

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXVII

DECEMBER 1, 1960 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 5

MEDITATION

JEHOVAH'S GREAT GOODNESS

"Oh, how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!"

Psalm 31:19

Thanksgiving!

What is it?

If you want an answer to that question you better look strongly at Jesus. Or, rather, you better listen sharply to Jesus.

If anyone, Jesus was thankful.

To be thankful you must know God. And you must know Him in His great goodness.

Every school child of the Church knows that Jesus cried at the end of His life: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!" But there are not many who know that Christ was singing His own psalms when He uttered that cry. You find the quotation in this 31st psalm.

What a psalm! Full of the outpouring of sadness and grief. It is the outpouring of the suffering of Jesus, suffered before to some extent in David.

But, as it happened so often, at the conclusion of this psalm we hear the voice of gladness again.

And we have chosen one of those verses for our thanksgiving meditation.

* * * *

God is goodness. It is one of His names. It tells us that His limitless Being is good; that all His thoughts, words and works are good.

Indeed, God is the only Good for His creatures.

That is revealed to all of us.

If Paradise the first told us anything, it certainly told us

that God was good for Adam and Eve, and for all the creatures inhabiting it.

Even today, after so many years, and after the curse of God is evident, you can still see that God is good. The psalms tell us that His goodness crowns the seasons, so that the hills and the valleys clap their hands. All things still testify of this goodness of God.

Listen to David in psalm 65: "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: Thou settlest the furrows thereof: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

Thus it is in all lands, among all peoples, in all the ages of the history of this world.

There is a constant testimony from all things surrounding us and permeating us which tell of the goodness of the Lord.

His goodness prevents us in the morning, and is round about us the whole day and night.

All created things cry out in plain language, telling us that God is good!

The whole of mankind in all places and in all times arise in the morning, and they say: I am hungry! And God stands ready everywhere: He loadeth us with His benefits! We have eaten, we smile and say: O, but that tasted good! Paul said it to the heathen: "filling our hearts with food and gladness." Let us quote the whole verse: "Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," Acts 14:17.

He did so to the good and the evil, to His saint and the murderer.

O, but there is a beautiful speech of God anent His goodness.

* * * *

But, beloved reader, David is not speaking of that goodness here. I spoke of it, because I am writing a meditation of Thanksgiving, and then men expect you to speak of the good things which God gives to mankind, be they good or bad. Neither is there any question about it: He did and does good from heaven incessantly.

I would only warn you and say that this goodness of God with respect to the natural things is no common grace!

When God gives fruitful seasons and much wheat and corn to a reprobate farmer, then He indeed proves that He is a good God, but He does not give grace in those things to the reprobate. Things, no matter how sweet to the taste of man, are not grace.

You may be loaded down with the good things of creation on this Thanksgiving Day, and be hated of God from eternity to eternity.

If a man is of a reprobate mind and receives his riches of the earth, God is proving in all these things that this man is bad. The more God gives him, the more he breaks out in evil.

On the other hand, God may deprive you of many good things in this life, so that you shiver of the cold, and are black from hunger, and yet He may love you very much. Witness the saints that died in great want. Heb. 11:36-38. Also, learn the lesson of Psalm 73. Asaph in want is gloriously glad, while the wicked in abundance are sliding down the slippery places to hell.

No, dear ones, the question on this Thanksgiving Day is not how much you have of the earth's treasures, but whether or not you have that other goodness, the goodness of my text. Let's look at that.

* * * *

Oh, how great is Thy goodness!

What goodness?

The goodness "which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!"

Again: what goodness?

The goodness "which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!"

Yes, this is another kind of goodness of God. It is a different commodity than corn and wheat, silver and gold, houses and lands, health and life on earth. These latter things are the subject for discussion on Thanksgiving Day on the part of those that know not God. I am sorry to have to say it, but it is true, and it makes my heart sad.

The Lord Christ spoke of this special kind of goodness in His application of the parable of the rich fool, when He said: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, *and is not rich toward God!*"

That other kind of goodness makes you rich in God.

Again, Jesus spoke of this goodness when He said: "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . ."

But of the goodnesses of this earth, the Lord Jesus said: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Is it then bad to possess of these earthly goodnesses of the Lord? No, as long as you possess them as not possessing; as long as you use them as a means to an end, and not an end in themselves.

Pray: Give us this day our daily bread! And do your work as well as you know how. Do not labor for the bread that perisheth, but rather look to that Goodness of which my text speaketh.

How great is Thy goodness!

Both laid up, and wrought for God's people.

What is it?

You now, there are two worlds, two earths and two heavens; there are two works of the Lord.

The first earth, heaven, world and work of God was the creation and providence of the world in which we now live and have our being.

That world we and the devils have corrupted. And so the wrath of God was revealed from heaven. And all things are loudly crying for a judgment day.

But at once after the fall of our first parents God started a second work; He revealed at once a second world: the world of His eternal good pleasure.

The first world and work was but a picture of this second and last work of God.

And if this first world was beautiful, what shall I say of the second?

David looked at this second world and cried: Oh, how great is Thy goodness . . . !

Elsewhere the Holy Ghost tells us that no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard and it has not come up in the heart of man what the Lord God hath prepared for them that love Him.

That is the goodness of my text.

It is the goodness which is laid up in heaven for all God's elect people. Peter speaks of these same goodnesses when he speaks of the inheritance which is kept for us in heaven. The writer to the Hebrews calls them the things hoped for and the things not seen.

Moses had a glimpse of them on the Mount, and his face shone with heavenly glory.

And these goodnesses are also "wrought" for them that trust in God before the sons of men.

"Wrought," what does that mean?

Oh, beloved, thereby hangs a beautiful story. It is the story of Jesus our Lord.

God wrought this goodness in the sending of His only begotten Son in our flesh, and in the midst of the wolves who made Him cry from His birth to His death on the cross. That Son is the great SIN BEARER of the world. He came to correct what we had broken. He came to bear our curse, our death, our damnation, our eternal guilt. And He bore it all away.

And because He was God to be praised forever, He earned, He merited a world of good things that are infinitely superior to the old world.

And how do you know that you are partaker of these goodnesses?

All those that fear the Lord, and all those that trust in Him before the face of men!

Those are the earmarks of the spiritual millionaires!

Yes, Thanksgiving Day is already past when you read this.

No matter, every day is thanksgiving day for you when you fear God and trust Him before the face of the whole world.

Look at those things for they are visible by faith.

Look at them, and marvel, wonder, and break forth in thanksgiving.

Praise Him for His great goodness in Jesus the Lord! Amen.

G.V.

Christian School Teachers and Teachers-To-Be:

Whereas the Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School Society plans to open its own school for the second semester (January, 1961), the board encourages ALL interested teachers and teachers-to-be to inquire for further details. It is requested that applicants include name, credits or degree, experience if any, and expected salary. It is desirable that this information reaches the undersigned on or before December 31, 1960.

GILBERT GRIESS, *Secretary*
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Loveland, Colorado

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

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James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S. E.
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

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

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

Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

Second Class postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

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EDITORIALS

Fast Disintegration

This article, as the reader will understand, is simply a continuation of my last editorial on the above named subject. I was busy with a few comments on the letter which the schismatic synod sent the Christian Reformed Synod. This I now continue.

2. To my mind, there is a contradiction in this letter of the schismatic synod. They admit that the Three Points are not Arminian or Pelagian. They also promise that, if they are received back into the Christian Reformed Church, they will not strive or agitate against the Three Points. On the other hand, the Christian Reformed Synod, in 1960, expressed that "we do not require submission in the sense of demanding total agreement with the Three Points; we recognize and bear with scruples which you may have, in the expectation that we together may come eventually to a better understanding of the truth; and not bar those who have certain misgivings or divergent interpretations as long as they refrain from propaganda for their interpretations." Yet they, the schismatic synod, virtually ask the Christian Reformed Synod to retract the Three Points or, at least, to remove their binding power and make them of none effect. This is a flat contradiction.

It seems to me that the door of the Christian Reformed Church, if not wide open to the schismatics, is, at least, unlocked. All the schismatics have to do is turn the knob and walk right in. Why, then, ask the Christian Reformed Synod to retract the Three Points?

Perhaps the reason is this request may be found in one of the grounds that are offered for it, namely, that "By this action you would serve us and enable us to practise this unity with far less danger of splintering in our churches." If this means anything, it surely signifies that there is still a faction in the schismatic churches that do not want to subscribe to the Three Points, that do not agree with the statement that they are not Arminian or Pelagian, and that do not even want to promise that they will not agitate against them. If I understand the situation correctly, there are different factions among the schismatics:

1) There are those that wish to go back to the Christian Reformed Church regardless of the Three Points. They are really of the opinion that they are not Arminian or Pelagian and, therefore, are perfectly willing to subscribe to them. Or, perhaps, they do not even give it a thought whether or not they, the Three Points, are Arminian and Pelagian.

2) Others are ready to join the Christian Reformed Church on the conditions prescribed by the synod of that church in 1960, namely, on the promise that they will not agitate against the Three Points.

3) But, finally, there are also those that consider the Three Points un-Reformed and that do not want to join the

Christian Reformed Church at all or, at least, not unless the Three Points are retracted.

This, to my mind, is the fundamental reason why the special schismatic synod addressed their last letter to the synod of the Christian Reformed Synod.

And I am bold to make two predictions:

1) First, that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church will refuse to retract the Three Points. If they should ever do this, they will, at the same time, have to condemn the actions and decisions of Classis East and West of the Christian Reformed Church whereby they cast out Reformed ministers and consistories from their midst. This, indeed, would be perfectly proper, but my prediction is that they will never do this.

2) Secondly, that in spite of the fact the Christian Reformed Church will not retract the Three Points several of the schismatics, ministers and members, will go back to the Christian Reformed Church anyway. For they are not Protestant Reformed and, therefore, they feel that there is no reason for their separate existence.

That the latter is true is evident, not only from what some of them said after the letter addressed to the Christian Reformed Synod was adopted by their synod, but also from a letter that John De Jong wrote to their special synod and which I quote here in full:

"Esteemed Brethren:

"Whereas our congregation is considering joining the Christian Reformed Church on a local basis, through Classis Sioux Center, particularly in case our churches as a denomination do not (at least not at this time) declare themselves synodically in favor of reunion with the Christian Reformed Church, we would like to know whether it is necessary for us to receive permission from our synod to do with our properties as we deem proper and advantageous to our local group.

"If it is the opinion of our Synod, as it is ours, that ultimately the Synod has control of the local properties, in case the local group dissolves or joins another denomination, we hereby request that the Synod goes on record as giving us, locally, the right to do with our properties as we deem best.

"The reasons why we come with this request are evident. Let us mention some of these reasons:

"1. We want to do the proper thing over against our churches and the commitments we have made in re church relationship.

"2. The consistory of our (former) Edgerton church came with a similar request and received a favorable reply from the Synod of 1959. (See Acts of Synod of 1959, pages 70-72).

"3. We want to satisfy our own people that we are doing the proper thing and act in harmony with — or with the approval of our Synod.

"4. We also hereby want to safeguard ourselves (if that should be necessary) over against outsiders who may claim to have a right to our properties.

"5. Having sought contact with Classis Sioux Center of

the Christian Reformed Church with a view to eventual reunion, we also want to be able to tell these brethren, if it should come to reunion on a local basis, that we have clearance from our Synod.

"We gladly leave it up to our Synod as to how you, brethren, want to formulate what we hope will be a favorable reply to our request.

"Finally, it may not be amiss to state here that we have no intention whatever that any person, members of our congregation, will financially benefit from an eventual sale of our properties, should that be the ultimate outcome of the matter.

"If we should eventually sell our properties and simply disband, dissolve and disintegrate as a local group, we would see to it that the moneys would be given to worthy Kingdom causes.

"Wishing you the guidance of the Spirit in all your deliberations, we remain your brethren in Christ, etc."

From the above letter it is very evident that what we wrote is true, namely, that many of the schismatics will go back to the Christian Reformed Church even if the synod of that church will not retract the Three Points.

What was done with this letter is not quite clear since in its discussion the schismatic synod met in executive session. What we do know is that their synod appointed a committee to report on the matter. And the report of this committee contained the following items: 1. That they advise synod to receive this letter. 2. That they advise synod to follow the precedent of the Edgerton case in this matter and send them a reply as found in Art. 71 of the Acts of synod 1959. 3. That they advise synod to urge Hull not to leave the schismatic churches before the matter can be decided denominationally.

Plain it is, however, that they received this letter, which was, of course, illegal because it, evidently, was sent directly to synod without first seeking the advice of classis. Besides, it is also evident that their synod did not censure De Jong and Hull for this separatistic action as the true Protestant Reformed Synod would have done. Instead they urged Hull to wait with the matter of uniting with the Christian Reformed Church until the matter could be settled denominationally. This I learned from the party that reported to me.

I still have another report which concerns the matter of the funds that were in the treasury of the Protestant Reformed Churches at the time when the schismatics left our churches. This report reads as follows:

"Esteemed Brethren:

"Article 77 of the Acts of Synod 1960 contains a report of this same committee regarding these funds. There was on the floor of Synod a motion to pro-rate these funds with the Hoeksema group. Our mandate thereupon is found in the following two articles of the minutes according to which the committee is re-appointed to further study the matter of these funds, as well as the matter of the mission house on 1144 Alexander St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and come with its advice and recommendation.

"What Synod meant by further study is difficult for us to determine since the term is not defined. In the light of the advice of the committee of pre-advice we suppose that Synod desires advice regarding the moral as well as the legal aspect.

"Legally it has, of course, been determined by the courts that we are the Protestant Reformed Churches. From the moral viewpoint we ask Synod to consider the following:

"First of all that this recognition of the courts has been received and acknowledged by our Synods. We have retained the name and functioned under it. We have also used all the properties allotted to us through litigation. Never has Synod been contested in this action from a moral viewpoint. Secondly it should be borne in mind that both on the congregational as well as the synodical level we have more than once approached the Hoeksema group to divide these funds. With all these attempts we failed to receive recognition, leave alone consideration of our proposal.

"Your committee is of the opinion that the funds referred to are legally and morally the property of the Protestant Reformed Churches, including the house on Alexander St. and that Synod can use them or dispose of them according to its own discretion. In view of this opinion we advise Synod:

"Regarding the funds:

"There was on Feb. 1, 1960 a balance of \$27,486.11. We advise that we in the distribution of these funds do not consider such funds that no longer exist or for which our churches at present are not assessed. Further, that there was at that time \$14,249.46 in the Mission Fund and \$3,225.10 in the Foreign Mission Fund. We advise that this entire sum be placed in our present Foreign Mission Fund. Also that the amount of \$1,918.22 which at that time was in the Student Fund be placed in our present Student Fund. That then the balance be pro-rated into our current funds on the basis of our present synodical assessments per family.

"Regarding the house on Alexander St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. This house has of course been sold to Rev. Petter. According to the financial report of the synod of 1960 a sum of \$6,816.29 was received from Rev. Petter for rent and down payment. This money was placed in our Domestic Mission Fund. The committee advises that this amount and all the payments to be received from this sale be placed in a Reserve Mission Fund."

This report was adopted.

I will make no comments in this report of the committee and its adoption by the schismatic synod. Only a few remarks:

1. We heartily agree "the funds referred to are legally and morally the property of the Prot. Reformed Churches."

2. By this time it also ought to be very evident to all, the schismatics included, that what they call "the Hoeksema group" are the only Prot. Reformed Churches in existence.

3. That, therefore, only the so-called "Hoeksema group" have the only legal and moral right to these funds.

For the rest we will have to wait till our synod has expressed itself on this matter.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Mystery of the Beast

Revelation 17:7-14

And, in the third place, we must also remember that this universal kingdom shall nevertheless be realized in the future, and that this complete realization of the beast shall form the ultimate outcome, the historical product, of all that have gone before. If therefore you would have a full picture of this beast, of the antichristian world-power, you must not merely think of the final manifestation, but just as well of the historic process through which the beast has passed. And it is this complete picture of the beast which is drawn before our eyes in the words of our present passage. The seven heads, then, represent different stages of development through which this beast has passed in the various kingdoms that existed before its complete manifestation, while the ten horns reveal to us the final formation, or league of kings, that shall be of one mind and completely realize the ideal of the beast for a short time. And, for the same reason, we are called to study this picture of the beast, first of all, in its historical appearance, and, in the second place, from the point of view of its ultimate formation.

As to its historical development, we must, first of all, call your attention to the apparently dark expression that the beast was, and is not, and yet shall come up out of the abyss. Three times this is repeated in the text; and therefore it will be of importance that we understand the significance of this expression. In the first place, it must be clear to us that this is asserted of the beast as a whole. We must make a distinction between the beast in principle and the beast in its complete manifestation. And we must remember that the beast never entirely disappears from the scene of history. He is always there in some form. Even in John's time the angel interprets that one of the heads is, exists, so that also then the beast appeared in one of his heads. But the beast does not always appear in his proper and full manifestation. He does not appear in his full and complete aspect. And therefore it is of the beast as a whole that the text says that "he was, and is not, and comes up out of the abyss," or again, that "he was, and is not, and shall be." Many have been the interpretations that have been given of this mysterious expression. It seems to us that it makes us think immediately of what we read in chapter 13 about the deathstroke that was healed. You remember that in that chapter we had a picture of the full manifestation of the world-power of the beast in its ultimate formation and appearance. And of that final manifestation of

the beast it was said that it had been wounded to death, but that the wound was healed. At that time we referred to the kingdom of mighty Nimrod, which also aimed at universal world-power, but which was distinct from all the forms of the world-power that succeeded in this particular, that it consisted rather of a confederation of all the different tribes and peoples that existed at the time, rather than of the dominion and aggrandizement of one particular nation at the expense of the rest. They all spoke one language. They all were of one mind. They all combined in one purpose, to establish the kingdom of the world and exalt themselves against God Almighty. But by the separation and confusion of their language and counsel that mighty dominion had received its deathstroke, a stroke, however, which shall be healed in the future, when that same world-power shall appear in the same form once more, as a great and powerful federation, as a league of nations that shall be of one mind. If we recall this, it seems to me the interpretation of the seemingly mysterious words, "the beast that was, and is not, and shall come out of the abyss," cannot be difficult. The beast did exist also in its proper form at the time of the building of the tower of Babel. Then a great and mighty federation must have been formed, for they were already building their central city and tower. Then they were of one mind and purpose. Then the beast revealed himself in his proper form. And therefore, in that sense the angel can say, "The beast that was . . ." It was in the dominion of ancient Babel and mighty Nimrod. But in that sense the angel also could truly say, "It is not . . ." Surely, there was mighty world-power at the time. The Roman Empire had sway over practically all the world. It had succeeded by the strength of its legions and by its mighty organizing power to extend its dominion over all the important countries of Europe and Africa and Asia. It was a world-power that might be called universal. But it is not true of the Roman power that it resembled the ancient federation of Nimrod. For in the Roman Empire they were not all of one mind. It merely consisted of one mighty nation that had subdued a number of others and for that reason ruled the world. And therefore, however mighty the Roman Empire may have been, it was a strength of force, not of purpose. They were one, not because they were of one mind, but because they were suppressed by one single nation. And therefore, in John's time the beast was not. But the same beast shall again appear in the future. Again the nations of the earth shall unite, shall be of one mind, shall all give their power to the beast, and by a great league, or federation, shall succeed in establishing a universal world-power, having sway over all things.

In the second place, we must pay attention to the seven heads, indicating seven different manifestations of the world-power in history. As we have remarked, the picture of the beast in our text places before us the historic development of the world-power, as well as its final formation. And the former is symbolized in the heads. That this is the case is plain from the language of the angels. He tells us about these

heads that one is, that five have fallen, and that one is not yet, evidently pointing to succession. The ten horns evidently indicate a number of world-powers existing all at the same time; but there is succession — past, present, and future — in the number of heads. Now what does the angel tell us about these heads? In the first place, he tells us that the seven heads are seven mountains. He adds that they are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. But for the present we can leave this out of consideration, and discuss the relation of the woman to this beast in a future discourse. We now take the interpretation of the seven heads as such. They are seven mountains. As I have remarked before, there are interpreters who take it that these seven mountains refer to the seven hills of Rome. The city of Rome was built on seven hills; and so the woman, which was the city of Rome, was sitting on the seven hills of the Roman capital. But that this interpretation is not correct may be plain, in the first place, from the fact that the text speaks of mountains, while the hills of Rome were mere moles, not for a moment to be called mountains. But in the second place, the angel indicates that mountains must be taken in the figurative sense of the word: for he adds, “and they are seven kings.” Not merely, “And there are seven kings,” as some would translate, but specifically referring to the seven heads of the beast, “And they (namely, the heads, the mountains) are seven kings.” Now surely, the hills of Rome are not at the same time the kings of Rome: and therefore this interpretation will not hold. They stand for strong and conspicuous kingdoms, just as a mountain stands for a conspicuous elevation of the earth’s surface, elevating itself above even the smaller elevations and hills that may appear next to it. Thus, a mountain is symbolic of a mighty empire or kingdom. More than once it appears thus in Scripture. In Psalm 30:7 we hear David sing of his kingdom: “Thou, Jehovah, hast made my mountain to stand strong.” In Jeremiah 51:25 we read that the prophet spells destruction upon the mighty kingdom of Babylon when he says: “Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith Jehovah, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.” In Daniel 2:35 we read that the stone which is cut loose and symbolizes the kingdom of God will develop into a great mountain, filling all the earth. And again, in Zechariah 4:7 we read in respect to the world-power that opposes the rebuilding of the temple: “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain.” And therefore, it is nothing strange to meet with the figure of a mountain as indicating a king and a kingdom. And as far as the objection is concerned that in this case the angel interprets one symbolism by another, that of the heads by that of the mountains, if the latter must not be taken in the literal sense of the word, this is sufficiently explained by the fact that the heads do not symbolize *any* world-power — not Moab and Edom and Samaria — but specifically, great and mighty, conspicuous kingdoms and kings, which may be compared to mountains in

their high and powerful exaltation. And therefore, the heads refer to seven mighty dominions.

In this light it is not difficult to understand the rest of the angel’s explanation of the mystery of the beast. He says: “Five are fallen, one is, the other is not yet come.” Taking our starting point at the one that is, we can make no mistake about it. It is, of course, the one that existed at the time of John’s exile on Patmos, namely, the mighty Roman Empire, with its sway over practically all the world. Figuring back from that mighty empire to the five that are fallen, we obtain the result that before the Roman Empire the Graeco-Macedonian Empire held sway over all the world, especially in the time of Alexander the Great. Before that great Macedonian empire, it was the power of the Medo-Persian kingdom that was supreme. It was preceded by the tremendous and glorious world-power of Babylonia, having its representative king in Nebuchadnezzar. Before the last, the Assyrian Empire was supremely powerful under Sennacherib. And again, before the Assyrian Empire we have the royal power of Egypt, as pictured in Scripture. Thus we obtain the following five: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece. All these are mentioned in Scripture. And besides, all of them were conspicuous also in their opposition to the kingdom of Israel. Besides, four of these six are mentioned in the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, namely, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome — the golden, silver, brass, and iron elements of the image. And therefore, there can be little doubt but that the angel, prophesying from the viewpoint of John’s own time, refers to the power of the Roman Empire as the head that *is* at that period, and to the five representative powers of the world that have just been mentioned as the ones that have fallen already. The seventh is not yet, so the angel continues. And when he comes, he must continue a little while. That seventh power has not yet been today. Ever since the final downfall of the Roman Empire in the year 476, the history of Europe has been a struggle between the various nations of the continent. True, there have been powerful empires; but never has any succeeded in obtaining undisputed control of the universal power of the world. And since the discovery of a new continent, this has become all the more impossible. It is very plain from history that God wills not that any one nation shall gain the complete control over the others, in order thus to realize the kingdom of Antichrist. No, evidently that kingdom shall be established in an entirely different way, as already has been discussed before and as also indicated in the words of our passage in an unmistakable manner.

H.H.

O Lord my God, how manifold
The works which Thou hast wrought,
Ofttimes Thou hast bestowed on us
Thy care and gracious thought.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Moses Rejected By His Brethren

And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. Acts 7:23-25

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Exodus 2:11-14

Moses had come into his fortieth year of life, and he formed a lonesome figure in his wandering through the land of Egypt. In position and appearance he was an Egyptian, and one of the highest rank. He was known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But as he advanced in years he had withdrawn himself more and more from the life of the court. He had refused to take a position in the government for which he had prepared. He had neglected to take to himself a wife from the daughters of the land in spite of his foster-mother's urgings. Seldomly was he to be found in the social functions of the palace, and there was no effort on his part to make friends with any men of his own rank. Most of his time seemed to be spent in wandering through the fields and close by the construction projects where the Hebrew slaves were working. Also there he cut a solitary figure. The Egyptian taskmasters showed him a fawning respect. They recognized his influential position in the court, but he evidenced little appreciation for them. Occasionally he spoke a kind and sympathetic word to one or other of the slaves. Their responses were curt, if not openly hostile. The Hebrews knew that he was of their own blood; but he had lived too long among the Egyptians to be trusted. His Egyptian clothes and customs made too much of a rift for them to ignore. He did not toil in slavery like they did, and how could mere words remove that difference? Let Moses speak as he would, to them he was an Egyptian and not to be trusted.

Little did any one realize the turmoil that lived in Moses' breast. From the Egyptians he received countless offers of kindness. They sought to give him friendship, power, and glory among the mightiest of the land. In the court of Pharaoh personal opportunities never ceased to come. But Moses had no appreciation for these offers of the Egyptians;

he did not want to live as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he was a Hebrew. His love was with the people of his birth. They were the chosen people of God. For them in their bondage he grieved. For their deliverance he longed and prayed. He remembered the promise of God to Abraham that after four hundred years they would be returned to Canaan, and upon that promise he rested his hope. Time and again he had counted the years and found that the promised day was drawing nigh. There remained only one thing for him to do; he had to find his place in the Hebrew nation so that the deliverance might not pass him by. But was it not quite evident? Israel needed a leader to guide and direct the forces of the nation. Was there anyone more suited for that than himself? He had the training. He had the ability. He alone of Israel was prepared for work such as that. It was Moses' firm conviction that he was to lead the people of God. Only one thing stood in the way. The Israelites would not have him as their leader. They would not even acknowledge his membership in the nation. They looked upon him with distrust and suspicion. And then there was one more thing that troubled him. God had not confirmed this calling. Thus Moses had waited for a change of attitude among the Hebrews, and for a word of confirmation from God.

Slowly the feeling of eagerness and anticipation built up in the breast of Moses. As he watched the suffering and oppression experienced by his brethren, he became more and more convinced that something had to be done very soon. Finally he could contain himself no longer. It happened one day as he watched an Egyptian beating an Israelite unmercifully and without due cause. Suddenly he saw a plan clearly set forth in his mind. Here was an opportunity which should not be neglected. He would prove to this fellow Israelite that he was not an Egyptian at heart; he was ready and willing to take the part of the people of God. Moses was determined, but he was careful not to neglect due caution. Vigilantly he looked about him. No Egyptian must see or know what he was about to do. The way was clear, for no one else was in sight. Quickly Moses stepped forth and laying hands on the Egyptian slew him. With continued caution he carried the body away and buried it in the sand where it would not soon be discovered. Only then did he notice that the Hebrew had already departed.

With a light heart Moses returned that evening to the palace. He felt flushed with joy in his accomplishment. Was not the man whom he had rescued even now spreading the word through the land of Goshen? Was not the news being received with amazement and joy by all who heard it? Now all Israel would know with certainty that he had forsaken the riches of life among the Egyptians to unite himself with them in their suffering. Surely their attitude toward him would be different on the morrow. Would they not eagerly receive him as one of them? and maybe even suggest that he be their leader? With only a slight tinge of fear and misgiving Moses spent the hours of that night.

In the morning Moses left the palace with a greater

enthusiasm than he had known for many a year. Perhaps he would never return. If the Israelites received him with the gratitude that he expected, he could go to dwell with them. It would maybe be only a matter of days before the people would be sufficiently organized to rise up in rebellion against the Egyptians. With the blessing of God upon them they would throw off the yoke of Egypt and return with power into Canaan.

As Moses approached the place where the Israelites were working he looked about him for signs of the new and appreciative attitude. It was then that he saw a new opportunity for him to establish himself more firmly with his people. He saw two Hebrews striving together. The day before he had availed himself of the opportunity to show himself to be a strong and able defender of the people of God. Now he would show himself as a wise and discerning judge of people. He would watch to see which of the two was in the wrong and then take steps to reconcile them to each other. By this they would know for sure that he was capable of being their leader.

Finally Moses approached the two brethren that were struggling together. With a tone of voice as gentle and understanding as he could make it, he addressed himself to them. "Sirs," he said, "ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another? Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

But the response was far different from what Moses had expected. The man who was evidently in the wrong turned upon him. There was no shame, no guilt, no repentance upon his face. There was only a bitter sneer and from him came the retort, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" and with a rude shove he pushed Moses away.

In amazement and dismay Moses looked about him at the others, but wherever he looked it was the same. There was no kindness, no gratitude, no sympathy or understanding. On the faces of all were to be seen only sneers, distrust, hatred, the same as always only now even more bitter. Moses turned and fled.

There are disappointments in the lives of men which at the time often seem impossible to endure. We think of Elijah when driven all alone into the wilderness until he cried unto God that he might die. We think of Peter that night after he had denied his Lord and he went out to weep wretchedly bitter tears. Such was the despair that tore at the heart of Moses as he was retreating from the sneers of his brethren. The whole of his life had served to the building of the dream that now lay crumbled about him. It had been the one thing only that he had really desired, because he believed in God and loved the people of God. But he had underestimated the ingratitude and hardness that still dominated the hearts of Israel. They did not want a deliverer. In spite of all their hardships, they were still bound with lust to the fleshpots of Egypt. That was their reason for rejecting the love of Moses.

Still as Moses retreated there was one thought that he could not drive away. In his ears continually rang the

question, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" For that question he could not find an answer. He had no appointment either of man or of God. What he had done he had done on his own, and he had no right. He was an intruder and an impostor. Uncalled of God and unwanted of the people, he had received only what he deserved.

Immediately the problem came to Moses of where he should now go. If his brethren held no love or respect for him, they would soon report his misdeed of the previous day to their overlords. Soon even Pharaoh would know and he would be called into question. Perhaps even now the summons was awaiting him. He could go to the palace and defend himself. His word would undoubtedly stand against the accusation of a mere Hebrew slave. In that way his position in the palace and in Pharaoh's family would be secured. But that would require of him a false oath before the king. It might stand before man, but for it he would be held guilty by God. Even more it would mean that he would be forever separated from the people of God. The Israelites would recognize him as guilty even though Pharaoh did not. All possibility of his being restored to the covenant people of God would be forever gone. When their deliverance would come it would pass him by.

The only other alternative would be for him to flee the land. This would be sure to incur the wrath of Pharaoh, for it would be as much as an admittance of guilt. It would constitute a public acknowledgment that he had taken the part of a Hebrew slave overagainst the ruling power of the Egyptians. Never again would he be able to return in peace to the palace. The riches and glory of the royal palace would be forever lost. He would be a hunted man, unwanted in all of the land of Egypt.

We read concerning Moses in Hebrews 11, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Moses stood before a choice between Pharaoh and God. Only by remaining in Egypt and defending himself with a false oath could Moses maintain the position of favor before Pharaoh which he had known all of his life. In fleeing, Pharaoh's wrath would be aroused, and he would be disowned as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Henceforth his life would be worth nothing more than that of any Hebrew slave. But with Moses there was an awareness of more than just the attitude of Pharaoh toward him. He was conscious of the presence of the invisible God. As powerful a ruler as Pharaoh might be, the favor of God was to Moses much more important, and God would never condone an oath falsely sworn. Moses was a man of faith and the presence of the invisible God could not be forgotten.

It was a solitary figure that made its way toward the wilderness of Midian. He had thought to be going this way at the head of a great nation, but he was now going all alone. He had thought to be going in power, but now he was fleeing for his life. He had thought to be going in joy, but now his heart was rent in sorrow. There was yet very much that Moses had to learn.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I John 2:18-21

c.

Twice it has been our privilege to call attention to the meaning of the concept "last hour" in Scripture in general, both the Old and the New Testaments, and might come to some rather definite conclusions.

We need not repeat these conclusions here at great length. It is sufficient to our purpose to remind the reader of the following salient points.

1. That the term "latter" times in the Old Testament Scriptures refers to the future time when God will fulfil His promise(s) to Israel in the sending of His only begotten Son.

2. That these times are "latter" and "last" time(s) because of the prophetic perspective of the Old Testament Seer, through whom God spoke His word. Such we noticed in the case of Jacob blessing his sons (Gen. 49:1-8) and in the blessing of Balaam upon Israel (Num. 24:14) as well as of Isaiah in his prophecy concerning the future of the heavenly Jerusalem (Is. 2:2) and of Moses when he proclaims the unchangeable mercies of Jehovah upon his people notwithstanding the carrying away of them into Babylon (Deut. 4:30).

3. This is emphatically corroborated by what we read in the Gospel of John concerning the "hour" of Christ. This is the God-appointed time, the appropriate time, the only possible "hour" in which God is revealed in the flesh, Christ is glorified, the church saved, and presently all things made new. This was indicated and clearly taught in such passages as John 2:4; John 4:21, 23; John 7:30 and 8:20. A very clear indication of the meaning of the hour we noticed in the sacerdotal prayer of Christ in John 17.

Such we noticed in the past two essays on I John 2:18-21.

We now stand before the question as to why the coming of the Antichrist and antichrists is an infallible earmark of the "last hour."

The first question before which we are placed is: Who is the Antichrist, and who are the antichrists in I John 2:18-21?

The name "antichrist" (anti-christos in Greek) appears in this form only four times in the Bible. And, it is noteworthy, that this name only appears in the epistles of John, to wit, in I John 2:18, I John 2:22, I John 4:3 and II John 7. This does not mean that the Scriptures do not indicate, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the coming of the Man of Sin, Antichrist. See Daniel 9:27 and also Matt. 24:15.

We shall see more of this presently concerning the general teaching of Scripture concerning the "antichrist."

There is some difference of opinion amongst interpreters of Scripture concerning the force of the preposition *anti*—in the composite antichrist. The preposition can express

either hostility or substitution. If it expresses *hostility* it means that this Antichrist and these antichrists in the text are *against* Christ. They are his enemies; they deny his very existence. If it expresses *substitution* then they appear as the false christs, such as we read of in Matt. 24:5, 11, 24. Thus in Matt. 24:4, 5 we read: "And Jesus said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray." In this passage the *term* is not really antichrists, but false Christs. Now this need not detain us long. For these false-christs are not "for" but they are "against." For he that is not for Christ is against him, and he that does not gather scattereth, Matt. 12:30. Even though therefore the *hostile* opposition to Christ is here emphasized, the intent of replacement is not absent.

It is quite evident from the text that the Antichrist and the antichrists here are persons. They are *men*, and also women. The point is that they are not evil angels or the devil himself, nor must we think of this simply as antichristian *teaching*. As was said, they are *men*, *persons*. That such is the case is very evident from the text and context. We call attention to the following:

1. This is indicated by the plural antichrists, as well as from what is said of them, "They went out from us" and "if they had been of us they would have remained with us." Now this clearly indicates that these are persons in flesh and blood, people who once were living with the believers in Christ.

2. That the Antichrist is a human person, a certain man, appears from the fact that of him it is said that he "is coming." He will be more than a *manifestation* of evil in the abstract. He will be a man in flesh and blood. Was not the Christ such a real *man* too while upon earth?

3. Besides, if the antichrists are men, then surely the text teaches that Antichrist is a man to come, and not simply a power, influence, teaching. Is it not abundantly clear also from I John 2:22-27 that the deceivers, who are liars, are men and women, with whom the church must rub shoulders in this world? And are they not men and women in flesh and blood, whom we may not receive into our house, neither bid them godspeed in II John 4-11? These are the "many deceivers" who have gone out into the world. They were once in the church, but they have gone forth from the church "into the world" and now they do nothing but deceive! They deny that Jesus is the Christ.

To see the great implication of denying that Jesus is the Christ is to see the meaning of anti-*christ*. The term Christ means: anointed one of God, the Messiah, John 1:41. And according to the second Psalm this anointing can only come upon the Son. Thus it is in the decree of God. Wherefore we read: "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." Psalm 2:7. And, again, we read in Acts 2:36: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye have crucified." We see here that

only the Son of God can be Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures.

We therefore repeat: that the greatness of the sin of anti-*Christ* can only be seen when we note that in the Gospel of John as well as in the letters the terms "Christ" and "Son of God" are synonymous. Christ is *God*. This is a *thesis* worth proving. Unless this is seen we will not understand the strong language of John when he says: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." All religion which does not hold to this truth, to the Head, the Son of God, is idolatry. Wherefore John says: "Little children, keep (guard) yourselves from idols," I John 5:18-21.

To prove this thesis we will call attention to the following passages from the Gospel of John. Peter says to Jesus in John 6:69: "And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And this is basically what Peter confesses in the regions of Caesarea Philippi as recorded in Matt. 16:17: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And this was "revealed" to him by the heavenly Father. Martha confesses in connection with her hope and faith in the blessed resurrection: "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," John 11:27. And Thomas says when he sees the print of the nails in Jesus' hands: "My Lord and my God." And the keynote of this all we have in the so-called "Prologue" of John's Gospel: "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!" John 1:14. And not to forget what we read in John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son of God, who is ever in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him unto us."

And this truth John would underscore also here in the letters to the churches. Thus in I John 2:22 it is stated that the "antichrist" is he who "denies that Jesus is the Christ." Now it might be objected that the *human* Jesus, the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; he has an *anointing*, a calling and office in life. But that does not prove that he is *God in the flesh*. However, be not deceived. For John continues in this verse and says that such a one does not have the Father or the Son. He does not have either one. He does not know Him. For the Son reveals the Father, to whomsoever He wills. For he that confesses the Son, as Son in the flesh, he has the Father. And therefore he that denies the Son is antichrist. He is antichrist in that he does not desire, but opposes both the Father and the Son. That is the deep root. He hates God. He hates God in the flesh, Immanuel, God-with-us. He does not want the Lord of glory. And therefore he denies the *person* of the Christ, the Son of God.

For notice that, according to I John 4:2, the one who is not antichrist is born out of God. He speaks through the Holy Spirit. He says Jesus Christ *is come into the flesh*.

Now this is not said of any child of Adam, of mere man born from a woman by the will of man, John 1:13. He is simply born. We do not come into this world. We are a part of this world, of this creaturehood. We did not pre-exist. We were made in the beginning. But Christ was the eternal Word, and He did not *become* in the beginning, He *was* in the beginning, and He was God. And He *came into this world!* He assumed our flesh and blood. And therefore to deny "that He came into the flesh" is to deny the Deity of the Son, His eternal pre-existence and transcendency. And he that denies this has the spirit of antichrist. Antichrist is against the Son of God in the flesh. For this fact, this reality of his being *very God*, true God, is the cornerstone of the church's salvation. That is the glory of the nations. And therefore it must not be denied that "Jesus is come in the flesh." Mere man is born. Mere man does not come in the flesh. And this greatness of the Incarnation must be denied by antichrist. However, we maintain:

1. Christ is God.
2. Christ is God in the flesh, the eternal Son.
3. He that denies that this eternal Son came in the flesh is *antichrist*.

Before we close this essay and write the final period, we would point out that it should be quite evident that there are many antichrists in the world today and that they have been in the world, having gone forth from the church, fomenting their lies against the Lord and against His anointed.

Not all deniers of the Son of God do this outright and consistently.

However, all unitarians fall in this class. Modernism today who will speak of the man Jesus, the Master, the Teacher of Galilee. They are antichrists. Think of the Jehovah's Witnesses, those messengers of darkness, who come to your door as angels of light. I remember distinctly that a woman, some sixty-odd years old, came to our door at Loveland, Colorado. She desired to sell the *Watchtower*. She was from *Kingdom Hall*. I interrupted her memorized story with "Is Christ God?" She answered with an emphatic "no." I told her to leave my door and not to return. As she stumbled down the steps she said over her shoulder: "But the Bible says too that He is the Son of God." I repeated: "Does that mean that He is then also 'Son of God, very God?'" She answered "no." She left and never returned. And I had not received her into my house, nor bidden her godspeed, and had no fellowship in her evil.

That is the crucial question.

Well may we in these days in which we remember the birth of our Savior underscore this truth of the eternal Son of God in the flesh, lest with all the "holiday spirit" we forget or deny the Christ of God, and be *antichristian*!

There is no "Christmas" without Christ, and there is no Christ except it be God come into our flesh, Immanuel (*Im-with — anu-us — el-God*). God-with-us!

For in Bethlehem's manger lay the Lord of Glory!

G.L.

THE MIRACLE OF BETHLEHEM

The Christmas season is with us once again. What a wonderful time it is for the church of Jesus Christ! And what an amazing thing it is that we are privileged to commemorate these days — the miracle of Bethlehem! There is your salvation, centrally realized in the eternal Word become flesh. There the wonder of all wonders, the Incarnation, is accomplished via the sign of all signs, the Virgin Birth. There infinite justice and equally infinite grace unite to give life out of death, light out of darkness, blessed hope for utter despair, beauty for ashes, heaven for hell. All this in the night wherein Jesus was born — for lost and damnable sinners like you and me! Blessed Christmas! “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!”

Therefore it was on that occasion, and no other, that the angelic hosts filled Ephratah’s night with their joyous refrain, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Never before in history had this happened; never after. Is it a wonder?

Come then, let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, this mystery of godliness, this Incarnation of the Living God, this miracle of Bethlehem. Who is this wondrous Infant, Whom shepherds and magi and a throng no man can number from all nations and tribes and kindreds worship as their Redeemer? What is that thing that came to pass that first Christmas night, so blessed to the heart of God’s church? Who lies there in that blessed manger? What happened?

Wise men of the world, devoid of all grace, go to Bethlehem, glance at the manger, at that Child so like all other children apparently, and conclude in their carnal self-confidence: nothing out of the ordinary has happened. Another baby was born, this time to Joseph and Mary. It happens all the time. True, he was destined to be illustrious above all other men. He was endowed with special gifts with a view to a special task among men. Even so, he was mere man, nothing more.

Others, unbelievers as well, have gone to Bethlehem, studied the child, and concluded: that child is neither God nor man. He is a sort of intermediate creature, made in eternity by God and come into the world in the mere form, the appearance of the human nature.

The church of God, however, has confessed from the moment “this thing came to pass”: it is the mystery of godliness! That babe is not a mere infant among infants. He is God and man, the promised Redeemer. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! God blessed forever! True, this mystery of godliness was not at once so clear to God’s church, that she could formulate and circumscribe the entire doctrine involved in the simple and clear-cut language we now have in our confessions. This took much study of the Scriptures, and much controversy too. However, after long years

of both she came to ever greater clarity of conception, so that we are now able to confess, briefly but comprehensively: “That God’s eternal Son, Who is and continueth true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that He might also be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.” Catechism, Lord’s Day 14. (See also articles 18 and 19 of our Belgic Confession.)

That Infant of Bethlehem, therefore, is God’s eternal Son, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity. That Son is the one and only *person* involved in the miracle of the Incarnation. Christ is no human person, nor is he two persons somehow. “The Word became flesh.” “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” Whenever the Mediator says “I” the eternally begotten of the Father speaks, no human person in any sense of the word.

That Infant, personally the Son of God, is, according to the divine nature, true and eternal God. This He remains forever and ever. Coessential with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Son lives eternally the full divine life in the full divine essence. His are all the divine names and attributes. He is and forever remains true, righteous, holy, omnipotent, immutable God. This is in no way changed by the Incarnation. Wherefore it is written concerning that same Infant: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, *God blessed for ever*,” Romans 9:5.

However, that Infant is God’s eternal Son, Who is and forever remains true and eternal God, in the nature of man. The Son became God and man, even so, that while He, as God, lives the full divine life eternally, He, as man, lives the full human life in a perfectly human way.

That, briefly and simply, is the incomprehensible but infinitely glorious miracle of the Incarnation of the Word, “the thing which is come to pass.” That is the miracle of Bethlehem.

Concerning this union of the divine and the human nature in the one person of the Son of God, the Church of Christ, as early as the year 451, has emphasized, that they are “inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably” united.

Never, therefore, may these two natures of the Mediator be confused, that is, fused into one. That has been and is being done by all who conceive of the Christ as a sort of God-man, theanthropos, a being who is neither God nor man, but a mixture of the two. Of course, then all is lost. Then God does not remain *God*, and man does not remain *man*. Then Creator and creature are fused into one and you have fallen into pure Pantheism. With an eye to this heresy we confess that the two natures are united “inconfusedly.” Never do they become one. The unity must not be sought in the natures, but in the one person who lives in and through both natures, in the one as God, in the other as man.

By the same token neither nature may be presented as

having undergone any essential change in the Incarnation. True, the Son of God came in the form of a servant, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Even so, the Godhead did not change. True, too, the human nature was endowed with special gifts by virtue of its miraculous union with the divine. Even so, the human nature remained wholly human, in Bethlehem and forever more.

The two natures of Christ, so the church continues to confess, are "indivisibly" united. There was nothing lacking in either nature, to be filled in, somehow, by the other. The complete human nature was united with the complete divine nature, and that *in the single person of the Son of God*.

Finally, the divinity and humanity of the Mediator were "inseparably" united. Both extremes, therefore, that of confusion as well as separation of the two natures, stand condemned. Again, however, the unity must never be sought in the natures as such, but only in the one Person, Who lives in and through the two natures.

Truly, the mystery of godliness is great! God manifest in the flesh! Eternally incomprehensible to us mortals, yet knowable unto salvation.

* * * *

How could this thing come to pass? That wonderful Infant must have been born in a wonderful way! And so He was!

He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Thus that Christ-child, so like and yet so unlike all other children, was born in a way, so like and yet so unlike the birth of any other child.

He was born of *Mary*. How simple, how perfectly natural, how like the birth of any child! Jesus' mother was simply one of the women of our human race, like any other covenant woman. And yet, how significant are these words: "Born of . . . Mary."

Thus we know, that the Son of God became *very*, that is, real man. Born as all children are born, out of one of the women of our race, He assumed *our* flesh and blood. He was not a foreigner to our race, nor was the blood He shed on Calvary strange blood. In that event, it could never have atoned for our sins. He was one of us.

Thus we know, too, that God's Son assumed the flesh and blood of *the children*. And this was necessary to save His elect. He had to be of the seed of Abraham, out of the house of David, like unto his *brethren*. Born of Mary He became all this. Here, if ever, we must stress the covenant line. Israel's Redeemer must take hold of the human nature in the very core of the covenant of God. He must come as the Elect of all the elect, and hence out of and in their very midst.

Out of Mary He assumed the *weakened* human nature. Christ took our flesh and blood, not as Adam bore it before he fell into sin, but as Mary herself bore it. He assumed the corruptible, mortal, weak human nature. Truly, He came in the likeness of *sinful* flesh, Rom. 8:3. Mind you, He

did not come in the likeness of flesh, nor did He come in the sinful flesh. In either case we would have no Redeemer. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and thus became like unto us in *all* things.

Sin excepted! He knew no guilt, because He was not a human person and guilt is reckoned to the person. And He was without stain of sin, because He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and preserved from all pollution in Mary's womb.

"Born of the *Virgin* Mary!" Oh, wonder of wonders. There is the miracle in the physical aspect of the Savior's birth that corresponds to the mighty miracle of Bethlehem itself, the Incarnation.

How the modern world opposes this miraculous conception and birth of the Lord Jesus we know. Scoffing at the whole idea she says in her arrogance and consummate stupidity: it is scientifically impossible that a child should be conceived without the will of a man. Setting herself up as an exegete as well she posits: the word "virgin" in Scripture also refers to a young married woman. It has this connotation in Isaiah 7:14, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son." And turning theologian this same modern world postulates: it is not necessary that Jesus be born without the will of man; the Son could as well have assumed humanity of both Joseph and Mary.

To the world as scientist we reply: we know very well that in the course of human events it is not the usual thing for children to be conceived without the instrumentality of the male. However, why should it be deemed impossible? In the last instance all children are conceived, not by man, but by the mighty will of God. Why then can God, Who alone is God, not do without the medium of mortal man, if such be His desire? Is the Creator bound by His own creature?

To the world as exegete we say: Really, it makes no difference to our present subject what the word "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 may or may not mean. Matthew could not state more clearly than he does, that Mary was still unmarried when "found with child of the Holy Ghost"; that for that reason Joseph "was minded to put her away privily," suspecting her of infidelity and dishonor; that while in that state of mind the angel of the Lord came to Joseph to tell him that he must not fear to take Mary to wife, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." One may deny the Virgin Birth, but certainly not without wilful rejection of the Word of God itself.

To the world as theologian we say: it was no doubt necessary from every point of view that Jesus be born without the will of man. This necessity follows from the very fact that it took place in this manner. Whatever a modern world may think of this argument, to us it means everything that God brought His Son into the world in just this way. It was necessary in order that all the world, and the church in particular, might know that the Infant of Bethlehem was indeed the promised Messiah. It was necessary, because that which is of the flesh is flesh; because mere man could never

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Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

The most prominent among the Quakers were George Keith, Samuel Fisher, and William Penn. The last named was a man of a British admiral, and he proved his sincerity by the sacrifices and sufferings to which his adherence to a sect, then despised and persecuted, subjected him. Anyone who is somewhat familiar with American history has surely heard of William Penn. His name is associated with the state of Pennsylvania.

Quakerism extols the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is its fundamental principle. The Quakers, although acknowledging the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, make far less of them than other evangelical denominations. They make little of the Church and its ordinances; of the Sabbath; of a stated ministry; and nothing of the sacraments as external ordinances and means of grace. Indeed, according to Barclay, a leading figure and exponent in this movement, there are many things the Christian needs to know which are not contained in the Scriptures. In these matters he is guided by the Holy Spirit. There are matters, for example, such as: whether he is to preach; and, if called to preach, when, where, and what he should preach; where he is to go and what he ought to do in any given emergency. So, the Spirit teaches us when and where we are to pray, and what we are to pray for.

Many, of course, are the objections to this Mystical Theory. We can, of course, speak of Mysticism in a good sense of the word. Christianity is surely mystical in a very real sense of the word. It is true that the Lord has access to the human soul. There is a very real and intimate association of the children of God with the alone blessed God. Besides, it is also true that the Lord has spoken at sundry times and in diverse manners to the children of men. That which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and what could never enter into the heart of man has been communicated to the children of men by the living God. Holy men of old have spoken as directed infallibly by the Spirit of God. This is Divine inspiration. All inspiration is necessarily revelation, although all revelation is not necessarily inspiration. Inspiration is Divine revelation as it moved holy men to write unerringly the Word of God. Now Romanists will admit the infallibility of the written Word of God. However, they contend that the Scriptures are not sufficient in themselves, and that the Lord

continues this infallible guidance of the Spirit in His Church. Only, of course, this infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit occurs in the pope at Rome. The Mystics, however, although conceding the infallibility of the Scriptures, maintain that the Holy Spirit is also given to every man as an inward teacher and guide, Whose instruction and influence are the highest rule of faith, and sufficient, even without the Scriptures, to assure the salvation of the soul.

First, Mysticism has no support in the Scriptures. Now it is true, on the one hand, that we do read in the Word of God of revelations which the Lord gave to individuals. This is certainly true in the Old Testament. In the Old Dispensation the Lord revealed His Word to certain privileged persons. However, these persons were selected persons of God, chosen to be prophets, authorized by the Lord to receive and impart His Word to the people of God as they anxiously awaited these revelations from the Lord. In the Old Dispensation the Word of God was very incomplete. The first Scriptures, Genesis through Deuteronomy, were not given by God until Moses. So, these prophets were Divinely appointed messengers to receive and impart His Word. And, in the New Dispensation, the Lord chose His twelve apostles to be the Divine media of His Word. However, the written Word of God has now been completed and the Scriptures are the full and complete revelation of the Will of God, of all that one needs to know unto his salvation. And, on the other hand, it is also true that the Lord has promised His Church His Spirit to guide it into all the truth, if only we understand that this guidance of the Spirit does not merely operate in an individual but in His Church. But this truth can never be divorced from the Scriptures. Hence, we have the promise of the Lord that He will guide His Church by His Spirit into all the truth of His written Word. It is, of course, true that the Holy Spirit is a Teacher. Without His inner operation in our hearts and minds we will never be able to see the beauties of His Word. The Spirit must open our eyes that we may see and our ears that we may hear. He must work in us the gift of spiritual illumination and discernment. But, this inner operation of the Holy Spirit, however immediate and irresistible it may be of itself, never occurs in the consciousness of the people of the Lord apart from the written Word of the Lord. Spiritual discernment is surely the design and effect of the Spirit's teaching. But He never speaks or testifies apart from the Word. There is no consciousness of salvation in separation from the written Word of God.

Secondly, Mysticism is contrary to what we read in the Scriptures. It is not only true that it finds no support in the Word of God, but it is also contrary to what we read in it. In the prophecy of Isaiah the people of the Lord are commanded to return to the law and to the testimony. If in this they fail, they would see no light. Throughout the Scriptures we read the constantly repeated expression: Thus saith the Lord. Men were required to believe what was communicated to them and not what the Spirit had revealed to every or any individual. And in the New Dispensation Christ

commands His Church to go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. We surely feel the thrust of this. This means, of course, that whosoever believeth this gospel, and not merely what the Spirit has revealed to one individually. The preaching of the gospel is presented as a power of God unto salvation. And so the Church of God has been commanded by the Lord to preach the gospel. And it is also for this reason that provision was made for this ministry of the gospel. Mysticism emphasizes the inner enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and speaks with considerable disdain of trained ministers of the gospel within the Church of God. But this is surely not according to the Word of the Lord. To preach the gospel one must study the Scriptures, the Word of God, and this demands constant application of self to this work. The apostle Paul admonishes his spiritual son, Timothy, to be a workman approved of God and exhorts him to divide the Word of God rightly. Do not the riches of the Scriptures and the calling to study the Word of God not imply that we can never have a ministry too well trained in the work of expounding the Word of the Lord?

Thirdly, we may also say of Mysticism that it is contrary to fact and experience. It is simply an undeniable fact that the Word of God is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. And this implies that without the Word of God we have no lamp before our feet and no light upon our path. Without the Word of God we err and stumble in darkness. This is simply true to life. Mysticism would have us believe that by the inward operation of the Holy Spirit saving knowledge of the truth and of our Christian duty is given to the individual man. But all experience teaches us that without the written Word of God people are ignorant of Divine things. The sun is not more obviously the source of light than the Bible is the source of all knowledge. There is no true knowledge of the Lord apart from the Word of God. History plainly teaches us that if and when men depart from the Word of God they corrupt the truth and lack all true knowledge of the truth. Without the true knowledge of God there can be no true religion. Without the true knowledge of the Lord we cannot entertain any proper affections toward Him. The true knowledge of God is never found where there is no knowledge of His Word. There can be no holiness without the truth. The Scriptures are the only source to us of all saving and sanctifying knowledge. What happens, for example, when the study of the Scriptures is neglected or ignored? What is the history of the Church of God in the Old Dispensation? Does not the prophet of the Lord complain that the people perish because there is no knowledge of the Lord? We read in Jeremiah 4:22: "For My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish children (stupid, senseless children, H.V.), and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." What is, therefore, the result when people depart from the objective revelation of the Lord? They become foolish and as sottish children. What does the Old

Testament teach us? This, that a rejection of the prophets of the Lord and of His Word always went hand in hand with a seeking after other gods and of the things that are below. And this surely lies in the very nature of the case. The Word of God alone is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. There is no operation of the Spirit of God in the consciousness of the believer except in conjunction with the Word of God. If we depart from these Scriptures we will simply follow the dictates of our own natural heart and mind. And my natural heart and mind will invariably lead me away from the living God and into the things of sin and evil. And this is ever the case throughout the ages! What characterizes people who do not honour the Word of God and study the Scriptures? Sound and thorough knowledge of the truth? Are these people noted for their staunch defence of the gospel and the fundamental principles of the Word of God? Are they noted for their allegiance to the doctrines of election and reprobation, to the depravity of man and the particular efficacy of the cross, to God's irresistible grace and the certain glory of the believer? Hardly! They have no knowledge of the truth at all. They care not for any fundamental principles and teachings of the holy Scriptures. They are as little children who are swept along by every wind of doctrine. They lend a hearing ear to every revivalist they may encounter, regardless how he may distort and corrupt the Word of God. Every kind of heresy makes an impression upon his childish soul. They are not strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. They have no conception of the whole armour, appear to sense no reason whatever to put it on, do not know that we are called to put on this entire armour of the Lord, and have no idea whatever that that which holds this armour together is the girdle of truth. They feel no particular need to defend the gospel inasmuch as the intents and purposes of evil men to corrupt it escapes their attention completely. They see no enemy of the living and true gospel of the Lord. They cannot discern between what is right and wrong, cannot distinguish the enemy from a friend. The admonition of the apostle that we must rightly divide the Word of truth means absolutely nothing to them. They do not know the ways of the Lord. It is simply a fact that we cannot see without light. And it is just as true that it is impossible for us to see without the Word of God. History teaches us this abundantly and we do well to maintain this principle of the Scriptures and hold on to it with all the powers the Lord has given us.

H.V.

Vow and pay ye to Jehovah,
 Him your God forever own,
 All men, bring your gifts before Him,
 Worship Him, and Him alone;
 Mighty kings obey and fear Him,
 Princes bow before His throne.

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

This was the subject of discussion at the fall meeting of our League of Men's Societies. And it was suggested that my introductory treatment of the subject should appear in writing for the benefit of all and to stimulate further discussion. Seeing that I have just finished the treatment of our *Canons* and have not yet begun my treatment of the *Netherland Confession* under my usual rubric, discussion of the above subject can conveniently be inserted at this point.

It goes without saying that this subject is of important practical significance, and is, in fact, close to our hearts. For, first of all, it concerns our covenant youth, who ought to be very much the concern of every parent and every elder and pastor. And, secondly, it concerns the celebration of the sacrament of communion, a matter which is at once of significance and of interest to every believer. Hence, we need spend but few words on the interest and the seriousness of the subject.

A brief definition of terms is essential, first of all, for an intelligent treatment of the subject. We are all aware what is meant by the Lord's Supper. But let us stress a few important elements. The Lord's Supper is the second of the sacraments, one of the means of grace that are appointed for the strengthening of our faith. It is the sacrament of covenant communion and fellowship, even as baptism is the sacrament of incorporation in the covenant of grace. In distinction from baptism — as becomes especially plain in infant baptism — it is characterized as a sacrament by conscious and active participation in the part of believers. In baptism we are passive: we *are* baptized. In communion we are active: we *partake*, we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the means of grace are essentially one. The Lord's Supper belongs with and follows upon baptism, essentially cannot be and therefore by us may not be separated from baptism. And the two sacraments, in turn, belong with the preaching of the Word as the primary means of grace.

The next term requiring definition is *adolescents*. The age of adolescence is the age of youth. Taken broadly, it covers the years from 12 to 20, although we must always remember that you cannot mechanically break life up into exact periods. One could say much of the characteristics of this period. These are in many ways one's formative years. They are also the years in which the individual begins to assert his independence, whether for good or for evil. I think we must remember especially in connection with our subject that adolescence is the age of transition. It is the age in which one is partly a child, yet not completely a child any more; it is also the age in which one is to an extent grown-up, yet not completely an adult. However, in our subject the term must be more narrowly defined. Obviously the subject is concerned with the period of *early adolescence*. And by

this term we understand the period from approximately 12 years of age to approximately 15 years of age. That this is the meaning of our subject is plain from the fact that otherwise our subject proposes nothing extraordinary. After all, most of our covenant youth make confession of faith and partake of the Lord's Supper in late adolescence. Besides, it is exactly this question that has been discussed occasionally in our circles and that has recently been raised again by some in connection with a recent discussion of the discipline of members by baptism. Hence, we shall have especially our early, or younger, adolescents in mind when we try to arrive at some conclusions in regard to our subject.

Finally, there is the term *encourage* — a very broad term indeed. It could mean ecclesiastical encouragement; it could include merely parental encouragement. It could include merely the exercise of spiritual influences — preaching, catechism, personal admonition and pastoral labor. It could also include encouragement by ecclesiastical decision, adoption of a general rule or policy which either merely allows or that definitely prescribes and stipulates participation in the Lord's Supper by such covenant youth of 12 to 15 years old.

Now there are many aspects and ramifications of this subject, all of which it is impossible to treat in a brief introduction of this kind. However, we may present our thoughts under the following three main sub-questions: 1. Should our early adolescents (covenant youth of 12 to 15 years old) be encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper *before* they make confession of faith? 2. Should early adolescents be encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper *by making early* confession of faith? 3. Should our adolescents in any sense and to any degree be encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper?

* * * *

I. *Should covenant youth of 12 to 15 years old be encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper before they make confession of faith?*

By way of introduction, let me state, first of all, that I can nowhere find that this idea was ever considered by Reformed churches; nor can I find that any concrete plan or thoroughly developed proposal of this kind was ever advanced by any Reformed authority. A suggestion along these lines is made by the Rev. H. Hoeksema in his treatment of Lord's Day XXVIII in "Eating and Drinking Christ," pp. 14, 15: "The church consists of believers and their children. Other members there are not in the church in the world. In the church, therefore, one is either a professing believer or a child that has not yet come to years of discretion. But one who remains a baptized member and never confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a monstrosity that certainly should

be eliminated by proper disciplinary measures. In the Church of the Refugees in London it was customary to demand of its members to make confession of faith and come to the Lord's table when they reached the age of 18 or 20 years. After this age they were no longer considered as members of the church of Christ in the world. Now it may be true that this rule was too stringent. Various factors may have to be taken into consideration that make it impossible always to apply a rule of this nature. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that this practice was based upon a principally sound conception of the church as the gathering of believers and their children.

"For the same reason I often wonder whether the practice of our churches not to administer the Lord's Supper to children before they have reached the age of adolescence is not an error. Surely, long before they reach this age, they are able to discern the Lord's body. There is, it seems to me, not sufficient reason to withhold from them this sacrament, by which they are nourished with the body and blood of Christ and in which they commemorate Christ's death, until they have finished the course in catechetical instruction that is required in our churches and are capable of making a complete confession of faith. Let it rather be demanded of them that they continue to attend catechism until they have finished the course, but in the meantime let them partake of the Lord's Supper at least at a much earlier age than is usually the custom in our churches."

More than a rather indefinite suggestion, however, the above cannot be called. Apart from this, I have heard oral suggestions of this idea, and, incidentally, also heard it claimed that this was the theory and practice of John Calvin — a matter to which we will return presently.

Hence, we can but outline a hypothetical plan, which might contain the following elements. 1) All children of believers, when they reached the age of 12 years, would have the communion table opened to them, either by permission or by definite, binding rule, and that, too, prior to confession of faith. It would thus become common practice in our churches that covenant children would partake of communion when they reached the age of 12. 2) Such children would be required to continue their catechetical training, and confession of faith would be expected of them when they reached the age of 15 or 16 years. 3) If in the interim between the age of 12 and the age of 15 or 16 such children would reveal an attitude of indifference or opposition toward their catechetical instruction or toward the means of grace in general, or if they walked in an ungodly manner, they would be barred from the Lord's table. 4) If such adolescents made no confession of faith by the age of 16, they would begin to be the objects of discipline, with a view to eventual excommunication in case of impenitence by, say, the age of 21. Others might propose variations of this plan, some with less stringent requirements. But here we have at least the main lines of such a plan. And besides, it might be expected — if, at least,

this early participation in the Lord's Supper is beneficial and produces fruit as a means of grace — that the requirements should be rather stringent. If 12 is the age when one partakes of the Lord's Supper, and 15 is the age for confession of faith, then 21 (the age of adulthood) is certainly becoming a relatively late age for not having made confession of faith.

However this may be, let us now consider some possible arguments in favor of such a plan. I will present them very sketchily.

1) Such a plan would be in harmony with the fact that baptism and the Lord's Supper belong together and are essentially one and inseparable as sacraments, and that therefore those who are baptized have a right to the Lord's Supper and ought to partake of it as soon as they are able.

2) A covenant child in the period of early adolescence is quite able to discern the Lord's body, is thus able to partake, and therefore ought to partake of the Lord's Supper.

3) In this way the Lord's Supper may actually serve as a means of grace, along with the preaching of the Word and with baptism, not only for adult members of God's covenant but also for our children, at least when they reach the age of 12. Thus our covenant youth would reap the advantage of having their faith strengthened through the means of this sacrament, and so instead of being a goal attained *through* confession of faith the sacrament of communion would be a powerful means to lead covenant youth *to* confession of faith.

4) Early participation in the Lord's Supper would serve the purpose of making covenant youth more conscious of their actual place in the church, would thus bind them more closely to the church, cause them to "live along" with the church, and would thus also serve as a means of restraint as far as a worldly and ungodly life is concerned.

5) This plan is in harmony with the usual manner of conversion in the sphere of the covenant. While public confession of faith is necessary, it is too often equated with a so-called "conversion experience," whereas actually conversion is a gradual process for covenant youth. It is therefore much more realistic to take our children along with us to the Lord's table as the expected and natural thing in their religious life.

6) This plan is in harmony with the position that baptized adolescents do not "join church" or become members of the church through confession of faith, but are already members of the church from their infancy, and are therefore also subject to discipline and some form of excommunication in case of indifference and impenitence.

What do you think of the above? Can you perhaps adduce more arguments?

My own answer to Question I is a very strenuous and decisive *No*. And my reasons I will give next time, D.V.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

Combating Heresies

"To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the ministers and elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, as well in the ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and family visiting."

— Article 55, D.K.O.

Ministers of the Word are enjoined in the Form for Ordination to *"refute with the Holy Scriptures, all schisms and heresies which are repugnant to the pure doctrine."* Concerning this refutation of false doctrine, the same Form points out the teaching of Scripture in Titus 1:9, *"That a minister must hold fast the faithful Word of God, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers."*

With respect to the Elders, the form for Ordination exhorts, *"Take heed that purity of doctrine and godliness of life be maintained in the Church of God,"* a thing that is impossible except through constant vigilance and warfare against every form of heresy and ungodliness that seizes every opportunity to infiltrate into the church. In the prayer of the congregation, which concludes this form, God is implored to *"replenish these men (Elders and Deacons) with the gifts of wisdom, courage, discretion, and benevolence so that the elders may take diligent heed unto the doctrine and conversation in keeping out the wolves from the sheepfold of thy beloved Son; and in admonishing and reproving disorderly persons."*

Professors of Theology are also bound under the Church Order to *"expound the Holy Scripture and to vindicate sound doctrine against heresies and errors"* (Art. 18). In the Form that is used to install them into their office, they are enjoined, among other things, to caution those whom they instruct *"in regard to the errors and heresies of old, but especially of the new day."*

All of this, plus the provisions of the article of the Church Order that is quoted above, tends to emphasize the importance of this aspect of the Christian ministry. The church that neglects the task of vociferously combating heresy is like an unfortified city in time of war. Her destruction is inevitable. Once the enemy has established his camp in her midst, nothing restrains him from *"spoiling her through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men and after the rudiments of the world"* (Colossians 2:8). He has then only to lie in wait and with his cunning craftiness deceive and carry away her members by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). Strong is the church that is militant in the truth and casts out of her fellowship *"any thing that defiles and works abomination or makes a lie"* (Revelation

21:27). She is the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of heaven. Against her the powers of hell shall rise but will not prevail. Even though her belligerent policies are frequently the subject of mocking criticism by the church that has neither the spirit nor power to engage in warfare, this does not induce her to relent in her battle. A spirit of pacifism she can never tolerate for she is called unto a spiritual battle in which she, with sobriety and vigilance, must fight her roaring enemy, the devil himself, and his countless cohorts, the propagators of false doctrines. To accomplish this her chief weapon is the Christian ministry of the Word in the form of teaching, refutation, warning and admonition.

It is simply incredible that members of the church can be found who object at the first sound of the preacher mentioning a current or historic controversy in the preaching. Yet such people there are. They have no objection to the preaching as long as it remains expository. They even express agreement with it and testify that they are instructed by it. However, as soon as the elements of refutation, warning, and admonition are brought into the preaching, they express discontentment. It is alright, for example, in their viewpoint, to expound the doctrine of the total depravity of man in the light of Scripture but the preacher must not demonstrate in this exposition that the heresy of common grace is a denial of this truth. Or again, it is comforting to be assured from the Word of God that Jehovah is unchangeably faithful in maintaining and fulfilling His promise to His people, but do not mention the indubitable truth that those who teach the heresy of a general, conditional promise to all deprive the people of God of this assurance. It may be agreeable to bring forth from the Scriptures the truth concerning the necessity and significance of the two natures of Christ, but you must not burden the congregation by showing them how this has been denied by many heretics already in the early centuries of the new dispensation as well as in the present day. Though many other examples may easily be given, we will mention just one more. There are those who express joy in hearing the truths concerning God's eternal covenant of grace expounded but who object vociferously when the preaching, in expounding these truths, points to the heresy of those who, either because of a total lack of a covenant conception or because of a distorted view of the doctrine of the covenant, oppose Christian schools and a distinctive program of Christian education — specifically, Protestant Reformed Education!

It is not our desire to attempt to explain the motivation of those that oppose controversial preaching. This would be rather difficult to do although it is not at all impossible to suggest several possible reasons that may be the cause of this attitude. Rather than doing this, for these reasons are not in the least complimentary, it is better that those who resent controversy in the pulpit ask themselves in all seriousness why they feel as they do. Are there sound reasons for this attitude? We have yet to hear them. Do they themselves know why they disagree with the view expressed by the

Reformed fathers that "*heresy must be warded off by means of the ministry of the Word*"? Is their reason *spiritual* or *carnal*?

As far as the preacher is concerned, he has no choice in the matter. This we must understand. He does not publicly attack heresy because he wants to. The Church Order as well as his own promise at the time of his ordination demands of him that he shall use the ministry of the Word to combat with refutation and warning all false doctrines and errors. This he cannot do by keeping silent. On the other hand, if his preaching is *antithetical*, as it should be, he cannot avoid this. This is made clear in the following quotation from *Church Right*, by Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

"The only effective means of warding off false doctrine and error is sound preaching of the gospel in the pulpit and in the catechism class and on house or family visitation. Article 55 requires that false doctrine and error be exposed in the preaching of the gospel, thus requires that the preaching of the gospel be antithetical, that is, controversial. It means that the church of Christ through its teaching and ruling ministry must oppose God's yes to Satan's nay and God's nay to Satan's yes. This is antithetical preaching of the Word of God. Refusal of the church to engage in antithetical and controversial preaching is a *sin of first magnitude* (Italics mine — G.V.d.B.) ; it is treason against the cause of God and the truth. With Satan in the bottomless pit and the wicked in the place of everlasting desolation, there will be no more need of antithetical preaching of the Word. But as yet Satan is not in the bottomless pit. He is going to and fro on the earth, ever active in opposing his yea to God's nay and his nay to God's yea. How then can the church or any individual Christian imagine that antithetical preaching is not a necessity and a solemn duty in this present dispensation of the world? Should someone offend against our person or steal our purse or insult our wife or child, we would be ready for controversy and much of it, for debate, argument, combat, not only verbal but fistic perhaps. But this ethical opposition to God, contradicting and offending against Him, and the truth — that is another thing with us. For that's only God."

This "sin of first magnitude" is committed by the Christian Reformed Church if and when the proposed revision of the Church Order is adopted. I have sought in vain through that proposed revision for an article that even faintly resembles Article 55 of the Church Order as rewritten in 1905 by the Synod of Dort and adopted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1915. The closest thing to it is that the provision of Article 18 concerning the duty of Professors of Theology to warn against heresy is retained. The provisions that call for ministers and elders to ward off heresy through the preaching of the Word is omitted.

Is this omission intentional? One is strongly inclined to question the motivation of this. Does not the omission of this article clearly imply that the church no longer desires to combat heresy? It has no more desire to be controversial.

That this is the case in this instance history has clearly proved. And the reason for this is not difficult to find. It is twofold. In the first place, the church that shelters heresy can no longer fight heresy. This is a spiritual impossibility. If this article is maintained and enforced, every elder and minister in the church would before God be under the obligation to refute and warn against the pernicious heresy of common grace and the well meant offer of salvation to all men without distinction. This they do not want to do and, consequently, it is spiritually impossible to vigilantly oppose other errors and false doctrines of the same and lesser magnitude. One cannot embrace Satan and his lies on one side and plunge a sword into his other side.

In the second place, the very nature of the heresy that is sheltered in the church makes antithetical preaching impossible. This heresy concerns the preaching of the Gospel. When heresy concerning this is maintained there can be no more warding off of heresies through the preaching. Controversy ceases when the antithesis is taken out of the preaching as is also the case when the heresy of common grace as applied to the preaching is adopted. The preaching of a general grace of God to all men without distinction is no more a sword that cuts or a saviour of life unto life and of death unto death. It is impotent to ward off the God-dishonoring heresies of men that in countless forms deny His absolute sovereignty and right to "*have mercy upon whom He will have mercy and to harden whom He wills*" (Romans 9:18).

Why then retain such an undesirable provision in the Church Order that demands militancy of a pacifistic church? The answer is simple. There is no reason and, therefore, let us drop the article and don't require our ministers and elders to be forever combating heresy. In this way the "*peace*" of the church can be maintained.

A citadel without defence! A city unprotected! A depository for every wind of doctrine! A coveted prize and easy prey for the enemy. Such is the church that desists from "warding off false doctrines and errors by means of the ministry of the Word of God."

G.V.d.B.

Withhold not Thou Thy grace from me,
O Lord, Thy mercy let me see,
To me Thy loving-kindness show,
Thy truth be still my stay;
Let them preserve me where I go,
And keep me every day.

Let all who seek to see Thy face
Be glad and joyful in Thy grace;
Let those who Thy salvation love
For evermore proclaim,
O praise the Lord Who dwells above,
And magnify His Name.

ALL AROUND US

Faith, Love and . . . Controversy

When controversy arises in the Church of Christ over false doctrine, and when the truth is vigorously defended overagainst such false doctrine, those who are guilty of heresy often accuse the defenders of the truth with lacking in the Christian virtue of love. This has happened often in the history of the Church; this has happened recently in our own history; this is evidently happening at present in the Christian Reformed Church.

Under the above title, Rev. Henry R. Van Til, Professor of Bible at Calvin College, addresses himself to this problem in the October 28 issue of *The Banner*. He speaks of the fact that there are voices raised in the Church in defense of doctrines and views which are contrary to the Reformed tradition of the Christian Reformed Church, and that those who attempt to defend the Reformed tradition overagainst these views are considered as lacking in love. Some of the positions and views he mentions are the question of admitting lodge members into the Church, the denial that the covenant of grace is the true foundation of Christian education, the calling of the doctrine of eternal reprobation and the doctrine of infallibility into question. He writes:

"It may not seem strange to some, but to this observer it is passing strange that anyone may propound any idea at any time and introduce a change in policy or principle or interpretation of Scripture without disturbing the peace — but alas and alack, the moment any other person opens his mouth to challenge such a change or such a new interpretation, he is said to be disturbing the peace not only but he is accused of not loving the brethren, of being a self-appointed heresy hunter, of thinking himself a watcher upon the walls of Zion.

"Paul is quoted as suggested above ('But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.' H.H.) to settle the issue — 'the greatest of these is love!' That is the end of the matter! Do not answer the argument! Just brand the opponent as a loveless person, that will be quite enough."

Rev. Van Til goes on to offer some exegesis of this passage from I Corinthians 13 and makes the point that the defense of the faith is a necessary calling of the Church of Jesus Christ, as Paul in more than one place in his letters also insisted. This is not at all a violation of the Scriptural injunction which calls the saints to live by love. And he concludes his article by pointing out that after all, to introduce false doctrine into the Church is in itself a denial of love. Says he,

"Truly, love is the fulfillment of the law, but anyone who propagates false doctrine under the cover of love is perverting the very law of love as revealed in the Scriptures. Love is the tie that binds kindred hearts in Christian fellowship, but it may never become a city of refuge for those who undermine the church by destroy-

ing its foundations. Love cannot be the cement that binds the church unless the bricks with which we build are the truth of God."

With the sentiments of this article, there cannot be any disagreement by those who love the Reformed faith. In fact, in this day of false tolerance and hypocritical love, this point is worth emphasizing again and again.

It is certainly true that the one who introduces false doctrine into the Church or initiates views contrary to Scripture is himself violating the law of love. He is seeking, by his efforts, to destroy the Church of Christ; and this, by no stretch of the imagination, or of Scripture, can ever be called love.

On the other hand, it is equally true that one who defends the truth of God and puts forth every effort to resist false doctrine is himself revealing love in the highest sense of the word. He is revealing his love for the Church of Jesus Christ, for the brother who walks in error and whom he longs to correct; and in these things, he reveals the love of God, which after all must be the root of all love. He is jealous for God's honor and glory in the Church and in her confession, and will leave no stone unturned to see that God's name and cause is defended.

Yet the point also bears emphasis that love requires more than merely publicly defending the truth in the lecture room and on the pulpit as well as in the Church press. Love requires also faithful and concerted action through Consistory, Classis and Synod to see to it that those who care not at all for the truth and openly repudiate it are censored. If one who introduces false doctrine is merely answered in the pulpit and the press without any attempts made to remove those who persist in their views, one falls into the danger of backbiting. A false view publicly expressed may be publicly repudiated. But ecclesiastical action is also necessary for the protection of the truth. This the conservative element in the Christian Reformed Church should do. This also is love.

Scotland Celebrates Its Reformation

In a rather lengthy news item in the November 7 issue of *Christianity Today*, attention is called to the fact that in October of this year the Church of Scotland celebrated its 400th anniversary. In August of 1560, the Scottish Parliament ratified Protestantism's victory over Rome by abolishing the papal jurisdiction and the mass in Scotland and approving the Calvinistic Scots Confession.

John Knox was the chief leader of the Reformation in Scotland, and was one of the authors of the Scots Confession. He stood in the tradition of Calvin and introduced what has become known as Calvinism into his country. The Scots Confession is a good confession and indeed predominantly Reformed. And the Church of Scotland has been known throughout post-Reformation history as a strong Reformed Church. From articles that have recently appeared in Church papers written by Scottish divines, one gains the impression

that there is still a remnant of this Reformed and Calvinistic tradition in Scotland. But from the speeches that were delivered at last month's celebrations, it seems as if at least the chief leaders of the Scots Church have drifted far from the Reformed line. The Most Rev. Arthur M. Ramsey deplored the fact that the Reformation had lost some of the good elements of Roman Catholicism during the Reformation. The Very Rev. George F. MacLeod condemned as idolatry any attempts of the Church to look back at the Reformation and at the creed which the Reformation produced. He advised the Church not to "try to recover" the Reformers' insight, but rather to "look at our modern environment and see what it says to us." He called for "the true line of the Reformers' . . . a renewed doctrine of man's worth in a machine age, a recovery of a sense of mankind's unity, and an energetic search for church unity." He said nothing of Knox's views and the other Reformers' views concerning the fundamental doctrines of Scripture and of the Reformation, but coolly passed them over.

Other more conservative leaders in the Scots Church are worried about the fact that there are vast differences in the theological opinions of ministers with respect to cardinal doctrines of Scripture, that Church membership has been greatly on the decline, and that the Church has lost much of its sense of tradition.

The Mission Committee of our Churches, in beginning a broadcast in Monaco this past year, intended this broadcast to reach especially the Reformed people in England, Scotland and Ireland. Whether there are remnants of people who hold fast to the Reformed truth we will probably learn in time through correspondence sent to us in response to our radio sermons.

A New Translation.

I received in the mail a Catholic weekly newspaper this past week. The name of it is, I think, "Operation Understanding." It is said to be "Our Sunday Visitor Edition" of the national Catholic weekly. Where or by whom it is printed is not said. It appears, from one of the articles written, as if it is printed in Austin, Texas. It is interesting because it includes many articles on a variety of subjects from a strictly Roman Catholic point of view. Its main purpose seems to be to try to assist any attempts made between Protestants and Catholics to open discussions to try to find a common ground of unity, and explore possible ecumenical movements between the two branches of Christendom split since the Reformation.

An interesting article appears in this paper which tells of a new translation of the Bible which is coming out shortly and which is the fruit of the efforts of scholars both Protestant and Roman Catholic. It is intended as a translation that will be acceptable to all kinds of Churches and denominations. Now the Roman Catholics cling to the Douay Version of the Bible, while Protestants generally prefer the King

James Version. The Protestants will not accept the Romish approved version, nor will the Roman Catholics accept the King James Version. This translation is intended to be one acceptable to all Protestant denominations and to the Roman Catholic Church, as well as to Jewish Churches. The new translation is intended to be published in thirty paperback volumes by Doubleday Publishing Co., the first volumes to appear in January of 1962, while the last ones are expected to come off the press in 1966.

The avowed purpose of this new translation is to find a "common Bible" which will win acceptance for theological discussions and for ecumenical movements. It is however also hoped, although with some pessimism, to be a translation that will be so commonly accepted that it can be used for reading in the public schools. Now, when the King James Version is read in the public schools, Catholic parents protest; while when the Douay Version is read in these same schools, Protestant parents protest; or when some other version is read, atheists protest against a violation of their freedom of religion. But the hope is that this translation will be protested by none, and will receive the legal sanction of the United States Supreme Court.

If such a purpose motivates this new translation, one would almost expect that the lowest common denominator of all these groups will color the translation. It is simply a fact that any translation is to a certain extent commentary. This cannot be avoided. So also the American Revised Version is also colored by definite modernistic views. It will be interesting to see the results of these efforts.

H. Hanko

GOD THE CONQUERING KING

O Zion, 'tis thy God's command
That thou in strength securely stand;
O God, confirm and strengthen still,
Thy purposes in us fulfil.

O Thou, Whose glorious temple stands
In Zion, famed through heathen lands,
Kings shall Thy power and glory see,
And bring their presents unto Thee.

Thou wilt rebuke the fierce and strong
Who hate the right and choose the wrong,
And scatter those who peace abhor,
The nations that delight in war.

The heathen princes yet shall flee
From idols and return to Thee;
Earth's sinful and benighted lands
To God shall soon stretch out their hands.

Psalm 68:1-4

CONTRIBUTIONS

Reply to Brother A. D. McClure

Dear Brother :

Thank you for your contribution in our November 15 issue. Though you have only recently joined the ranks of our subscribers, and though this "hymn-discussion" really began with remarks of mine in an editorial report on Synod in the July 1 issue, rest assured that we do not consider it presumptuous to write on the subject. Our magazine is open; and you are welcome. By the same token, you will expect a reply, I am sure.

Permit me to reply briefly as follows :

1. I believe it must be granted that our English "Psalter" is far from perfect. Recently I cited an example in this regard; and I repeat that such examples could be multiplied. I also concede that our English "Psalter" is more faithful in content than our Dutch "Psalmboek."

2. Let me repeat that in our present metrical versions of the Psalms we do not have literally the inspired Word of God, but simply versifications based on and derived from the Psalms. The issue before us therefore is not that of the inspired Word of God versus the uninspired poetry of the saints.

3. Without at all going into the question of the validity of our Christian holidays, I am sure you will concede that in our church music we wish to celebrate the wonders of grace connected with these holidays. And I frequently find it difficult to choose selections from our "Psalter" which clearly and directly refer, for example, to the incarnation, the resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit, etc.

4. In that same connection, let me assure you that I do not consider the Psalms to be the Song Book of the Old Testament *only*. And I would be the last to dispose of our "Psalter" too. But you will have to concede that the outlook of the Psalms is definitely "Old Testament." And I see no principal reason why the church of the new dispensation must be confined to the Old Testament viewpoint in its singing.

5. As far as the saints of the New Testament are concerned :

a. It cannot be proved that they confined themselves to the Psalms.

b. There is indeed evidence that good, sound hymns were used at an early date in the ancient church.

c. We surely need not confine ourselves to songs which other New Testament saints used. The believers are as free to versify the rest of the Scriptures as they are to versify the Psalms.

6. I very much doubt whether the church is corrupted by hymns *initially*. I would rather think that the church (and also the individual believer) must first be doctrinally corrupt, or at least lacking in doctrinal alertness. Otherwise

doctrinally corrupt hymns could not find their way into the church. Once a church decays doctrinally, however, and such bad hymns are introduced, they contribute to more decay.

7. However, the issue in our churches is concretely whether we shall, in addition to the Psalm-versifications, introduce other *faithful* versifications of Scripture. What, from the viewpoint of principle, can be against this?

Thank you again for your contribution. And: call again!
H.C.H.

A Knotty Problem

One of the questions that seems to plague the Protestant clergy is the oft repeated one: "Why do people miss church?"

While reading the October issue of *The Church Observer* the undersigned found this question discussed again. Without going into the reasons given by this article, I would like to make a few comments. The first is this — that the greater part of the clergy of the Protestant Churches direct their inquiry outward, away from the church, seeking to find the answer by diligently searching into the inner recesses of the hearts of their church members. The common assumption of many ministers is that the people are indifferent, lazy, unconcerned about the Bible and their Savior.

"Ah!" they say, "if only we can wake up these sleepy, lukewarm, worldly Christians. How much they could contribute. How much the Kingdom of God would advance! I've just got to do something to stir up these people to their responsibilities." And so they reason within themselves.

I might tell you of a certain gentleman whom I know, who stopped going to the Reformed Church. He had his reasons. It seems that one Sunday as he took his accustomed place in church eager to hear God's Word, that he was not spiritually nourished. That particular Sunday the congregation was treated to sermon entitled "How a Boy Scout Won the Award for God and Country."

You guessed it, the boy scout was an elder's son.

On another occasion this gentleman confessed that he was simply amazed when another officer of the church presented his 12-year-old son for baptism. Seems somehow he had never gotten around to having his son baptized although he himself was and had been an officer of that church for sometime.

Many other irregularities were observed, but being a very patient man, the gentleman of whom I am telling you, still hoped and prayed for the best. What finally drove him from the church (I have it from himself) was the sermon on the "Crucifixion of Christ." In very eloquent terms the Reverend told how Christ suffered, bled and died for the sins of the whole world. Yes, when Christ hung dying from the cross he said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The gentleman remembers in particular the last sentence of that sermon where the minister hastened to add, "If Christ forgave everyone why can't you and I do the same?"

The gentleman, who I dare say, was as well versed in Scripture as some ministers began to think a little. Said he to himself, "If Christ forgave everyone as the Reverend says, why is there a hell? Would God send someone to hell whom Christ had forgiven? What did Christ mean when he said to the Pharisees, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.' Are these forgiven too? These same people He called white washed sepulchers. Everybody forgiven?"

Suddenly he felt uneasy in his pew, within him arose slowly but surely a deep conviction that he didn't belong there. As he went out the church door that bright sunny morning, as he paused to shake hands with the minister, if you could have listened closely, you would have heard him say to the minister, "Do you still call yourself Reformed?"

If you observed closely as well as listened you would have seen the Reverend's face blush a little as he braced himself, gave the gentleman who asked him a hearty handshake and replied in a boisterous voice, "Certainly, as much as you do."

May I suggest in closing this article, that although the congregation isn't perfect and could improve, that all ministers who ask the question, "Why don't people attend Church?" first look into their own heart, into their own denomination, and doctrines and sermons. Maybe they have overlooked something.

"First cast the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Tucson, Arizona

Vernon Graeser

Report of Eastern Ladies' League

The Ladies' League meeting was held October 20 at our First Protestant Reformed Church. The meeting was opened by singing Psalter No. 237 and Psalm 42:1, which we sang in Dutch. Our present president, Mrs. M. Schipper, read Genesis 11 the first nine verses. At this time she opened with prayer. A ladies' double duet sang, "I Hear in the Air," accompanied by Mrs. Holstege. This number was given by our Hudsonville ladies.

Our speaker for the evening Rev. M. Schipper was introduced. He spoke on the topic "Confusion of Tongues."

Rev. Schipper spoke to us about the confusion of tongues. First, the historical occasion for it, second, the modern attempt to overcome it and third, the attitude of the Church over against it. Then the speaker called our attention to the attitude of the modern church over against the tower building and overcoming the confusion of tongues is not one of antithesis by synthesis. Finally brought out what our attitude should be. How we should react in respect to the building of the tower? Our attitude will be one of hope. The true church of Christ will therefore be watching and sober, their lamps will be burning. All their senses will be focused on the parousia, that second and final coming of the Lord of glory to take to Himself His precious bride. That is the

day when the tower and the tower builders shall be finally destroyed, and the saints called unto the Heavenly tabernacle; where forever they shall be united unto the Lord Who elected, regenerated, called and delivered them unto everlasting salvation.

We sang Psalter No. 276 while a collection was taken for our own High School.

Mrs. Maring from Hudsonville gave a piano solo entitled "The Holy City."

The business of the evening was taken care of and the new officers were introduced. In closing we sang Psalter No. 374. Mrs. M. Jonker our new president closed our meeting with prayer. Refreshments were served in the basement, which we always enjoy.

Miss A. Reitsma, Reporter

THE MIRACLE OF BETHLEHEM

(Continued from page 109)

beget a nature fit to be the habitation of the eternal Son of God; and because only the eternal God Himself can prepare such a nature in the womb of the virgin Mary.

To the world in whatever capacity, we say: you refuse to accept this miracle of the Virgin Birth only because you refuse to accept the miracle of the Incarnation itself. You cannot believe the one because you will not believe the other. For one who believes the incarnation, there is nothing more easy to believe than the virgin birth. In fact, the more deeply we enter into the Incarnation itself, the more deeply we feel that it is as proper as inevitable that such a miracle should involve a corresponding miracle in the physical aspect of the birth. With the late Professor B. Warfield we say, "To Christianity it would have been unnatural if the birth of the Savior had been natural."

Hence, the confession of the church of all ages stands: "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Thus the Holy Spirit, not the will of man, is the efficient cause of the conception. And Mary became pregnant by a direct work of God Himself, Who through the Spirit prepared humanity in the most blessed among women, and with that divinely conceived humanity united the Person of the Son of God. A profound mystery, you say? Of course! Is not all conception an unfathomable mystery? How then shall the Incarnation be anything else?

Wonderful thing that is come to pass!

Thus, and thus only can that Infant of Bethlehem be our Head and Redeemer, Who can prepare eternal salvation for us and us for eternal salvation.

Thus, and thus only can He be the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, in Whom we have reconciliation with the Living God.

Thus, and thus only can He apply that reconciliation and perfect redemption to His own and presently glorify them forever more.

Blessed miracle of Bethlehem!

R.V.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

November 20, 1960

Creston's congregation has extended a call to the Rev. A. Mulder of Kalamazoo.

The joint consistories of Isabel and Forbes have placed the following ministers on trio: Revs. G. Lubbers, R. C. Harbach and A. Mulder.

Jeremiah's prayer, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing," was the basis for an applicatory sermon preached by Rev. G. Van Baren after the communion service in October. Doon's communicants were comforted with this portion of God's Word as their pastor led them in the contemplation of that Man of God's confession of complete contentment in God's direction of His children's way.

A brief glance at any of our church bulletins suffices to cause us to realize how varied the study of the Scriptures is in the weekly work of our ministers. A recent bulletin from Edgerton reveals that Rev. Woudenberg's study concerns: the letter to the Galatians, on which he is preaching a series of sermons; the Book of Revelation, which is being treated in the Young People's Society; the Gospel according to John, which the Ladies' Aid Society is currently examining; the Book of Romans, which is the study of the Men's Society; besides the Bible History and Doctrines of the Church, which occupies the catechism classes.

Bulletin quote: What we should pray for in the morning of the Sabbath: "For him who dispenses the Word, that his tongue may be touched with a coal from God's altar; that God would warm his heart who is to help warm others. Your prayers may be a means to quicken the minister. Some complain they find no benefit by the Word preached. Perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. Prayer is like the whetting and sharpening of an instrument which makes it cut better."

Holland's Men's Society was host to the men of First Church Monday, Nov. 7. Bible discussion was on the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Revelation, and after recess, Mr. S. De Vries, of the visiting society, gave an essay on the topic, "The Son of Man."

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society, of First Church, had an open discussion on the very timely subject, "Woman Suffrage" on the after recess program, Nov. 9, the day after the National Elections.

We have received the following contribution from the

Radio Committee: "With most grateful and humble thanks to our Sovereign God we have now begun our 20th year of continuous radio broadcasting. Thankful also that the Lord has again granted us the privilege of recording our beloved pastor, Rev. H. Hoeksema, for another series of radio sermons beginning Sunday, Dec. 4, and continuing through April 2. Included in the series are: a Christmas Day sermon and a message treating the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The remainder of the series will be sermons based on the visions of the Apostle John as they are recorded for us in the Book of Revelation, chapters 5 and 6. The first three topics of the series are: "The Vision of the Sealed Book," "An Important Challenge," "The Lamb That Stands As Though It Had Been Slain," followed by the Christmas Day message, "The Sign of the Christ Child." We further report that in the very near future, perhaps in a week or two, a "News Sheet" will be printed and distributed in our congregations, and mailed to the radio listeners. This sheet relates highlights of the past years of our radio endeavors, and also reveals information regarding the present and future plans of the Radio Committee. Be on the lookout for this little paper, and in the meantime (and each Sunday) listen to the Reformed Witness Hour. Remember our mailing address—P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Michigan.

First Church Ladies' Aid Society held their annual Bazaar and Baked Goods Sale Nov. 17 in Adams St. School Gym. The society members donated the fruit of their handiwork to the sale, the proceeds all going to the various Kingdom causes usually remembered by the society when they empty their coffers for distribution.

Bulletin quote: "Simply to will belongs to man: to will what is evil, to corrupt nature; to will what is good, to grace . . . whatever good is in the human will is the work of pure grace." Calvin.

Sunday, Nov. 20, the Protestant Reformed Men's Chorus provided the Sunday Music Hour in the Chapel of the Pine Rest Hospital. The program was opened with prayer by Mr. Charles Westra, member of the chorus, and closed by the Institutional pastor, Rev. R. Heynen. The repertoire included such songs as, "O Jesus Grant Me Hope and Comfort," "Nearer My God To Thee" and a traditional English Christmas song, "A Child This Day Is Born." The singing was interspersed with organ selections by Miss Karlene Oomkes of First Church.

You may find the correct formula, given by the Holy Spirit, whereby we may provide an invigorating atmosphere for the well-being of our Christian walk on earth—for us and our children—in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.