior to confession of faith. Whether this was due to Calvin's Romish background, even while he opposed the idea of confirmation as such, I am not able to state. It is significant, however, that while he speaks of the age of 10 in the *Institutes*, he later fixed the age for confession and admission to the Lord's table in Geneva at 14 years, as did also a Lasco in the Church of the Refugees. (Cf. H. Bouwman, "Gereformeerde Kerkrecht," II, 384.) But at any rate, the tale that Calvin favored admission to the Lord's table prior to confession of faith cannot be substantiated.

Moreover, the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands took this same stand from the very beginning. The Convent of Wezel, 1568, the early synods (Dordrecht in 1574 and 1578, Middelburg, 1581, and 's Gravenhage, 1586) and the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19 all emphasized rather strongly: 1) The necessity of confession of faith for admission to the Lord's Supper. 2) The necessity of catechetical instruction for the children and youth of the church. 3) The necessity of an examination of one's faith as to knowledge of doctrine, conviction of the truth, and willingness to be subject to the discipline of the church. And in connection with this, we may remark that in this early period the public examination of those who made confession of faith was more extensive than it is today. And this was also connected directly with admission to the Lord's Supper. In fact, the early editions of the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper contained a rather elaborate formulary for this examination of one's faith, in which inquiry is made as to one's knowledge of Reformed doctrine, as to one's doubts on any aspect of the truth, as to one's willingness to abide by the doctrine, to forsake the world, and to lead a new and Christian life, and as to one's willingness to be subject to Christian discipline, and also containing an admonition to peace, love, unity, and reconciliation with the neighbor. (Cf. P. Biesterveld, *Het Gereformeerde Kerkboek*, pp. 230, ff.)

The churches followed varying customs as to the age for confession of faith, but from the very beginning the Reformed Churches have always insisted without exception on the

necessity of confession of faith for admission to the Lord's table.

Now I have purposely entered into this aspect of the question in considerable detail because I consider this alone to be a very strong argument. In fact, I would hesitate long and seriously and investigate and weigh the arguments with extreme thoroughness before I would ever dare to throw away a precedent of such long standing in the Reformed Churches and a precedent that goes back all the way to the church of immediate post-apostolic times. Understand well: we do not live by mere precedent and tradition. If it could be shown conclusively that such a precedent is wrong and anti-Scriptural and detrimental to the life of the church, then the precedent must be rejected and the truth and the right way of the Word of God must be embraced. But believing, as we do, the unity of the church of all ages, and believing that the church in the past was led into all the truth by the Holy Spirit, we cannot lightly break with history. Any change that is made must be shown to be a *progression* in the historical Reformed line, not a *departure* from that line. Unless, therefore, this can be proved, we must not make the change.

2) *This plan would be contrary to our Reformed documents, i.e., our Church Order, our confessions, and our liturgy.* Let me cite two articles from the Church Order, first of all. Article 61 states: "None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who according to the usage of the church with which they unite themselves have made a confession of the Reformed religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly walk, without which those who come from other churches shall not be admitted." It is very obvious that this article would have to be changed radically in order to introduce the plan we are discussing. However, Article 59 is of indirect significance also: "Adults are through baptism incorporated into the Christian church, and are accepted as members of the church, and are therefore obliged also to partake of the Lord's Supper, which they shall promise to do at their baptism." This article is significant: a) Because it associates adulthood and partaking of the Lord's Supper. b) Because in adult baptism confession of faith is made, upon which celebration of the Lord's Supper follows as a necessity. c) Because Reformed churches, both here and in the Netherlands, have allowed infant baptism up to the age of 14 and 15. Now you may disagree on the idea that a child of 14 or 15 should be baptized as an infant, and I believe I would also; but the significant fact here is that Reformed churches have considered such persons *not to be adults*, and not ready for confession of faith and for the Lord's Supper.

In the second place, let me refer you to our confessions. I will not quote at length from our *Catechism*. And then, first of all, let me emphasize that it is undoubtedly the position of our *Catechism* that infants (and therefore also adolescents) who are born in the church do have essentially

a right to the sacraments, organically considered. This ought to be plain from Question and Answer 74, the beautiful expression of our *Catechism* on infant baptism. In the second place, let me point out that almost all of the questions and answers dealing with the Lord's Supper teach that this sacrament is for believers and for conscious partakers, and that the entire section presupposes a rather thorough understanding on the part of these believers of the meaning of the sacrament and of the sacramental operation. In the third place, Questions 81 and 82 are of direct bearing on this question, and certainly imply strongly the necessity of confession of faith. In my opinion, one who is not a professed Christian cannot qualify for a place at the Lord's table in the light of these statements of our *Catechism*. But our *Netherland Confession* is still more explicit. In Article 35, the last part, we read: "Lastly, we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up amongst us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Savior, with thanksgiving: *making there confession of our faith, and of the Christian religion*. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself; lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, he eat and drink judgment to himself." To me this quotation means nothing less than that this whole plan is wrong from a confessional point of view. For while it does not state explicitly that confession of faith must take place *prior to* our partaking of the Lord's Supper, it nevertheless states that *at* the Lord's table we make confession of our faith and of the Christian religion. It means that one must be able and ready to make such a confession of faith when he goes to the Lord's table. And therefore, our Church Order is correct when it requires that none shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who have made a confession of the Reformed religion.

Finally, let me briefly point out that all the language of our Form for Administration of the Lord's Supper teaches the same thing by implication, namely, that this sacrament is for conscious believers who are able to examine themselves and able to discern the Lord's body, and that too, in a quite mature manner. To me, therefore, this part of our liturgy (and let me remind you that historically this is the background of this form too) can mean nothing less than that the Lord's Supper is for a *professing believer*.

There is more to be said; but this must wait for the next issue.

H.C.H.

Why, O my soul, art thou cast down within me,

Why art thou troubled and oppressed with grief?

Hope thou in God, the God of thy salvation,

Hope, and thy God will surely send relief.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Censure of Books

Article 55, D.K.O.

"With each text the truth must be *proclaimed* in its purity, errors must be *refuted*, heresies must be *warned* against, and there must be an *admonition* to loyalty."

—Joh. Jansen

In our last installment we explained the duty of the church, through its office-bearers, to be militant against every form of heresy. This aspect of the Christian ministry is described in the fifty-fifth article of our Church Order. The work of combating heresy is not to be restricted to the pulpit but may properly be extended to the catechism class and the work of family visiting. Errors are many and they increase with astounding rapidity. Into every sphere of life they creep to perform their destructive purpose. Officially, the church through its ministry, must fight them and in this battle she may never relent or grow weary.

We notice that the three means by which heresy must be fought that are singled out here all have to do with the *official ministry* of the Word. From this it must not be concluded that there are no other occasions when this can and should be done. Believers cannot limit the battle to three fronts. Life is a battle-field and as broad, therefore, as life itself is, there are opportunities to refute and warn against prevailing errors. The Church Order Commentary points out that "Our Sunday Schools and our Christian Schools and Colleges also have a very definite task here. Our schools have wonderful opportunities to render a noble service to our youth on this score." We do not question the truth of this if only it be kept in mind that these things do not fall within the province of the Church Order. Our schools and colleges are not governed by the Church Order but it is certainly true that as private, parental institutions they are founded for instruction in the truth and, consequently, must also militate against heresy. We lament that this is not done. Heresy, in both a doctrinal and practical form, is not only tolerated but openly taught in many schools and colleges today that bear the Christian name. The students themselves are witnesses to this fact. They bring — often innocently — the most shocking and alarming reports of the things they are being taught in the schools. This does not especially surprise us for what else can be expected when these institutions of learning are controlled by the membership of the church that has grown pacifistic and shelters within her as pernicious a heresy as that of "common grace"? What is alarming, however, is that there are still members in our Protestant Reformed Churches who seemingly can close their eyes to these things and assume an indifferent and even belligerent attitude toward the establishment of our own schools where we can "*render the noble service to our youth*" of warning them against the in-

creasing philosophies of this age that lead to world conformity and are a menace and deterrent to that spiritual transformation and renewal of the mind which, according to Holy Writ, is our reasonable service. Will we awaken to this our calling before we see our children wholly saturated with and carried away by these heresies we profess to abhor? If so, let us be well-founded in the truth and give all diligence to ward off heresy in every sphere of our lives.

Originally, however, the fifty-fifth article of the Church Order had to do with a related, but different matter. It concerned the censorship of books. This practice is indeed a very old one. The Papists used it very much during and following the Reformation of the sixteenth century although their efforts to ban the writings of the Reformers were not too successful. Philip Schaaf writes of this in *The History of the Christian Church*, from which we quote the following:

"The burning of obnoxious books by public authority of church or state is indeed as old as the book trade. A work of Protagoras, in which he doubted the existence of the Greek gods, was burned at the stake in Athens about twenty years after the death of Pericles. The Emperor Augustus subjected slanderous publications (*libelli famosi*) to legal prosecution and destruction by fire. Christian emperors employed their authority against heathen, heretical, and infidel books. Constantine the Great, backed by the Council of Nicea, issued an edict against the writings of Porphyry and Arius; Acacius, against the books of the Eunomians (398); Theodosius, against the books of the Nestorians (435). Justinian commanded the destruction of sundry obnoxious works, and forbade their re-issue on pain of losing the right arm (636). The oecumenical synod of 680 at Constantinople burned the books which it had condemned, including the letters of the Monothelitic Pope Honorius.

"Papal Rome inherited this practice, and improved upon it. Leo I caused a large number of Manichaean books to be burnt (446). The popes claimed the right and duty to superintend the religious and moral literature of Christendom. They transferred the right in the thirteenth century to the universities, but they found little to do until the art of printing facilitated the publication of books. The Council of Constance condemned the books of Wyclif and Hus, and ordered the bishops to burn all the copies they could seize (1415).

"The invention of the printing-press (1450) called forth sharper measures in the very city where the inventor, John Gutenberg, lived and died (1400-1467). It gave rise also to the preventive policy of book-censorship which still exists in some despotic countries of Europe. Berthold, Archbishop of Mainz, took the lead in the restriction of the press. He prohibited, Jan. 10, 1485, the sale of all unauthorized German translations of Greek and Latin works, on the plea of the inefficiency of the German language, but with a hostile aim at the German Bible. In the same year Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull against the printers of bad books. The infamous Pope Alexander VI prohibited in 1498, on pain of excom-

munication, the printing and reading of heretical books; and in a bull of June 1, 1501, which was aimed chiefly against Germany, he subjected all kinds of literary publications to episcopal supervision and censorship, and required the four archbishops of Coln, Mainz, Trier and Magdeburg, or their officials, carefully to examine all manuscripts before giving permission to print them. He also ordered that books already printed should be examined, and burnt if they contained any thing contrary to the Catholic religion. This bull forms the basis of all subsequent prohibitions and restrictions of the press by papal, imperial, or other authority.

"Leo X, who personally cared more for heathen art than Christian literature, went further, and prohibited, in a bull of March 3, 1515, the publication of any book in Rome without the imprimatur of the *magister sacri palatii* (the book-censor), and in other states and dioceses without the imprimatur of the bishop or the inquisitor of heretical depravity. Offenders were to be punished by the confiscation and public burning of their books, a fine of one hundred ducats, and excommunication. Archbishop and Elector Albrecht of Mainz was the first, and it seems the only German prince who gave force to this bull for his own large diocese by a mandate of May 17, 1517, a few months before the outbreak of the Reformation. The papal bull of excommunication, June 15, 1520, consistently ordered the burning of "all the books of Luther." But he laughed it to scorn, and burned in revenge the pope's bull, with all his decretals, Dec. 10, 1520.

"Thus, with the freedom of conscience, was born the freedom of the press. But it had to pass through a severe ordeal, even in Protestant countries, and was constantly checked by Roman authorities as far as their power extended. The German Empire, by the Edict of Worms, made itself an ally of the pope against free thought and free press, and continued so until it died of old age in 1806. Fortunately, the weakness of the empire and the want of centralization prevented the execution of the prohibition of Protestant books, except in strictly papal countries, as Bavaria and Austria. But unfortunately, the Protestants themselves, who used the utmost freedom of the press against the Papists, denied it to each other; the Lutherans to the Reformed, and both to the Anabaptists, Schwenkfeldians and Socinians. Protestant princes liked to control the press to protect themselves against popery, or the charges of robbery of church property and other attacks. The Elector John Frederick was as narrow and intolerant as Duke George on the opposite side. But these petty restrictions are nothing compared with the radical and systematic crusade of the Papists against the freedom of the press. King Ferdinand of Austria ordered, July 24, 1528, all printers and sellers of sectarian books to be drowned, and their books to be burnt. The wholesale burning of Protestant books, including Protestant Bibles, was a favorite and very effective measure of the Jesuitical reaction which set in before the middle of the sixteenth century, and was promoted by the political arm, and the internecine wars of the Protestants. Pope Paul IV published in 1557 and 1559 the first

official *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*; Pius IV in 1564, an enlarged edition, generally known as *Index Tridentinus*, as it was made by order of the Council of Trent. It contains a list of all the books forbidden by Rome, good, bad, and indifferent. This list has been growing ever since in size, but declining in authority, till it became, like the bull against the comet, an anachronism and a *brutum fulmen*."

In the Reformed Churches attempts were also made to control the press so that erroneous writings and books containing heresies could be kept from publication. One cannot criticize this aim but the methods employed to attain it cannot be approved. These methods proved to be not only ineffective but in some cases so unfair that they in effect accomplished the very thing they sought to prevent. This we hope to point out next time but it should be remembered that the effective way to combat heresy is not through legislation but by "teaching, refutation, warning and admonition."

G.V.d.B.

CONTRIBUTIONS

A New Project

It is not often that you receive news from our Protestant Reformed Theological School. Nor is it often that our people receive an opportunity to have an active part in the work of our seminary. Hence, the appearance of this little article is in itself a newsworthy event, and merits your careful attention.

Most of our readers will undoubtedly recall that the committee on arrangements for the 45th Anniversary celebration of the Reverend H. Hoeksema decided that the offerings at that celebration would be used to establish a "Hoeksema Memorial Library Fund" for our Theological School. The undersigned, having been asked by the committee to function as chairman of this fund, immediately enlisted the aid of the Reverends C. Hanko and H. Hanko, the regular library subcommittee of our Theological School Committee. And now the machinery is going into action.

At a recent meeting of our committee we reached the following conclusions and decisions:

1. The idea of this "Hoeksema Memorial Library Fund" is that a permanent fund be established for the maintenance and support and enlargement of a special section of our Theological School Library, to be operated independently of our regular library but for the benefit of our seminary.
2. To make our committee a more representative one by adding to our membership one member from the Midwest, the Rev. B. Woudenberg, and one member from the Far West, the Rev. R. C. Harbach.
3. To make known the existence and the needs of this fund to all our churches and our people, in order to enlist their financial support for this permanent library project.
4. To initiate this Memorial Library as soon as possible

by establishing, with the advice of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, a special section in our seminary library devoted to worthwhile dogmatical works.

But now the question remains: how shall this project be supported? Our present modest seminary library is supported through regular synodical channels with a small annual appropriation which amounts to less than 50¢ per family per year. This new project must receive all its support from *free will offerings*! Here, therefore, is a splendid opportunity for all our people to show their tangible support for our seminary, the main-spring of our churches, as well as to show their respect and thankfulness for what the Lord has given our ministry and our churches through all these years through the labors of the Reverend H. Hoeksema. Many of you could not be present at the celebration last summer, and thus you had no opportunity to contribute. You have an opportunity now! Besides, your committee would like to see a steady stream of contributions not only immediately, but for years to come. This is a *permanent* project!

How can you give your support?

In the first place, our congregations can give an occasional special collection to this cause. Yes, we know there are already many "specials." But this is the first time your seminary has ever asked for anything special.

In the second place, all the societies in our churches could well keep this project in mind when they make their annual disbursements.

In the third place, we are banking strongly on *generous individual contributions*. Your committee feels that this will perhaps be the main source of income. Send your contribution directly to us.

And finally—from a more long range point of view—why not remember this project with a worthwhile bequest in your will? The church is often forgotten in this respect; but it need not and ought not to be.

One final word. Would it not be wonderful if your free-will support would be so overwhelmingly generous that this Memorial Library would soon outgrow our regular seminary library? YOU can make this a reality.

Watch for progress reports!

On behalf of the committee,

PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

P.S. Address all correspondence and contributions to my address: 1218 Griggs St., S.E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Report of the Western Ladies' League

held in Doon, Iowa on October 12, 1960

"The Lord's Prayer," "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" and "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked," were played as the organ prelude. Singing the theme song, Psalter No. 298 and No. 87, "God the Only Deliverer," Scripture read-

ing from Hebrews 6 and prayer by our president, Mrs. Wm. Kooiker opened the meeting. Minutes of the previous league meeting and the board and delegate meeting were read and approved. During the offering, which amounted to \$27.25, Psalter No. 88, "The Goodness of God Proved," was sung.

Our speaker was Rev. Kortering and his topic, "Faith the Anchor of Hope." The subject comes as a figure: the soul is as a ship that is on the sea. Man is troubled by the perils of life. The soul, which is the ship, is anchored in faith. The anchor is hope and the chain is faith. Anchor has depth and must fasten itself in the sea. It must be reliable, not rusty. Hope is our anchor and as such is the goal of our life: the prize of the high calling of the children of God. It must be weighty, reliable, and steadfast. Natural man has no goal to attain, has no anchor. The hope of the child of God is Christ; He is the object of our hope. Noah and Abraham had the promise, the veil in the temple prevented fellowship with God for these patriarchs. When Christ went into the depths of hell the veil was torn. We can achieve the hope. Christ comes into our life through church attendance and societies. We have an anchor fixed in God, an anchor that is weighty because Christ is reliable. The storm is ever upon the children of God. The pressure of life is severe.

We speak of the soul, body and spirit of man, that is the outward and inward life of man. The soul is the inner life. The desires, longings, joys and sorrows comprise the soul. When the soul finds itself on the sea of life it needs an anchor. Trouble makes the soul restless and tempest tossed. As a ship needs an anchor, a soul needs hope. Without Christ a soul is without purpose and is utterly hopeless.

The chain that binds us steadfastly is faith. Faith is rooted in hope and binds us with hope. There is no faith where there is no hope. All that we have in faith is anchored in Christ who went to Calvary and rent the veil and brought His church to heaven. As surely as Christ went to heaven there is the chain that leads us to heaven. The stronger the chain the safer the ship.

The Doon ladies presented a duet, "Saved by Grace" and then Rev. B. Woudenberg answered our questions. The first was, Is it possible for anyone to die before his time? and was taken from Ecclesiastes 7:17.

Amos 8: To explain the point an illustration was used. The U.S.A. is a land of prosperity and a melting pot of churches. In these churches modernism has taken over and the children of God left in these churches thirst for the truth. We as churches are called to testify of the Sovereignty of God.

May we as women vote in the presidential election? The principle involved is that the head of the home should have the voice in the government, in civic affairs as well as in the church.

Our meeting was closed by singing Psalter No. 400.

Mrs. Henry Huisken, Reporter
Edgerton, Minnesota

ALL AROUND US

The Memorial Library

At the anniversary celebration last summer of Rev. H. Hoeksema's 45 years in the ministry, a collection was taken amounting to approximately \$275.00. This money was set aside to establish a "Hoeksema Memorial Library" for the seminary of our Churches. The Library Committee of the Theological School Committee was given the task of starting this Library and purchasing the books for it. However, rather than see this money spent immediately for books to start the library, the committee decided that it would be more valuable to make this a permanent fund kept alive by collections, donations, bequests, etc. If this were done, the library could constantly be strengthened and enlarged and would not remain a small collection of books without any possibility of growth and improvement.

For this reason this brief article appears in "All Around Us." We would like to have our people bear this in mind in time to come. The Churches in the West, and many of our people in the East have not had an opportunity to contribute to this fund, and would perhaps like to do this now. Our societies could remember this fund which has been established when annually they distribute the money they have collected throughout the year. Our people could very well remember this library and what it will mean in the future to our Churches through our seminary activities in donations to it.

Although the Synod of our Churches has appropriated this year a certain amount of money to be spent on the general library of the Seminary, and although they will undoubtedly continue to do this in the future, this "Memorial Library" is to be kept separate from the rest of the books and is to be a library that contains books that otherwise would not be purchased, but which would nevertheless be important and valuable contributions to the studies of our professors and students. This fund is therefore called to your attention with the heartiest recommendation of this column in *The Standard Bearer*.

Nothing Accomplished

In the November 25 issue of the *Reformed Guardian*, Rev. De Wolf writes an article in which he offers an analysis of the recent "early Synod" held by the Churches of his group. The gist of this article is that in his opinion their Synod was a failure. He says in conclusion, "Be this as it may, the fact remains that the special synod of October, 1960 failed to serve the purpose for which it was called. The Synod is past. Only its epitaph remains: Mission not accomplished!"

The reason why the author comes to this conclusion are mainly two: 1) The Synod adjourned without doing anything more than the sending of a letter to the Christian Reformed Church for reunion on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity. The Synod of the Christian Re-

formed Church had refused this request in substance and had emphasized the importance of the Three Points of 1924. Now the Synod of October 1960 merely asks the same thing once again. De Wolf remarks that this could just as well have waited till the regular Synod of next year, and in fact that there is very little reason to expect that the Christian Reformed Church will change its stand. By next July no progress whatsoever will have been made.

In connection with this request De Wolf offers his own personal opinion that "as far as I am concerned it (the Synod of the C. R. Church) does not have to go any farther than it has gone in its letter to us in 1960. We need no more than that to live together."

2) The second reason given for the failure of the Synod is that the grounds originally offered in the overture of Gritters were ignored. These grounds were: "a. There is an urgent need to shorten the time between sessions, and Article 50 provides for this. b. There is such an urgent need because of the situation in our churches due to declining membership, etc. c. An early synod is needed in order that we might act on this matter of contact unitedly and in an orderly way." De Wolf feels that the urgency of the situation was not fully recognized by the Synod, and that Synod did nothing to solve the problems of falling apart as Churches which warranted such urgency.

Undoubtedly it is true that their Synod failed to accomplish anything constructive and to reach the purpose for which it was called together. The attempt on the part of some to return to the Christian Reformed Church as a denomination failed completely. And it seems, as their history develops, that this was the last opportunity they will have had. For by the time the next Synod meets, it appears as if there will not be sufficient Churches left to constitute a full Synod. And when congregations return independently, or ministers leave, any future attempts Synodically will only be a mockery of their original intentions.

These Churches are making history fast. But it is such strange history that one has to search far to find anything similar; there seems to be nothing like it in all the annals of the Church of the past. Whether the failure of their Synod will be the means of stirring more people to take a firm stand against returning to the Christian Reformed Church only time will tell. But when such a mockery is made of Church Polity and ecclesiastical purity, one cannot help but wonder whether the people there who are faithful and wish to be faithful in the future are going to put up with it, or whether they will see that the only hope for them is to come back to the Protestant Reformed Churches.

More Tendencies Towards Evolutionism

In the December issue of *Torch and Trumpet* there is a review of a book entitled "Evolution and Christian Thought Today." The book is a symposium of thirteen members of the American Scientific Affiliation, a group of some eight hundred evangelical scientists committed to Biblical Christianity. It was written in connection with the one hundredth

anniversary of Charles Darwin's "Origin Of Species." The book purports to be an evaluation of the theory of evolution from the Christian viewpoint.

The reviewer of this book is a certain Henry M. Morris who is now professor and head of the Civil Engineering Department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The reviewer is rather critical of the book because it makes too many concessions to evolutionism. He points out that the book supports such views as: "The geologic ages are accepted in their entirety, implying an age for the earth of perhaps some five billion years, and age for life on the earth of perhaps a billion years, and an age for man himself of at least several hundred thousand years." The book suggests the very real possibility of an evolutionistic development of life—living matter evolving from non-living matter. Almost all the scientific arguments in various sciences in support of evolution are admitted by the authors. The reviewer points out that the flood is completely ignored, that the genuine historical validity of the Genesis account of creation is denied, and that there is a complete rejection of the importance of the curse of God upon the world.

One gets the impression from the reviewer that he is one of the few that still maintains a creation taking place in six days of twenty-four hours. If this is true, it is good to know that there are still those who will not bow to the idol of science and allow their worship of science to distort their interpretation of God's Word.

But that the authors of this book could claim to be representative of an organization dedicated to Biblical Christianity, and that they have the presumption to claim their book as a Christian evaluation of evolutionism is almost beyond credibility.

It is becoming more and more apparent that once one has committed himself to interpreting Scripture in the light of science, and re-interpreting Scripture so that the days of Genesis 1 are changed to long periods of time, one must go all the way and capitulate completely to evolutionism. And this is not at all surprising. For the question of whether the days of Genesis 1 are long periods of time is not simply a question of the age of the earth, but it is also a question which involves the nature and character of God's *work* of creation. And those who claim an old earth and periods instead of days do so simply to make room for a creation developed through evolutionary processes, ignoring a creation formed by the Almighty Word of God.

It has come to a point where there are only two alternatives: Capitulate to science and lose the Word of God; or: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God so that things which are seen were not made from things which do appear."

I was pleased to see in the article of the reviewer this statement: "Thus, the Creation was not accomplished by means of the natural processes prevailing at the present time . . . These processes . . . could not have been in operation in their present form in the period of the Creation." If

I understand this correctly, it means that one cannot learn the nature of God's work of creation from a study of the world as it is now. Any knowledge which we have now of the creation cannot possibly be a clue to help us understand how the worlds were formed. It is only *by faith* that we not only believe, but even understand the work of creation.

The Religious Issue In Puerto Rico

Although the religious issue in the latest presidential campaign in our country has aroused considerable comment and has been the occasion for many articles in religious periodicals, this issue was not limited to the United States alone. In Puerto Rico the issue was sharply raised by the Catholic Church itself in connection with the election of Governor Munoz Marin. Before the elections were held there, the Roman Catholic hierarchy had instructed its members not to vote for this man or his party since the Church was opposed to his policies—policies which opposed the allowing of time off for public school children from their studies to obtain religious instruction from the Romish Church, and policies permitting the teaching of birth control. The hierarchy warned that to vote for this man or his party would be a sin sufficiently serious to prevent those who did from participating in the sacraments, and would require full confession.

Because of the fact that Marin was re-elected by a huge majority, it soon became obvious that many Roman Catholic people had defied their bishops and priests. The result was a showdown in which some of the hierarchy tried to enforce their original stand. However, the archbishop of San Juan criticized strongly the clergy of Puerto Rico and told them they might not subject their people to any penalties no matter how they voted. The end of the matter has not come yet.

This whole question raised here and in our own country concerning the relation of Church and state is not only very interesting, but also quite difficult. After all, Article XXXVI of the Belgic Confession takes the position that the State has the calling to enforce the first table of the law as well as the second, which includes the promotion of the true religion. And although the footnote added later by the Synod of 1910 defines once again the separation of Church and state and raises its objections against a State Church, nevertheless the principle of Article XXXVI still stands. Of course, the problem is compounded by the fact that it has never happened in America and probably never will that a man of the Reformed faith becomes president. But we would certainly maintain at the very least that if such had ever happened, one would be obligated to function in this highest executive office of our country according to his convictions and principles. One cannot become neutral in public office. And certainly, according to our Confession, he would be obligated to promote the Reformed faith.

The last word has not yet been said on this whole question. There are many aspects to the problem, and it is not at all easy to come to any definite conclusions. It is, no doubt, a profitable subject for discussion in our societies, and perhaps in our Church papers.

H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Dec. 5, 1960

The consistory of Grand Haven has presented a trio from which the congregation will choose a minister-elect. The trio consists of the Revs. G. Lubbers, M. Schipper and G. Van Baren.

Hudsonville has for years held its second service in the evening instead of afternoon during the summer months. Recently the congregation decided to maintain that summer schedule throughout the entire year. This decision was precipitated by the pastor's doctor who decreed that Rev. Vos should space his preaching to that extent.

The November Beacon Lights Singspiration was held on the 27th at Hudsonville Church, with Gerald Kuiper, of Hope Church, leading the singing.

At a recent Mr. and Mrs. Society meeting in Hudsonville a representative from Bethany Home, of Grand Rapids, exhibited colored slides and gave a narration of the work of that institution. The occasion gave opportunity to remember the Home with an offering.

Because of Rev. Lubbers' proximity to Hull he will be asked to fill Rev. Kortering's pulpit while he is on classical appointment in South Dakota.

We note that Sunday School Teachers' meetings are held on various days in the different churches. Some are scheduled for Monday evening (Redlands, for one), giving the teachers opportunity to study the material *after* the teachers' meeting; and others are held Friday evening (First Church, for one), giving the teachers time to study *before* the meeting. We wonder which plan affords the better results.

The men of Redlands congregation are notified by bulletin announcement which week they are expected to clean the church, and to write to the serviceman. Those two tasks always fall on the same week — probably because such a schedule calls for but a single bulletin announcement.

More News from the Program Committee of The Reformed Witness Hour

Another station has been added to the seven outlets now broadcasting our Radio Program. The eighth station is W.P.A.Z., in Pottstown, Pa., and our half hour program over this station is sponsored by the First Prot. Ref. Church. With the addition of this radio station our program is now heard over two stations east of the Mississippi River, and four stations to the West, besides the two foreign outlets (Radio Hoyer, Netherlands Antilles, and Trans-World Radio, Monte Carlo, Monaco).

The Committee sincerely covets God's blessing upon their radio work and hopes that the listeners in this newly con-

tacted area will give our program "receptive ears" and will welcome "distinctively Reformed" radio preaching into their homes.

Sunday evening, Dec. 4, Rev. C. Hanko preached in First Church on II Samuel 7:18, 19, under the theme, "David's Joy In The Coming Christ." This was the beginning of a series of Christmas messages designed to help us keep our feet in the midst of the "busyness" of the coming season, a season marked with commercialism of the worst sort. May all of our pastors be used to the end that we shall be able to keep in mind that Christmas, though of pagan origin, may serve as a festival in which the true worship of Immanuel — God With Us — may be exercised.

The Protestant Reformed Men's Chorus has announced the presentation of a Christmas Program to be given in First Church Christmas night, after the evening service. All of our people in the area who enjoy male voices lifted up in the praise of the Babe of Bethlehem will mark this date on their calendars.

The Ladies' Aid Society of Redlands, in an after recess meeting recently, discussed this query from the Question Box: "Why was the Declaration of Principles formulated, and what purpose do they serve?" We wonder how many of our denomination can give a clear answer to this pertinent question.

Loveland's Prot. Ref. School Society plans to open their school in time for the second semester if a teacher is procured. The bulletin announcement reads, "if at all in the realm of possibilities."

Sunday, Nov. 27, Loveland welcomed visitors from our Forbes, So. Dakota church and from our South Holland congregation. In a denomination as small as ours it is a special pleasure to meet members of sister churches.

Hudsonville's consistory requires individual responses to the questions put to the members of a group making public confession of faith, as seven young people of their congregation did November 27.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg included with his bulletin contribution to this page a copy of an allegory presented to the South Holland-Oak Lawn membership. The allegory was one which pictures four men who had come to a seeming impasse on their way to the city called *Promise*. But the seeming impasse was overcome by the four men working in unison. The allegory served to spur their members to concerted effort to overcome any circumstances which might seem to prevent the realization of their own school. To date the Board has procured land, the building plans are completed, and some \$10,000.00 is in, or coming in, to cover the first expenses of the desired goal.

Bulletin Quote: "All the promises of man to man ought to be conditional. It is only for God to make absolute promises, for He alone is unchangeable and omnipotent." — Toplady.
... see you in church. J.M.F.