

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### CHRIST'S MISSION TO PREACH THE KINGDOM

*"And when it was day, He departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. And He said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."*

Luke 4:42-44

How is it that we have the preaching of God's Word in Hudsonville?

Our text is the answer to that question.

Christ did not stay in one place, nor His Holy Spirit.

Lately, a very strange Man had come to the shores of the Lake of Galilee. He is called The Stranger of Galilee...

That Strange Man has gone from land to land, from Continent to Continent and to the Isles of the Seas.

He is Christ, the Word of God.

His Holy Spirit came initially in Jerusalem, the City of the Great King. But He did not abide there: He went with Christ and His Word from shore to shore and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And He will be wending His way until your children and my children shall hear the Word, and be saved...

Christ could have sung the song: Do not detain Me!

"I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also!"

"And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

Yes, and so He also came to us in Hudsonville.

God be thanked.

\* \* \* \*

What were the circumstances?

It was the beginning of Christ's ministry on earth.

What happened here followed hard upon the 40 days of temptation by the devil in the desert places.

He who was familiar to a Divine Orchestra of the eternal song of love was led by the Holy Ghost to listen to the raucous voice of the Devil. What horrors!

It was also before the perfect number of twelve apostles were called. So far He had four of them that followed Him.

Christ who was used to the company of beautiful angels and souls of men made perfect chose His company of unlearned and foolish men.

It was also following His visit to Nazareth, the place where He grew up. Yes, and there they threatened to throw Him down to the rocks below, and why? Because He preached the Truth!

It was also at the close of His first work at Capernaum, preaching with power, casting out unclean spirits, healing those that were sick with diverse diseases.

Christ was tired.

And therefore, even though you may not understand this at first flush, therefore, He arose a great while before the dawn of day.

Yes, that sounds strange to you, but it is entirely harmonious with the laws of spiritual life.

Listen: He went to a desert place alone, to pray. And why? Spiritual work needs spiritual strength. And there is but one Source, and that Source is God!

And why a solitary place in the desert? Because it harmonized with His earthly portion, in the days of His humiliation: there was a burden of eternal wrath on Him. And there is no place on earth which portrays that wrath such as a solitary place in the desert. Travel through Death Valley in California, and you will see a little of that truth.

And so we find Christ in the desert with the burden of the wrath of God pressing upon Him and within Him.

And with strong crying He went to God!

\* \* \* \*

But there comes the clamoring multitude!

They sought Him; they came unto Him; they stayed Him; and they beg Him that He should not depart from them.

Well, that sounds salutary.

It sounds better than the prayer of the Gergesenes that He would please depart from their coasts.

But it was really not any better. There was selfishness in that request. Look at verse 40. There you find your answer. They had all their sick and miserable healed.

Imagine a Man of God coming to your coasts who heals all the sick of your land and your city. Would you not want Him in your midst?

Do you remember the multitude who clamored for Jesus to be their King? And what was behind it? Jesus will tell you: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

So also here. They would love to have such a proficient Physician and Doctor among them. Make Him King of Israel! Hallelujah!

\* \* \* \*

But Christ has a Mission. He must preach the Kingdom of God!

Will you, please, look at that heavy word, MUST?

We often read of that word in the Gospels. He must suffer; the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

They are the earthly echoes of a Heavenly Voice.

In eternity, from everlasting to everlasting there is the Voice of the Triune God: I will glorify Myself in the highest!

And that Voice is expressive of a Will.

It is the WILL of God to glorify Himself in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Think of the night in Ephratah's fields: Glory to God in the highest!

I would beg of you: do not forget that for one moment all through your history on earth. Think on that no matter what happens with you or with the heavens and the earth. That is fundamental and is the reason, the only reason, for things, both in heaven and on earth and in hell. Even the wrath of men shall praise Thee!

And that is behind all that MUST in Christ's life.

"For therefore am I sent!"

The Lord Jesus received a commission. You may even say that He is the ONLY ONE who received this commission.

When there was a voice in the heavens that asked: Whom

shall I send, and who will go for us? then it was Jesus and not Isaiah that said: Send Me! Remember that, and never forget it. Remember this: all the prophets, apostles, evangelists, ministers, elders, deacons, and all God's people that are sent, are really Jesus the Missionary. Here is the explanation: it is Christ's Word and Christ's Spirit that sends you, and you go and preach.

No, Christ would not stay on in Capernaum: the historical reason for His refusal to tarry is that He must preach also in the other cities of Galilee. God be thanked!

Listen to Matt. 4:14-16: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet saying: the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtalim by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light and to them which sat in the region and the shadow of death light is sprung up."

Here is the reason: there were many sons and daughters of God who were waiting for the sight of that great Light. And that Light was Jesus. And He knew it. He must needs leave them at Capernaum, and hurry to those other places and lead them from darkness to the light of the love of God.

It is the Mission of the Love of God!

And it explains the strange refusal of Jesus to stay in their midst.

He had to go on to Grand Rapids and to Hudsonville.

\* \* \* \*

And what are the contents of that mission of Jesus?

To preach the Kingdom of God.

And, oh, what wondrous variety in that preaching!

Listen:

To preach the Gospel to the poor. The Gospel is the glad tidings of the Promise of God. And that promise is fulfilled in this Jesus. If you have this Jesus you are blessed unto all eternity. You may lack everything else: if you have Jesus you are blessed unto all eternity.

To heal the broken-hearted.

How come you are broken-hearted?

God's light shines in your heart, and by the clear light of God you saw all your filth and your corruption, and your heart broke, and the night heard your sighing: O God, be merciful to me, the sinner!

But Christ heals such. He shows His cross and resurrection to such, and they arise and sing, they sing through their tears.

To preach deliverance to the captives.

Captives we are to the devil, to the world, and to the flesh. And when the Light of God shows you such captivity you cry in your anguish: O wretched man that I am! Who

shall deliver me from the body of this death? And the answer is: JESUS!

And recovery of sight to the blind.

The blind: who are they?

All of us are blind by nature. We see neither God nor ourselves. In the watchword of the Reformers there is a line which refers to that miserable estate: Once was I a stranger before God and myself! That is the blindness of the sinner. But Christ opens our eyes, and when *we* begin to cry, *they* begin to sing in heaven. There is much joy in heaven over one sinner that comes to repentance.

To set at liberty them that are bruised.

Bruised we are from day to day. That begins when you are lying in your cradle. All you can do, and all we can do to one another is to bruise and to kill. We are surrounded by forces around about us and within us that bruise us continually. Look at the little infant, and then look at the man of eighty years, and see the difference.

But Christ in His preaching of the Kingdom sets us at liberty. It is a glorious experience to walk at liberty and have room to live and to breathe. God be thanked.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Oh that acceptable year of Jesus and of God!

There is a year and there is a day when there is Divine acceptance, and the arms of God will enfold you.

They will sing then about you, and they will answer one another in the chorus of a divine song: Safe in the arms of Jesus!

How beautiful is the Voice of the Preacher of all the ages: Jesus Christ the Lord!

He is sent to the poor, the humble, the naked, the hungry and thirsty!

And He prepares acceptance, acceptance in the arms of God!  
G.V.

#### IN MEMORIAM

On September 8, 1960, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our dear mother, sister, grandmother, and great-grandmother

MRS. G. PASTOOR

at the age of 82 years.

May the family take comfort in the knowledge that when our earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have an eternal home with our covenant God in Heaven.

Mr. and Mrs. William G. Pastoor  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Pastoor  
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Pastoor  
Mr. and Mrs. John Pastoor  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pastoor  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pastoor  
Miss Stella Wierenga  
Grandchildren and  
Great-Grandchildren

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#### CONTENTS

##### MEDITATION —

Christ's Mission To Preach The Kingdom..... 1  
Rev. G. Vos

##### EDITORIALS —

As to Being Protestant Reformed..... 4  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

##### OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation..... 6  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

##### A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

Preparing To Go To Canaan..... 7  
Rev. B. Woudenberg

##### FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of I John 2:12-14 (b)..... 9  
Rev. G. Lubbers

##### IN HIS FEAR —

The Freedom of "Bigotry" (2)..... 11  
Rev. J. A. Heys

##### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments..... 13  
Rev. H. Veldman

##### THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht..... 15  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

##### DECENCY AND ORDER —

The Mission Order ..... 17  
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

##### ALL AROUND US —

Roman Catholic Influence In Government..... 19  
Missionary Labor In Africa..... 19  
Religious Broadcasting ..... 20  
Rev. H. Hanko

##### CONTRIBUTIONS —

Missionary Notes ..... 21  
Rev. G. Lubbers  
Contribution On The Hymn Question..... 22  
Mr. R. Rooda  
Reply to Brother Rooda..... 22  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

##### NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES..... 24

Mr. J. M. Faber

## EDITORIALS

### **As to Being Protestant Reformed**

In our last editorial we quoted the entire letter of the Christian Reformed Synod to the schismatic Synod.

We will now briefly discuss this communication.

According to the letter of the Christian Reformed Synod, the heart of the letter sent by the schismatics is that the latter request that the Three Points be set aside so that they have no longer any binding force. And this is undoubtedly correct.

Then the Christian Reformed Synod:

1. Expresses that this cannot be done.
2. Gives three reasons or grounds for this decision.
3. And finally suggests a way in which the unification of the Christian Reformed Church and the schismatics may, nevertheless, be effected.

Again, as I have written more than once, no word in the entire letter of the Christian Reformed Synod speaks of sin and confession of sin! Yet, in 1924, sin was committed. The sin that officebearers, ministers and elders and deacons, were deposed from their office. This also concerns the schismatics. By following the deposed officebearers, they acknowledged that Classis East and West of Grand Rapids walked in a sinful way when they deposed the officebearers of Eastern Avenue, Kalamazoo and Hope, officebearers that were admittedly Reformed and that had done no wrong. Does the Christian Reformed Synod of 1959 and 1960 still consider that the deposition of these officebearers in 1924 was correct? Do they hold themselves responsible for that deposition? If so, it is evident that the schismatics must be required to confess their sin even before they can talk about the conditions upon which they can be received in the communion of the Christian Reformed Church. And the letter of the Christian Reformed Church to the schismatics certainly should have emphasized that most important fact. Or if they do not wish to be responsible for the deposition of the officebearers in 1924, they should, at least, express this very clearly and offer an apology, not to the schismatics, but to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches and to those of the officebearers that were deposed and that are still living.

The only way in which sin can be put out of the way is, according to Scripture, by confession and forgiveness.

But neither the letter of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1960 nor that of the schismatics make mention of this.

I maintain, therefore, that the blessing of the Lord can never rest upon this attempt to unification.

This is my first general remark.

Secondly, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church does not deal with the Protestant Reformed Churches but with schismatics and with a schismatic Synod. Does not the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church know this? Of course, they do. Does not the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church know that a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches was legally deposed from office and that this deposition was sealed by Classis East? Of course, they do. Does not the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church know that, when the Classis approved of the suspension and later of the deposition of the minister referred to above some of the delegates simply left the Classis and organized a separate Classis which later was recognized by the schismatic Synod? Again, I say: of course, they do. And, therefore, it is very plain that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church knows that it is not dealing with the Protestant Reformed Churches, in this attempt to unification, but with schismatics. And in doing so, they heap sin upon sin.

This is my second general remark.

Finally, I ask: will the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church simply receive the schismatic ministers in their communion and allow them to preach and receive a call without any special further instruction. Remember that the only instruction they ever had, as far as theology is concerned, was in our own Seminary. Will they now recognize the theological instruction that was given by professors that were cast out of the Christian Reformed Church? We shall see.

Now let us discuss the letter that was sent by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to the schismatic Synod a little more in detail.

First of all, they refuse to set aside the Three Points. They do so in the following words:

"Synod may on occasion be compelled to make emergency decisions which serve a definite purpose in a given historic moment. Such emergency decisions are dated and may in time become inactive because they have served their purpose and are no longer needed. The result could be that such decisions are in effect set aside. Reflecting, however, on the synodical decisions of 1924 respecting the Three Points, we believe that an outright and official setting aside of them is unwarranted . . ."

This is an answer to the decision of the schismatic Synod that they do not desire to maintain the Three Points in any form.

Now, the language of the Christian Reformed Synod is rather careful: "We believe that an *outright* and *official* setting aside of them is *unwarranted*." To me this seems to leave room for a partial and unofficial setting aside of the Three Points as being warranted. The Synod could simply have said: "We must deny your request to set aside the Three Points because they express the truth."

Nevertheless, however careful the language may be, the fact remains that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church still maintains the Three Points and that any Church or group of Churches that unites with that Church put their neck under that yoke.

But the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, 1960, also produced reasons or grounds why the setting aside of the Three Points is unwarranted. The first of these reasons is as follows:

"a. The serious situation in 1924 which called these Three Points into being."

This, I think, would be a nice ground for the very opposite from what the Synod wants to prove. For one could reason as follows: a. The Three Points were called into being because of a certain situation that existed in 1924. b. That situation does not exist anymore and has not existed more than thirty years. c. Therefore, the Three Points may now safely be set aside.

What was the serious situation that required the formulation of the Three Points?

I could write a long chapter in answer to this question. But I will be very brief. The situation was as follows:

1. The deposition of professor R. Jansen by the Synod of Orange City who was teaching false doctrine at Calvin Seminary. He was deposed by the above named Synod in 1922. In this deposition the Rev. H. Danhof and myself took a very active part.

2. The "Jansen men" of whom there were several swore that they would also cast us, and especially me, out of the church.

3. Hence, they hit upon the question of so-called common grace on which I had written a few years before this in *The Banner*.

4. In the meantime, because we could not have sufficient space in the church papers to defend and develop our views, we organized and published *The Standard Bearer* in 1923.

5. To this I must add that the supervisory committee of Calvin College and Seminary, of which the Rev. H. Danhof and myself were members, had, on the suggestion of the Rev. Ghysels, reported to the Curatorium that the instruction of the "four professors" of the Seminary could be much improved upon. This explains the attitude of those professors and especially of professor Berkhof in the entire case that came before the Synod of 1924.

In other words the situation in 1924 was not such that it was love for the truth that motivated our opponents but personal hatred and envy.

The second reason or ground for the statement that the setting aside of the Three Points is unwarranted reads as follows:

"The salutary effect of these Three Points in producing rest and peace in the churches."

This I deny unless what is meant is the rest and peace of the graveyard. Since 1924, according to all I hear, see and read, the Christian Reformed Church has departed more and more from the Reformed truth. The Church has grown tremendously in numbers and has large and beautiful properties, but it has failed to grow in grace and especially in the knowledge and maintenance of the Reformed faith.

The third reason or ground which the Synod offers is the following:

"The fact that such setting aside of the Three Points would run counter to and virtually nullify a large measure of agreement which had been achieved."

I know not whether I understand this correctly but I suppose that the meaning is that a large measure of agreement refers to the committee of the Christian Reformed Church in conference with the committee of the schismatics. And this is, to some extent, perhaps, even to a large extent, true. For this reason, I cannot understand why the schismatic Synod now comes with the request to set aside the Three Points. I can only surmise the reason. And the reason that I surmise is that there are still many of the schismatics that must have nothing of the Three Points and that do not want to join the Christian Reformed Church. They understand by this time that, in 1953, they were deceived. They would like to come back if it were not for the fact that they would have to come back in the way of an apology and after seven years of separate existence it is often difficult to get their families along with them. I surmise that this is the reason why the schismatic Synod now requests that the Three Points be set aside. This would seem to make it easier for many of the schismatics to unite with the Christian Reformed Church. However, this request is not granted. Thus the question is: what next?

I would advise that those of the schismatics who are still Protestant Reformed return to us with the expression of heartfelt sorrow that they ever were deceived by their leaders and left the Protestant Reformed Church.

But although the Christian Reformed Synod maintain the Three Points, they nevertheless open the back door for the schismatics to come in. They suggest another way for the schismatics to unite with them. They will not set aside the Three Points, nor will they demand of the schismatics an expression of total agreement with those Three Points. For, so they say, we all, the Christian Reformed Church and the schismatics, stand on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions and, therefore, the unification ought to be effected.

Next time we still must consider that open back door, D.V.

H.H.

# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN

#### *The Battle of Armageddon*

#### Revelation 16:10-21

The book with its seven seals is given Him, in order that He might have all power in heaven and on earth. Seal after seal has been broken. Trumpet after trumpet has been blown. Vial after vial has been poured out. All history has been controlled by Him from year to year and from stage to stage, till the last vial is poured out and the last scene is to take place on the stage of history, the scene that will prepare the earth for the descent of the New Jerusalem. It is finished.

The last vial is poured out. As the nations are gathered in the winepress of the wrath of God, battling one another to death, the very atmosphere is filled with the wrath of God. The devils, that find their abode in that air, are defeated forever. And nature is angry with terrible convulsions. There are terrific lightnings and thunders and voices. The sun is darkened, and the moon appears blood red. A great and terrible earthquake cracks the earth, so that Babylon is split and destroyed and the cities of the nations are wiped out—an earthquake as never before, as long as man lived on earth. And to finish all, great hail falls from heaven, making the destruction complete. Every hailstone weighs a talent, that is, approximately one hundred pounds. Just imagine the scene. It is the great day of the wrath of God. All the nations are gathered. They fight and rage, wild with the despair of their forlorn kingdom. They are at each other's throats in fury, filled with the wrath of God. Darkness prevails. The moon by night looks like blood. Tremendous hailstones begin to fall, crushing them to death. An earthquake destroys their cities. Mountains are rooted out of their place. The very surface of the earth is changing. Islands flee away. And in the midst of this universal destruction, from which no one shall escape, are heard the cursings and blasphemies of a wicked race, rebellious to the very last. No indeed, there is no repentance except through the grace of God. God is fully justified in this last scene of human history. Sin is rebellion, hatred against the God of heaven.

Strikingly, this is the fulfillment of what was prophesied by Ezekiel in Old Testament symbolism. In Ezekiel we read: "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them

clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee . . . . It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land . . . . And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Ezek. 38:1-6, 10-12, 18-22.

Thus shall the evil intentions of the nations and of the beast and of the dragon be turned against themselves. In that last battle the people of God shall have no part. They shall be taken away. A beautiful indication is given us once more of this truth in the fifteenth verse of this chapter, where the Lord so wonderfully warns: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." The Lord will come as a thief, unexpectedly, unawares, with His judgments, but also to take His people away from the earth. He shall come and go, and no one shall have noticed that He shall have been. The nations shall continue to rage and to blaspheme the God of heaven; but the church of God shall be upon earth no more. Therefore the chapter is a warning to watch, look for the coming of the Lord, when all these things shall come to pass. We are making history fast, especially in the last years. And therefore, we must keep our garments clean, watch out for the defilement of Antichrist, refuse to have anything to do with him, watch as children of light, expecting the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may be faithful even unto the end; and no one shall take our crown.

H.H.



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Preparing To Go To Canaan

*And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave . . . that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan . . .*

*And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.*

Genesis 49:29, 30, 33

*And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died.*

Genesis 50:25, 26

It might appear to some that the title for this article is poorly chosen. It might better read, "The Death of Jacob and Joseph." Still, we can not help but feel that Jacob and Joseph themselves would not have it so. At the hour of their death neither of them was concerned so much with the sorrow of departure. They were looking forward in hope to being united with their people in Canaan.

The death of Jacob is remarkable. We see him in that hour gathering up his feet into his bed with complete self-composure and contentment, almost as though by his own choosing giving up the ghost. For all of God's people it is not so. For many death is more like a final battle. Some approach it amid anguish and pain as though the body would impress upon their souls one last taste of the curse. Some approach death with great sorrow, with the flesh refusing to leave go of all that is dear. But there are also those, who in the closing hours seem to mount up in the full strength of faith. As gradually the body weakens, the spirit advances in vigor. More clearly the spiritual realities are seen and held than ever before. The feebleness of the body and the concerns of the flesh seem to fade away as nothing until life closes its doors with a shout of triumph. Such was the death of Jacob.

The closer Jacob approached to the end, the more the promise of God began to dominate his mind. It became his final and sole concern. With the promise of God standing out before his mind, he bestowed their portion of the birth-right upon Joseph's sons. With the promise strengthening his heart, he called his sons together to bless them. Personal feelings and prejudices no longer concerned him. He exhorted and admonished, promised and assured each son as the will of the Lord had determined. When this was done only one reflection remained to be expressed from his soul. As he had charged Joseph individually before, so now he spoke to all of his sons, "I am gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a

buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth." This was the one thought that carried Jacob's soul as he came to the end of his life. It vividly revealed the deepest confidence of his faith. Having expressed it, he gathered up his feet and died.

Jacob died in the confidence that he would be gathered unto his people. His fathers were in Canaan, and he would be with them. In this he saw not just the earthly Canaan where their bodies had been laid. He saw the eternal Canaan, the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. It was Jacob's firm conviction that his fathers had not perished in the grave. Unto them were the promises of God, and those promises endured forever. They were redeemed from the power of death. Even as he knew his fathers were yet living, he knew that he would continue to live also. Thus death held for him no fear. With him there was no sorrow or weeping. In confidence he looked forward to being with God. In that assurance he died.

It was because of this also that he gave his sons commands concerning the burial of his body. Surely Jacob was not superstitious, as to think that where his body was buried would make any real difference for him. But his sons were there. It was important for them to know that their dwelling place could not be always in Egypt. God had given them Canaan as a type and picture of the kingdom of heaven. To that land they had to return. This Jacob told them by commanding that in that land his body should be buried. The command that his body should be laid with his fathers in Canaan was an external testimony of his faith that his soul would be with them also. So should all of the true children of Israel continue to look to Canaan as an external manifestation of the faith that they would dwell eternally in the presence of God.

No sooner had the moment of Jacob's death passed by than "Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." Joseph had always been closer to his father than any of his brothers. From his earliest youth, he had shared his inner, spiritual life in intimate communion with his father. He had not known the isolation of sin which had separated his brothers. Even during the many years that he had been in Egypt, his father had been continually in his thoughts, just as he had been in his father's. When finally they had been united again, this same spiritual communion had been restored. Now that once again they were separated, Joseph felt the sorrow more than anyone else. We find a picture so typical of the death of saints. While the one departing leaves in confidence, those left behind are overcome with grief.

Soon very elaborate preparations were begun for the burial of Jacob. Joseph called in his physicians, who embalmed the body after the Egyptian manner. This took a

total of forty days. Meanwhile the whole of the Egyptian nation went into mourning for a total of seventy days.

We may wonder at this. Surely it was not the Hebrew custom either to embalm the dead or to mourn at such length. But there are several considerations which we should note. There was undoubtedly a certain amount of adaptation to the customs of the Egyptians. This in itself was neither right nor wrong as long as the mourning remained truthful and sincere. As far as the embalming of Jacob's body was concerned, although not according to Hebrew custom, it was in this situation necessary. Jacob's body had to be carried on the long, hot journey from Egypt to Canaan. If it were left in its natural state, this could never be done. The only other alternative was to embalm the body after the manner of the Egyptians. It was only the Egyptians' knowledge of embalming that allowed for the command of Jacob to be kept. Finally, and perhaps most remarkable, was the mourning of the Egyptians. This mourning was evidently very elaborate and widespread. This was partly because of the high esteem in which Joseph was held. The Egyptians joined him in his mourning for his father. But this would not seem to account for it all. There was also a high regard for Jacob himself. And, if such were so, it would only be because of the important position which Jacob held in God's covenant. It is hard for us to know just exactly how broad Joseph's religious influence had been in Egypt. The Scriptures do not tell us very much about that. Surely Joseph did not remain silent in matters that pertained to God. From the great sorrow which the Egyptians revealed at the death of Jacob, it would appear that Joseph's influence was much greater than what we might at first imagine.

When the days of formal mourning were completed, Joseph sent to Pharaoh this request, "My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again." Although in a position of highest authority, Joseph would not forget his responsibility to Pharaoh. Even in matters of personal concern, he respected the greater authority of Pharaoh. God had taught him to be humble. Pharaoh's answer was in turn short and kind. "Go up and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear."

It was a great retinue that made its way to Canaan. All of the houses of Joseph and his brothers were present, as many as could make the trip. In addition there were great numbers of Pharaoh's servants, elders of the land, and horsemen and chariots to protect them on their way. These latter came, not so much by command, but out of deep respect for Joseph and his father. The extent of their sorrow manifested itself to all that met them on the way. The Canaanites called the place where they stopped Abelmizraim because of the grievous mourning of the Egyptians. Having arrived in Canaan, the sons of Jacob went on alone to perform the actual burial. Together they returned to Egypt.

It was after their return that a new fear began to trouble the brothers of Joseph. Reflecting upon their father's death, they reasoned among themselves, "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." Martin Luther remarked concerning this, "From this narrative we learn how dreadful it is to sin and have an accusing conscience. It is much like a wound that cannot be healed." What sinner is there who has not experienced this? A sin has been confessed and forgiven, but in times of weakness it returns again and again to plague the sinner with fear. Jacob had anticipated this trouble among his sons. He had warned them not to live in fear but showed them the way of relief, "So shall ye say unto Joseph, 'Forgive, I pray thee now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin.'"

In accord with the instructions of their father, the brothers soon sent a messenger to Joseph. "We pray thee," he said, "Forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy Father." Joseph heard the message and wept. But before he could send an answer, the brothers themselves came and, bowing down before him, exclaimed, "Behold, we be thy servants." The answer of Joseph stands yet today as one of the classic examples of forgiving love. "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones." Joseph had no desire to judge his brethren. That is the prerogative of God. He wished only to instruct and share with them the glorious truth "that all things work together for good to them that love God"—yes, even the sins of God's people. He had passed through the fire himself, and had tasted the riches of divine love. With him there remained only one desire, and that was to minister to the needs of his brethren. Faithfully Joseph followed the example of his Saviour, Who, paradoxically, was yet many ages to come.

Of the rest of the life of Joseph, we know very little. We may be sure that with kind instruction and guidance he continued to fill the place of his father in Israel.

It is of the end of Joseph's life that we are once more given a brief glimpse. We find him standing in the same faith as that of his father. His thoughts of faith were also set upon Canaan. So he instructed the children of Israel, "I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." This was not a wish or mere desire. It was not even an instruction which they had to fulfill. It was a sure promise of the mercies of God.

Thus in his closing hours, Joseph also left them with a testimony. He took of the children of Israel an oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Joseph's body was embalmed and left unburied. It waited for the return to Canaan, a constant testimony of his faith that he would be gathered eternally to dwell with the people of God.

B.W.



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I John 2:12-14

b.

In our former article we noticed that John, in addressing his readers as “children” and “little children” in the verses 12 and 14, has reference to the entire congregation, young and old, and not simply the very young in the congregation. We based this observation and interpretation on the current usage of the term “children” in the entire epistle of John, where it very clearly refers to the entire new-born church of God in distinction from the world which lies in darkness and in the power of the Evil One. See John 2:1; 2:8; 3:1; 3:10, 11 and 4:4. Furthermore, we noticed that the term “little children” is interchanged very definitely in this epistle with the term “beloved.” John is writing to the *beloved* in the Lord, for whose sins God sent His Son as a propitiation because of His great love.

It is the peculiar privilege of the “little children,” the new-born church, that her sins are forgiven her for Christ’s name’s sake. That constitutes the legal basis of her new relationship to God and to the fellow-saints in Christ, and her changed relationship to the world which lies in darkness! They are free from the curse of the law; the accuser of the brethren cannot bring any accusation against these children. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And nothing in all the world can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Up to the present moment the sins are forgiven; the little children are assured that God remembers them no more. John employs the perfect tense in the Greek which expresses *completed action up to the present moment!* Such is the grace wherein the children stand and rejoice (ever up to the present moment) in the hope of the glory of God in the saints!

This is ground number one why John writes these little children.

For in this conscious possession of the forgiveness of sins the saints also know the Father. They know God, the triune God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this knowledge of the forgiveness of sins they have eternal life. John 17:3.

Once more, such is the ground, the first reason for the concrete addressableness of these saints. They possess what it takes to be admonished to the battle that their joy may be full. I John 1:4. Compare Canons of Dort, III, IV, 16, 17. More grace is conferred upon them through admonitions! Sapienti sat! (A word to the wise is sufficient.)

We must also yet notice what John writes concerning the “fathers” and the “young men” in these verses.

First of all what he writes concerning the “fathers.”

The question is: who are the fathers here in the text; to whom does John refer in thus designating his readers? It seems to us that in justice to the text we must not limit the scope of “fathers” strictly and rigidly to old men in terms of years. John seems to have something else and more in mind than simply those in the congregation who have attained unto a ripe old age. We believe that John has in mind the more matured Christians from a certain point of view. For, if what John says concerning “little children” refers to the entire congregation, the old fathers as well as the young men, then a strict line of demarcation between fathers and the young men must not be urged. Both the “fathers” and the “young men” possess the forgiveness of their sins, and both know the Father in his forgiving love. Hence, we see no exegetical reason for urging such a distinction in terms of years. We subscribe to the remark of Lange in his Commentary on I John, and we quote, “That which John says to the *teknois* (children) that their sins have been forgiven, applies indeed to all, and it does not apply exclusively to the fathers, that they have known the Lord; or exclusively to the young men, that they have overcome the wicked one; for it may be that there are fathers who have just gained the victory, and young men who have acquired profound knowledge.”

Yet, it may be more the characteristic of the “father” to reflect upon the deeper and divine background of salvation, to know the one “who is from the beginning.” For this latter is none else than our Lord Jesus himself in his Deity, as he is before the foundation of the world. He it was who claimed to be the true God and eternal life. He and the Father are one. He is as to His Divine nature, as the person of the Son, from the beginning. He was when the world was made. Thus we read in the Prologue of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by him and nothing was made that was not made by him. In him was life and the life was the light of man. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” See John 1:1-18. And, again; in the Prologue of this epistle we read: “That which was from the beginning, what which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life — and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and declare unto you the eternal life which was with the Father and manifested unto you . . .” Comp. I John 1:1-2.

There can hardly be any doubt but that John has reference to this entire manifestation of eternal life, the unfolding of the counsel of God concerning our redemption, when he speaks of what the fathers know or have known! When one knows him who is from the beginning one knows the *manner* of the love of God, of God revealing Himself in the Son. Such know the mystery of godliness that is great. God is revealed in the flesh! This is the “heavenly things” which Jesus makes known unto Nicodemus in John 3:14-16 when

he says: "Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of Man be lifted up . . . For God thus loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." And this is a more matured and reflective knowledge of salvation, the deeper and divine background, so to speak, of the forgiveness of sins. Here is the rock-bottomness of salvation. Here one says "it behooved God." See Heb. 2:10 where we read of this one who is from the beginning and his place in the economy of salvation in bringing many sons to glory!!

When one knows this one from the beginning he belongs to the "fathers" in principle. His is the solid, quiet trust of the matured little children of God whose sins are forgiven them for Christ's name's sake.

Let no one say that there is no need for this knowledge. This is more than a thumb-nail preaching. This means profound preaching such as we have in question and answer form in the Heidelberg Catechism: Why must he be truly and righteous man? Why must he be truly God? What must a Christian believe? Ah, here one evermore profoundly delves into the mysteries of faith of the Apostolicum: God, the Father, in our creation; God, the Son, in our redemption; God, the Holy Ghost, in our sanctification!

May our Protestant Reformed Churches ever be composed of such "fathers" well-nurtured in the Word!

For if we thus know him who was from the beginning then our joy shall be full.

Secondly, we must also consider what John writes concerning the "young men."

Also here the question is: who are the young men? What we wrote in an earlier paragraph also holds here concerning these "young men." They too have the forgiveness of sins and know the Lord. There certainly must be something of the "fathers" in these young men shall they indeed be strong. In the young men we have this church in her fighting strength. She is the church, well-founded in the truth of Him who is from the beginning, as the gates of hell would prevail against her. She has to deal with the Evil One! She is the church militant!!

Let us take note of this just a bit more in detail.

In the light of all of Scripture as well as in the light of various passages of this epistle of John, it is quite evident that Evil One refers to Satan, the prince of devils himself. He is the prince of this world. In Matthew 13:19 the Evil One is Satan who takes the Word out of the hearts of those hearers, called: sowed by the way-side. In chapter 6 of Ephesians the apostle warns against the "fiery darts of the evil one." And in this epistle of John in chapter 3:12 we read, "Not as Cain who was out of the Evil One and slew his brother," and in chapter 5:18 we read, ". . . but he that is born of God keepeth himself and the Evil One doth not lay hold on him."

This rather at once tells us who the Evil One is and also circumscribes the battle, the strength needed and weapons to be employed.

Now the young men are strong. Their strength is not simply a potential of native ability, but theirs is valiant strength in battle. They battle gloriously, crowned and endowed with this strength of God. They are strong because of the Word of God which dwells in them through faith by the operation of the Holy Ghost. They stand in the panoply of God; the full armor of God is theirs. Because this word thus dwells in them by faith, in this faith they fight the battle against the Evil One. They say: it is written. And the Evil One may assault, but there is no wrestling match; the Evil One is kept at bay so that he cannot lay his hands on the young men in the battle.

These young men have overcome. Constantly they have the victory—up to the present moment. They are more than conquerors in the Lord. Their sins are forgiven; they know the Father in His saving love and power. Such is the militant church. She knows in Whom she believes. She is well-anchored in the truth in Jesus. And thus she fights to hold what she *has*. Thus are these young men.

Such is the church when she is in her manhood and when she is strong, courageous, and quits herself like men.

Behold, the last two grounds for writing the church!

For it ought to be crystal clear that John says all these things of his readers as the *grounds* for writing them. Were this not all true of these little children, fathers and young men, there would be no point in writing them. They would be the "world"; then they would not be the church. But now he writes them as he does.

And it seems to me that he does so with great urgency.

It seems that the repetition of "I write," "I wrote" points in that direction.

It is the battle-cry of John to the church in the world. The church must live up to her high estate. She may not make common cause with the world, her lusts, her pride of life. Hers is another greatness.

Hence this repetition in two series of triads. And the latter triad is the underscoring of the former in a certain type of Hebraism.

Well may we give heed to this Word of God.

Satan hath little time and great wrath. Has he not and does he not constantly assault us, both as to doctrine and life? Let us then as little children stand in our new relationship to God in the forgiveness of sins, and be fathers in doctrine and young men in walk of life.

I write you, I write you, I write you!

I have written you, I have written you, I have written you!

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### The Freedom of "Bigotry"

(2)

Jesus' words to the fault-finding Pharisees are classic: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Luke 20:25.

To the authorities we must be subject. The tribute they demand of us we must pay. The man elected to be our President, we must recognize as such and show him honor for God's sake. For we can render unto God the things that are God's only as we render unto His servants the things which He places upon us through them. Only when these authorities demand of us that we no longer render unto God the obedience and service that we owe unto Him, may we refuse to do as they command.

But that does not mean that, if I refuse to vote for a candidate whose church has every intention and ambition to destroy the faith which by God's grace I have been led to believe is the undeniable truth of His Word, I should be accused of bigotry. I have nothing I need render to that candidate nor to his party. And since being an adherent to that party is also a voluntary matter with no legal obligations, I do not need to render anything to that party either. Though I might consider myself to be a supporter — that is in the moral sense and financial sense — of that party, I am not guilty of bigotry when I will not tolerate idolatry and obstinately refuse to invite a church, that threatens serious damage to my faith and church, to have influence over the affairs of the state in which I am a citizen.

Vote as before God's face you must vote — for after all there is no other way in His fear. We repeat what we said last time, "We will not tell you how to vote." But we insist that the right must be left to the child of God to be obstinate in his faith and intolerant of all that which he considers to be the lie and evil. And this right he must have without being labeled as a bigot. That nasty word may not be pinned on him. If it is freedom of religion to call men bigoted because their consciences will not allow them to give any moral, physical and financial support to a faith that in the past has openly used violence to strive to put down Protestantism, and still gives instruction in its schools which clearly reveals that she would suppress with an iron heel that Protestantism today, if given a chance, we say, If we may not oppose that church and yield firmly to our own faith, then give us the freedom of "bigotry." Let us then be called by this vile name, but let this not turn us into unfaithfulness against the truth and the Church of God. If that is the name we will be called, let it be so; but let us have the freedom to do what is right and not be forced by name-calling, and reproach, or fear of reproach, to move away from our position of faith.

Last time we concluded by saying that we would like to point out the teachings of Jesus that we should be obstinately and intolerantly devoted to our faith in Him as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Let us turn our thoughts now to a few passages of Holy Writ which teach us this truth. Jesus Himself is a clear example of what many today would call a bigot. He was obstinately and intolerantly devoted to the truth the Father sent Him to proclaim. He never yielded an inch to the philosophical Pharisees and Sadducees. Even though some of them were chief priests and scribes and elders of the people, He tolerated none of their false doctrines and thoroughly condemned their sinful walk of life. He called them a viper's brood and children of the devil. He called them whited sepulchres that outside were white and clean but inside were full of dead men's bones. He never yielded one point to the enemy on any doctrinal issue.

And before Him His servants and His people revealed that same intolerance and that same obstinate stand against all but that which by God's grace they were led to believe. Enoch, that preacher of righteousness, did not budge an inch, or tell the wicked world that they had the right to continue believing what they pleased and walking as they willed. He would not compromise to any degree at any time. O, no, he walked with God, and God is infinitely obstinate and intolerant in His devotion to His Own glory. Noah obstinately and intolerantly continued to build the ark, although he was ridiculed and "shown" that his faith could not be the right one — no such flood could ever come. (Pharaoh was obstinately and intolerantly devoted to his own flesh and his own gods, and he perished in the Red Sea by the God of Israel Who would tolerate no such foolishness and wickedness.) Daniel and his three friends obstinately were devoted to God and intolerant with the evil commands of the king. They went into the lions' den and into the fiery furnace in their obstinate refusal to recognize any other faith than faith in God. But He saved them. Men called them bigots, but God called them: My loving children.

John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ by being such a "bigot." There in the wilderness you saw a man obstinately and intolerantly devoted to his God and the Lord Whose way he must prepare. He minced no words. He took nothing back. He allowed none of the Jews their own opinion about these matters. Instead he demanded repentance. He insisted that these wicked Jews change their minds and conform to his teachings. Obstinate he was. Intolerant he surely was. But he was also faithful, and though men would call him a bigot, Jesus said that he was the greatest of those that were born of women.

The Apostles were obstinate in their testimony of Jesus even though they had been threatened and even beaten. The Apostle Paul was intolerant in his epistles to the churches, rebuking in no uncertain terms, demanding a complete break with evil. He tells us in II Corinthians 6 that there is no fellowship between darkness and light, no concord between

Christ and Belial. And lest you say, but we are today talking here about the Christian church, about those who also profess Christ, notice that Paul writes to the Galatians, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8. And he says this because some had been moved away unto another "gospel." Two divergent views cannot both be right. The Protestant faith and the Roman Catholic faith are not parallel faiths, or faiths that differ only in emphasis. And all that which belongs to Protestantism likewise is not the truth of the Word of God. Against much of it we must be intolerant. The lie does not have an equal right with the truth. And we must be obstinate in our stand over against the lie in every form. You cannot find a passage in Holy Writ that gives you the right to do anything else. And the "Love Chapter" of I Corinthians 13 least of all. Indeed, in it Paul says that love suffereth long and thinketh no evil. But in that same breath he says that love rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth. In that light you will have to explain the fact that love suffereth long and thinketh no evil. Love to God, as the Scriptures know it, is intolerant with the lie and with all evil, and is obstinate in its dedication and devotion to God and the things of His kingdom. It may be stated as an undeniable fact that the Word of God demands of us that we stand firmly opposed to all false doctrines and wicked practices, that we encourage none of them and do nothing to foster and spread them. Let men call us bigots. Our "bigotry" in reality then is true Christianity.

But as we remarked last time, we wish to point out what the Roman Catholic Church teaches its own youth about these matters and about the relation between church and state, which makes it so important that we, in this respect for sure, must exercise the freedom of "bigotry." The Pope himself stated in 1948 (not too long ago is that?), "The Roman Catholic Church, convinced through its divine prerogatives, of being the only true church, must demand the right of freedom for herself alone, because such a right can only be possessed by truth, never by error. As for other religions, the Church will certainly never draw the sword, but she will require that by legitimate means they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrine. Consequently, in a state where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church will require that legal existence be denied to error, and that if religious minorities actually exist, they shall have only a *de facto* existence without opportunity to spread their beliefs." This quotation is from the April issue of *Civiltà Cattolica*, a Jesuit journal. If refusing to vote for a candidate for the highest civil office in our land because he believes the above is bigotry, an obstinate and intolerant devotion to the beliefs of one's church, what is it to hold on to such a faith as the one expressed in the quotation above?

But this is taught Roman Catholic children in school. In a book which is used in Roman Catholic schools, the Roman

Catholic children are taught that the State must promote only the Roman Catholic religion. That means that a Roman Catholic president would be obliged by his faith and loyalty to his church to promote the Roman Catholic religion in our country with all his power and at every opportunity given him. And if he is not loyal to his church, and in his campaign he promises NOT to be loyal to this stand of his church, men may well ask whether his professed loyalty to the State and the Constitution of the State has any real meaning and can be relied upon as anything more than campaign propaganda. We insist that first of all a man must be loyal to his God. He must render to God the things that are God's. If he wavers in his devotion in regard to his faith, one must not be surprised that he also defects in his professed devotion to that for which the State stands. And black on white on pages 98 and 99 of the Roman Catholic book *Christian Principles and National Problems*, a book used in the Roman Catholic school system, you may read the following: "The doctrine of the Church . . . is that the State must profess and promote not any religion, but the one true form of worship founded by Christ and continuing today in the Catholic Church alone . . . The non-Catholic and the non-baptized should be permitted to carry on their own form of worship as long as there would be no danger of scandal or perversion to the faithful. In a country where the majority are Catholics, the practice of Protestantism or paganism by an inconspicuous minority would be neither a source of scandal nor perversion to the adherents of the true faith."

Lest that last sentence be misunderstood let us return to that statement of the Pope in 1948 that these other beliefs should have only a *de facto* existence without opportunity to spread their beliefs. That means close our schools, put us off the radio and close the presses to us. Freedom of the press is even at stake. And note that it says that an "inconspicuous minority" would not be a scandal, but today Protestantism in our country is a majority.

We would conclude this article with one more quotation from a book used in the Roman Catholic schools today and plan to continue this next time. In *Living Our Faith*, by Flynn, Loretto and Simeon, we may read the following: "The question of union or separation of Church and State has perplexed men since the Protestant Revolt. (Note, not Protestant Reformation but Protestant Revolt. J.A.H.) The ideal situation exists when there is perfect union and accord between Church and State, with each supreme in its own field . . . In a Catholic country, when a dispute arises (between Church and State) and settlement is unattainable, the rights of the Church should prevail, since it possesses the higher authority."

It is plain, is it not, that the Roman Catholic Church demands obstinate and intolerant devotion to its faith? And should we be forbidden to be as intolerant and obstinate over against all the false doctrine and idolatry of the Roman

(Continued on page 23)

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

We concluded our preceding article on this subject with the observation that we must always be on our guard against the danger of False Mysticism. Mysticism was particularly effective and grew into prominence at the time of the Reformation on French and German soil, and especially on German soil. This Mysticism flourished, we repeat, particularly on German soil and sought by means of asceticism, meditation and contemplation a fellowship and communion with God which could be experienced without the Holy Scriptures. Especially the Anabaptists exalted the inner or internal word above the external word. Already in 1521 the contrast was made between Scripture and Spirit, and this contrast has become a lasting characteristic of Anabaptism (see H. Bavinck, Vol. I of his *Dogmatics*). Scripture is not the true word of God but merely a testimony and a description of it; the real, true word of God is that which the Holy Spirit speaks in our hearts. The Bible is nothing more than a book of letters; the Bible is Babel, full of confusion; it cannot work faith in our hearts. The Spirit alone can teach us the true word. And when that Spirit instructs us we can do without the Scriptures; it is a temporary remedy but unnecessary for the spiritual man. Some identified this internal word with natural reason and pointed to many contradictions in the Bible. Others simply did not consider the Scriptures necessary. Then, there were those who bluntly declared that the Bible should be abolished and that people should simply live according to nature and spirit. It was argued that religion existed in the world before the Bible made its appearance. Christianity was present before evangelists and apostles wrote about the truth. Religion is not true because evangelists and apostles taught it, but they taught it because it is true. Luther, it was said, has delivered us from the yoke of tradition; who will deliver us from the yoke of the letter?

This conception which would emphasize the testimony of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of men at the cost of the written Word of God, gave tremendous support to Rome. This is surely understandable. Also Rome denies the absolute necessity of Holy Writ. Rome, of course, seeks the ground and continued existence of the Christian religion in the Church Institute, that is, in the infallible pope. All these departures from the Scriptures as the sole rule for all faith and life seek the development and continued existence of the

Church in the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit, but this guidance, according to Rome, centers in the pope. And when Protestantism (as including Anabaptists, etc., in the broad sense of the word) denied the absolute necessity of the Bible, it strengthened Rome's position immeasurably and, in the same measure, weakened itself. This, we repeat, lies in the very nature of the case. For, whereas Protestantism, denying the absolute necessity of Holy Writ, and relying upon the inner operation of the Holy Spirit, lost all ground and based everything upon a man's inner, subjective feeling and therefore had nothing left, Rome at least could point to the infallible pope.

Although the Reformation made a complete break with Rome and maintained the absolute necessity of Holy Writ, it did not deny that the Church as before Moses had its existence in the world long before the Scripture made its appearance. It did not deny that there was no written Word of God during the first twenty-five hundred years of the world's existence. And it also conceded, of course, that the Church of God as in the New Dispensation was established by the apostles long before the appearance of the New Testament Scriptures. Moreover, the Church of God is called into existence in the heathen world through the preaching of the gospel. For ages it is simply true that many people of the Lord lived and died without ever having seen a copy of the Bible. It is, comparatively speaking, not too long ago that the Bible became as plentiful as it is today. Today it is called the best seller. There are several Bibles in every Christian home. But this was not the case before the invention of the printing press. In those days it was a priceless possession in the hands of a very few. Does this, in any sense of the word, imply that the Scriptures are unnecessary, that, whereas so many children of the Lord lived and died without it, its necessity may be questioned? Indeed not! The Word of God surely existed from the beginning of the world and was indeed the seed of the Church. It is true that the Church existed before Moses wrote the Scriptures. But it is just as true that there was a spoken word of God long before there was a written word of God. The Church never lived out of itself, never rested upon itself, but always through and in the Word of God. The Church may be older than the written word; it is surely younger than the spoken word. This also applies to the Church of God in the New Dispensation. It is true that the canon of the New Testament Scriptures were not generally acknowledged and recognized until the middle of the second century. But the Church of God as in the New Dispensation had from its New Testament beginning the Old Testament Scriptures. These congregations were established through the word of the apostles. And at an early time these churches came into possession of the writings of the apostles which also were given to others to be read by them. It lies in the very nature of the case that, as long as the apostles lived and visited the churches, no distinction was made between their spoken and written word; tradition and Scrip-

ture, as it were, were as yet one. Besides, the apostles were Divinely inspired whenever they spoke apostolically, officially, and they themselves gave guidance to the various churches or congregations of God in the New Dispensation. But when that first period of the apostles had passed by and this period of these Divinely led leaders of the churches had passed from the scene and receded more and more into the background, the writings of the apostles grew in significance and they became (these writings) increasingly important and necessary.

Hence, it is surely not true that the Scriptures came forth out of the Church. According to the doctrine of the Word of God inspiration is a special operation of the Holy Spirit, a special gift bestowed upon the prophets and apostles, by which they were able to deliver the pure and unadulterated Word of God to the Church. Scripture, therefore, did not come forth out of the Church but was given to the Church through a special operation of the Holy Spirit in the prophets and apostles. Rome, to a certain extent, will concede this. However, Protestantism maintains that this special and inspiring operation of the Holy Spirit as in the prophets and apostles has come to an end, whereas Rome maintains that this infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit continues in the pope.

True Mysticism, we must understand, does not deny the inner operation and testimony of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people of God. Of course not! But it maintains that all the operation of the Spirit within us is inseparably connected with the written Word of God and is never divorced from it. False Mysticism makes separation between the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, the "inner voice," and the Holy Scriptures.

Now we have already made the observation at the beginning of this article that Mysticism flourished especially in Germany. Writing on "The New Mysticism," Vol. VI, pages 236-242, Philip Schaff writes concerning this movement as follows:

"At the time when the scholastic method was falling into disrepute and the scandals of the Avignon court and the papal schism were shaking men's faith in the foundations of the Church, a stream of pure pietism was watering the regions along the Rhine, from Basel to Cologne, and from Cologne to the North Sea. North of the Alps, voices issuing from convents and from the ranks of the laity called attention to the value of the inner religious life and God's immediate communications to the soul.

To this religious movement has recently been given the name, the Dominican mysticism, on account of the large number of its representatives who belonged to the Dominican order. The older name, German mysticism, which is to be preferred, points to the locality where it manifested itself, and to the language which the mystics for the most part used in their writings. Like the Protestant Reformation, the

movement had its origin on German soil, but, unlike the Reformation, it did not spread beyond Germany and the Lowlands. Its chief centers were Strassburg and Cologne; its leading representatives the speculative Meister Eckart, died 1327, John Tauler, died 1361, Henry Suso, died 1366, John Ruysbroeck, died 1381, Gerrit Groote, died 1384, and Thomas a Kempis, died 1471. The earlier designation for these pietists was Friends of God. The Brothers of the Common Life, the companions and followers of Groote, were of the same type, but developed abiding institutions of practical Christian philanthropy. In localities the Beguines and Beghards also breathed the same devotional and philanthropic spirit. The little book called the *German Theology*, and the *Imitation of Christ*, were among the finest fruits of the movement. Gerson and Nicolas of Cusa also had a strong mystical vein, but they are not to be classed with the German mystics. With them mysticism was an incidental, not the distinguishing quality.

The mystics along the Rhine formed groups which, however, were not bound together by any formal organization. Their only bond was the fellowship of a common religious purpose.

Their religious thought was not always homogeneous in its expression, but all agreed in the serious attempt to secure purity of heart and life through union of the soul with God. Mysticism is a phase of Christian life. It is a devotional habit, in contradistinction to the outward and formal practice of religious rules. It is a religious experience in contrast to a mere intellectual assent to tenets. It is the conscious effort of the soul to apprehend and possess God and Christ, and expresses itself in the words, "I live, and yet not I but Christ liveth in me." It is essentially what is now called in some quarters "personal religion." Perhaps the shortest definition of mysticism is the best. It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. The element of intuition has a large place, and the avenues through which religious experience is reached are self-detachment from the world, self-purgation, prayer and contemplation.

Without disparaging the sacraments or disputing the authority of the Church, the German mystics sought a better way. They laid stress upon the meaning of such passages as "he that believeth in me shall never hunger and he that cometh unto me shall never thirst," "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father" and "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." The word love figures most prominently in their writings. Among the distinctive terms in vogue among them were *Abgeschiedenheit*, Eckart's word for self-detachment from the world and that which is temporal, and *Kehr*, Tauler's oft-used word for conversion. They laid stress upon the new birth, and found in Christ's incarnation a type of the realization of the divine in the soul." Next time, the Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation.

H.V.



## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

#### Article 8 (continued)

As we have seen from the example cited last time, the adherents of mediate regeneration appeal to this article of our *Canons* for support. We said this is not correct. For the *Canons* themselves do not give any such indication in the article. Actually, what the adherents of mediate regeneration do is to appeal to the passage from I Peter 1:23, quoted by the *Canons*, in order to support their view. But regardless now of whether I Peter 1:23 supports their view, the *Canons* certainly say nothing about it. The mere fact that the *Canons* quote the text from I Peter is no proof whatsoever that they teach a mediate regeneration. And as far as the question of mediate or immediate regeneration is concerned, the *Canons* offer no interpretation of the text. The fathers only cite this text to show the absurdity of a *repeated* regeneration. In fact, in so far as they indicate anything at all, we may say that the *Canons* speak here not of regeneration as a whole, including regeneration in its broadest sense, but of regeneration in the narrower sense of the word.

We may, however, inquire whether the passage in I Peter 1 teaches an immediate or a mediate regeneration. And then we must be careful to read and interpret this passage correctly, and not simply read it to fit a certain view. For the apostle uses some rather precise language here in speaking of regeneration.

Those who hold to mediate regeneration emphasize that the text teaches clearly that regeneration takes place *through the living and abiding Word of God*, and that in verse 25 the apostle tells us that this is the same Word that is preached unto them. And so they conclude that regeneration is through the preaching of the Word. But this is incorrect. In the first place, this interpretation makes the mistake of simply identifying the living and abiding Word of God and the proclamation of that Word. The apostle does not do this. On the contrary, in the passage he very plainly mentions these as two different things. First of all, he says that we are born again through the living and abiding Word of God. And then he adds a second truth, namely: this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you. These are two

distinct facts, therefore. And when the apostle Peter tells us that regeneration takes place through the living Word itself, it simply will not do to replace this living Word by the preaching of the gospel. In the second place, this interpretation makes the mistake of ignoring the prepositions "out of" and "through." We are born again *out of* incorruptible seed *through* the living and abiding Word of God. Here again are two distinct facts. And it will not do to read the text as though "out of incorruptible seed" and "through the living and abiding Word of God" mean the same thing, and that then this in turn means the same as "through the preaching of the gospel." This is precisely the mistake made by the Rev. Bos in his explanation cited last time. He writes: "Now the Son is never called 'the word of God,' only the Word. And that Son can also not be called 'the seed of God,' as that seed appears here. *The seed of God and the word of God and 'the word of the Lord' is the preached word of the Gospel* (italics supplied). Here then is indeed proof that the preached word, the word of the Gospel, is here considered as the seed of regeneration . . ." Now just apply this bit of exegesis to the text under consideration, and substitute "the preached word of the Gospel" for the terms mentioned. You get this nonsense: "Being born again not out of the corruptible, but out of the incorruptible preached word of the Gospel through the preached word of the Gospel, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the preached word of the Gospel endureth for ever. And this is the preached word of the Gospel which by the gospel is preached unto you." It is very evident, therefore, that this interpretation leads to absurdity. Certainly the holy apostle did not intend this at all. Hence, two things must be established from the outset: 1) "Out of incorruptible seed" does not mean the same as "through the living and abiding Word of God." 2) "The living and abiding Word of God" is not simply the same as the "preaching of the gospel." If we keep these two facts in view, we will see already that the text does not simply teach a mediate regeneration.

But what then?

In the first place, let us keep in mind that in these verses the apostle is evidently describing the whole of regeneration. He is not speaking, as the *Canons* do, only of regeneration in the narrower sense of the word, but of regeneration also in its wider sense, as including the unfolding and development of the new life in the consciousness of the believer. This is evident not only from the terms "out of" and "through," but also from the context in vs. 22. There the apostle admonishes the church: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." And then he goes right on in vs. 23: "Being born again . . ." The whole of regeneration is therefore meant.

And in that whole process the apostle makes certain precise and careful distinctions, as is plain from his terminology.

Hence, in the second place, we may notice that the apostle distinguishes regeneration in its narrower sense as the implanting of the seed of regeneration, the principle of the new life, in our hearts. There is a seed, an incorruptible seed, implanted within us; and *out of that seed* we are born again. This is regeneration in the deepest and narrowest sense of the word, namely, that saving act of the Triune God whereby He takes hold of the elect and in himself dead sinner through the Spirit of Christ, translates him in the very depth of his existence, and infuses into him the principle of the life which is in Christ Jesus, thus translating him in principle out of death into life and placing him in abiding communion with the body of Christ. This is exclusively a work of the Triune God; it takes place in the very depth of a man's existence, not in his consciousness as such; and it precedes all mediate work of God in us. It is the implanting of the seed of the new life as it is not yet sprouted into the consciousness of the sinner. It is an immediate work of God, through the Holy Spirit in our hearts, taking place in us without us.

In the third place, we may note that this incorruptible seed of regeneration is then under the influence of the living and abiding Word of God. For we are born again out of incorruptible seed *through the living and abiding Word of God*. The principle of the new life, implanted in the depths of a man's being by the Holy Spirit directly and immediately, sprouts and develops into a conscious and active life of regeneration through the living and abiding Word of God. This is regeneration in the broader sense. And this is the second distinction which the apostle Peter makes in the passage under consideration. We must remember, however, that even this is not the preached Word as such. The preached Word is in itself not living. And it is not abiding. The living and abiding Word of God is the Word which God speaks through Christ. You have here therefore the idea of the efficacious calling. To be sure, that efficacious calling is preached. But you must make a distinction between the living and abiding Word of God as such and that Word as it is preached. That Word is living because it is the Word of God through Christ. God is life, and Christ is the life; and therefore the Word of God is living. Living it is, too, because through that Word God quickens, makes alive. It quickens the seed of regeneration into conscious activity. And that Word is also abiding, everlasting. Otherwise regeneration could not be abiding. Regeneration is not implanted into the heart and then left to itself. And it is not once quickened by the efficacious calling and then neglected. Then it would never abide. God must continue to speak His regenerating Word. Just as in providence God continues to speak the Word which He once spoke creatively, so in the efficacious calling God through Christ continues to speak His Word that He once spoke recreatively. And that is why regenera-

tion abides, and that too, in distinction from all flesh, which is as the grass that withereth.

And finally, the apostle distinguishes also the preaching of that Word. The living and abiding Word of God is preached. Otherwise we would have and could have no contact with it here on earth. We do not lay hold on the Word of God mystically. But the reception of the Word of God takes place through our understanding, through our mind, through our intellect. And when our natural intellect is under the power of regeneration through the Word, then that Word as it is preached is apprehended by us spiritually, so that we can hear it and be saved. Mark you well, the Word is preached! It is proclaimed officially by the church in the service of the living Word of Christ. And when through that preaching the saints come into contact with the living and abiding Word of God, then the seed of regeneration sprouts and develops into conscious activity.

To sum up, therefore, there are three factors or elements which come to the fore in this passage:

- 1) There is our regeneration in the narrowest sense of the word, the implanting of the principle, the seed, of the new life. This is direct and immediate. The Holy Spirit performs this in the depth of our being, apart from our consciousness. *Out of this seed* we are born again.
- 2) There is the living and abiding Word of God, or the efficacious calling, through which the seed of regeneration is quickened into conscious activity. This is regeneration in the broader sense. *Through the living and abiding Word of God* we are born again out of incorruptible seed.
- 3) There is the preaching of that Word, which lends contents to the calling for us and through which we apprehend the living and abiding Word. The Word is by the gospel preached unto you.

But that regeneration in its narrowest sense is immediate. It is in us without our aid. And just as surely as its being in us is without our aid, so surely also it cannot be lost, and need never be repeated. It is an incorruptible seed, which cannot be influenced by any power except the living and abiding Word of God.

H.C.H.

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As one lays a garment by,  
Thou wilt change the starry sky  
Like a vesture worn and old,  
But Thy years shall ne'er be told.  
Thou wilt make Thy servants' race  
Ever live before Thy face,  
And forever at Thy side  
Children's children shall abide.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Mission Order

Art. 51, D.K.O.

In our last installment, we learned that Article 51 of the Church Order deals with the subject of missions as regulated by a synodical mission order. More particularly, therefore, with denominational mission work although not altogether excluding the endeavors of the individual churches. We observed that mission work by our churches is conducted through our Mission Board that is responsible to our Synod and that works cooperatively with the consistory of the calling church. We also noted that our Mission Board is not empowered to call a missionary since that is the sole prerogative of the church as institute. This practice, although not always agreed upon, has been followed by our churches from the beginning of our existence. Concerning the history of this question we shall write presently but first we must inject a parenthetical thought.

(It is somewhat of a temptation to digress for a little while from matters that concern our Church Order directly and devote the space of this rubric to a series of articles on the principles, methods and practices of missions and other related questions. Three main reasons motivate this desire. First of all, we believe this would be of interest and benefit to our people. Secondly, we feel there is a definite need for this and especially so because of the multifarious misconceptions regarding missions that are currently being propagated in many religious periodicals. A voice that will witness of the truth concerning the calling of the church in this regard is both desired and needed. Finally, we have very little in our *Standard Bearer* with regard to this subject. Having just recently compiled the index for the last volume of our magazine, I find the articles referring to missions to be very scarce. May we then suggest at least that since this material is really foreign to our Church Order rubric, our missionary might perhaps devote himself to this task and in so doing this could nicely be combined with periodic reports of our current mission activity.)

To return to the question whether it is proper for a synod or classis to call and send out a missionary, we learn that this matter was considered already as early as 1896 by the Synod of Middelburg. From a series of articles written in *The Banner* a number of years ago by J. D. De Korne, we are informed that the Synod of Middelburg defined foreign mission principles but that it was in 1902 at the Synod of Arnhem that these principles were embodied in a mission order. We quote here the following six principles of that mission order:

"1. The purpose of all missionary effort is the glorification

of God." Rev. De Korne adds that, "This is fundamental. Since it was not disputed it is seldom mentioned in later discussions."

"2. Who must send? According to Matthew 28:19 and Acts 13:1ff., missions is the task of the church, not of the church as denomination, but of the local congregation, although in the working out of missionary activity denominational ties must be recognized.

"3. Who must go? Only office bearers of the church can be sent as missionaries. Auxiliary services can be rendered by those who do not hold office in the church, but in the exercise of all official functions only the ordained missionary can officiate.

"4. To whom must missionaries be sent? To all creatures, but the colonial possessions of the Netherlands are the special responsibility of this country.

"5. How must missions be done? Force is excluded. We must convince men of the truth, bring them to faith, and those who reveal themselves as believers must be gathered in churches. There is such a thing as preparatory grace. Since the Christian religion is bound to the Holy Scriptures, teaching men to read is one of the appointed means of preparation. Medical help is also preparatory. But remember that this preparation and these auxiliary methods are not missions. Schools and hospitals do not flow forth from the offices of the church, and these preparatory and auxiliary means may not be identified with the work of church officers. There is a warning against failing to distinguish between the essence of Christianity and the western form of civilization; rendering all services free; and against persisting in missionary endeavor in places where no one comes to confession of faith." This section contains a number of other valuable hints from which our church can profit in its further study of missionary methods.

"6. Missionary Relationships. It is declared that the church which carries on mission work has necessary relationships with the government, with other churches, with other mission stations, and with churches of sound confession in the land where the work is done."

We do not aim to evaluate these principles nor are we concerned with their validity. At present we are interested only in the second of these principles which deals with the matter of sending out the missionary and involves related questions, such as, his call, field of labor, directives pertaining to his work, etc. In discussing this question in his articles, Rev. De Korne distinguishes between what he calls "centralization" versus "decentralization." The former he then defines as "the theory of missionary activity which stresses the control and supervision of mission work by the synod and agencies appointed by the synod" while decentralization refers to the "theory of missionary activity which places all emphasis on the autonomy and the authority of the local con-

gregation." Apart from our dislike of the use of the term "*decentralization*," this distinction is perhaps workable to at least make plain the issue that is involved here. We would prefer to speak of two theories of mission activity that emphasize the centralization of authority on two different levels. The one stresses the local consistory and the other the **broad**er gatherings of the churches. Although it is true that no one pleads for the extreme feature of either view which would men that mission activity would be *completely controlled* by either the consistory or the synod, our churches in both theory and practice have favored the "decentralization" view which was also the original position taken by the Synod of Middelburg in 1896.

In the Netherlands, the Synod of Arnhem in 1902 drew up an expression adopting in effect the decentralization position in that it insisted that calling churches, not classes or synod, are the official bodies which send out missionaries. The position of this synod was that calling churches pay not only the salaries of their missionaries but all expenses of the mission post. The same synod, however, made certain concessions to the position of centralization in that it required that synod determine the field, assign posts to the calling churches, determine the requirements of the men who can be called, and required that two synodical deputies for missions must be present at their examination. Synodical deputies also have a voice in determining the qualifications of native workers on the mission field, control the training schools on the field, have authority to subsidize medical work at the posts of individual calling churches, and determine which liturgical documents and Bible translations shall be used. Prof. J. H. Bavinck says that this mission order of 1902 has remained the fundamental position of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands on missions. There have been some changes but none of them is major.

From the same articles referred to above, we learn that this question has also had a stormy history in the Reformed churches of our country, particularly our mother church. In 1898 the first Mission Order was adopted. It expressed in Article 1 that, "In the execution of her decisions regarding heathen missions, synod makes use of a Board for heathen missions. The Board is subject to synod." Article 28 states that, "Discipline over doctrine and life of missionaries and missionary helpers must be exercised by the consistory to which they belong." Article 32 provides that, "When a minister is needed for mission service the Board shall request a classis to call and send out that person, but the further regulation of his work and his financial support was to be left entirely to the Board." Thus 1896 leaned toward the principle of centralization. In 1902 a further step was taken and the Board was authorized to ordain missionaries.

In 1906 these principles were challenged. Two Classes (Classis Iowa and Classis Hudson) proposed that missionaries should not be sent out by committees, but by con-

sistories, classes, or synod. The synod appointed a committee to draw up a Mission Order based on Biblical principles. The report of this committee was submitted two years later and gave rise to a spirited discussion of the question whether missionaries can be called only by local consistories or whether they can be called also by groups of consistories, by classes, or by synod. The synod then took the position that, "Since the broader judicatories of our churches as they meet in classis and synod form a legal representation of these churches, it follows that not only may separate consistories meeting separately call a minister of the Word and install him in office, but that also each classis and synod in combined session may issue calls in cases where a minister of the Word is needed in general service."

This decision of the synod aroused a vigorous protest on the following grounds:

"a. The decision leads to the introduction of general offices which the Scriptures do not recognize after the offices of apostles and evangelists were discontinued.

"b. In calls to such offices the office-bearers will have to separate themselves from the congregation with which the primordial right to extend calls rests, as is evident from Acts 1:23, 6:2-6, 13:1-3, II Corinthians 8:19, and from Article XXXI of the Netherlands Confession of Faith, Article IV and V of the Church Order of Dort, and from the formula for the installation of office-bearers.

"c. The Church Order does not recognize such general offices, makes no provision for the ecclesiastical position of office-bearers as called, with the result that these, although they are ministers of the Word, cannot by virtue of their office be members of any consistory.

"d. Because this decision inevitably leads us into the arms of collegialism which threatens us from every side."

In spite of this, synod decided to have a committee draw up a Mission Order consistent with the principle adopted. And this decision aroused still more controversy over the question.

(to be continued)

G.V.d.B.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Eunice Society of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids wishes to express its sincere sympathy to two of our members, Miss S. Wierenga and Mrs. D. Pastoor, in the loss of their sister and mother-in-law

MRS. G. PASTOOR

May our God comfort the bereaved family and give them peace.

Mrs. D. Jonker, President

Mrs. G. Spruyt, Secretary

## ALL AROUND US

### *Roman Catholic Influence In Government*

With the democratic nomination for president of the United States going to a Roman Catholic, there is considerable discussion going on among church leaders as well as leaders in the publishing field in general about the advisability of a Roman Catholic in the White House. Many churches have already taken a stand against this, especially the churches in the South. That the Romish Church is still interested in world domination is evident from the following quote by a Catholic named J. J. Connor who is chairman of the Catholic Committee for Historical Truth:

"We now have more than 100 Catholics in Congress, 18 or 20 Catholic governors and thousands of Catholics in our state legislatures. If these Catholics would forget the by now meaningless designation of 'Republican' and 'Democrat' and work together, keeping in mind the social and economic doctrines set out through the generations by the Church since at least the days of St. Thomas Aquinas, and if we elect a Catholic as president to take his place at the head of the Army of God, we cannot only march triumphant against the scourge of Communism but we can bring a true and lasting peace to the entire world and make the United States a Catholic country in a real sense, and the greatest nation of all time. We are at a crossroad now. We can take the road to destruction and damnation, or we can take the road to God and glory. And we must do it at the ballot box."

### *Missionary Labor In Africa*

With the strong surge of nationalism in Africa bringing new nations to independence almost every month, there is a need forced upon many churches to re-examine their mission endeavors in the "dark Continent." Articles are appearing with regularity in many papers about the difficulties of mission work and the hazards of missionaries. Some time ago an interesting article appeared in *Christianity Today* in which the threat to mission work by the rise of nationalism was vividly discussed. It seems as if nations who attain independence from so-called "colonial powers" soon turn against the church. This article pointed out that the churches which had been established and the missionaries who were working in these fields were threatened constantly and often forced to flee. Many seeming converts turned back again to paganism with all its strange and often repulsive rituals and rites once the nation was freed from the rule of another country. The leaders of these new nations were often not favorably inclined to the work of missions, and harassed those who carried on such work. The result is that the whole mission enterprise in Africa stands in some danger of coming to an end. This was especially true recently in the Congo.

Now there is a plea on the part of some leaders for mis-

sionaries to return. Under the title, "Re-entering Congo," in the August 29 issue of *Christianity Today*, there appears the following brief notice:

"As of the middle of August, Protestant missionaries who had evacuated the strife-torn Congo were slowly returning, urged on by appeals such as one received by Dr. C. Darby Fulton, executive secretary of the Presbyterian U. S. Board of World Missions. The letter to Fulton from Congolese Christians cited, in halting English, the 'necessity' of having the missionaries return.

"'We ask you to get them back in Congo immediately,' the letter said.

"During his visit to North America this summer, Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba said that missionaries had done much for the 'moral and intellectual upbringing' of his people.

"'We want the missionaries to remain,' he said. 'For years it was only the missions who looked after the Congolese. We ask them to continue their help.'

"The Swiss Catholic press agency KIPA said, however, that it had secured a copy of a 'secret instructions' document issued to militants of the Congolese National Movement singling out Christian missionaries as the 'greatest enemy' of the people. The document apparently was issued before the proclamation of independence. Lumumba was the head of the Congolese National Movement."

This whole matter of mission endeavor in Africa brings up some interesting questions. It certainly is a fact that the gospel has never had the influence in Africa that it had in nations such as Europe and America. This is not to say that the Lord does not have His own elect in Africa as well as other nations, for the church shall be gathered and is gathered from every nation and tribe and tongue. Nor does this mean that all that goes under the name of mission work today is indeed the progress of the gospel in the gathering of the church. Much, and perhaps most, of what is called mission endeavor cannot possibly have any positive fruit. For many people who claim to preach the gospel do not preach it at all, but preach a perversion of the gospel that the Lord will not and does not use to gather His church.

But, apart from these questions, it remains a fact that the continent of Africa as well as the nations of Asia are never nations that come under the influence of the gospel. The gospel is predominantly limited to the nations of the West. And such is also undoubtedly the purpose of God. The progress of the gospel is always westward from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to Asia Minor and Europe, and finally to America. The covenant lines run mainly through the nations that inhabit the western part of the globe. And always with the gospel there is also a certain civilizing power and influence so that the main stream of culture is to be found mainly in the West.

This is not only evident from history, but is also the teaching of Scripture. It is perhaps entirely in harmony with Scripture to say that these nations which come under the

influence of the preaching of the gospel and are "Christianized" are also the nations that become Anti-christian — i.e., the very center of the power of the Anti-christ. While at the same time, the nations that do not come under the influence of the gospel as completely as the Western nations become the nations on the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog. While these nations also are bitterly opposed to the church and to the truth of the Word of God, they remain for the most part in Paganism. They are not part of the nations that are called "Christian," using the term in its broadest sense. They remain for the most part under the influence of their pagan religions. They are the nations that are forced to give their power to the beast for a season; but they are also the nations that never will have anything to do with what is called Christianity. They are atheistic and pagan to the core and remain so to the end of time. This seems to be evident also from history which is recently being made in the Congo. Part of what is happening there may be the result of a perpetual hatred of these nations against all that goes under the name of Christian.

These same nations are the ones that eventually turn against Anti-christ and bring about the final battle which shall come at the end of the ages. It is, however, interesting that the basic reason why these nations turn against Anti-christ is no doubt that they still consider the Anti-christian kingdom to be the citadel of Christianity, **not realizing in the darkness of their paganism that what was once Christian has become in time Anti-christian.**

It is difficult if not impossible to predict what part these nations will play in detail in our contemporary history. But the believer, who looks at history as being one of the signs of the return of his Lord, sees these events as instructive and comforting, for they must bring with them the final redemption of the church when Jesus shall appear again.

### *Religious Broadcasting*

As some of our readers know, there has been an attempt in recent years made by the National Council of Churches to gain control of all religious broadcasting in our country. This NCC favors a policy of bloc allocations of free time to major religious groups instead of individual sales to religious broadcasters. This means also, of course, that the NCC will have a great deal to say about what religious organizations are granted these free blocs of time to broadcast.

Under the heading "Protestant Broadcasting Faces More Cutbacks," *Christianity Today* has the following:

"Religious radio appears to be in for even harder times.

"New curtailments on paid religious broadcasts go into effect this fall, forcing more programs off the air. Hundreds of big stations now refuse to sell time for religious programs.

"Latest to announce a cutback is the American Broadcasting Company radio network, which has the nation's second largest chain of station affiliates. ABC has dropped

four of its eight paid religious programs, including the Oral Roberts broadcast.

"Network spokesmen say that failure of local stations to air the programs is responsible for the move, which follows a creeping trend toward general elimination of *paid* religious broadcasting. The trend runs in accord with National Council of Churches policy favoring bloc allocations of *free* time to major religious groups instead of individual sales to religious broadcasters. Evangelicals generally oppose such an either-or arrangement, but radio stations have asserted a right to refuse to sell time. Even though the broadcasting industry is federally-regulated, no religious broadcaster has thus far been able to prove his legal right to radio time.

"A strong argument against paid religious broadcasting revolves on the poor quality of some programs which have been aired under such an arrangement. Once the time is sold, stations have no control over amateur producers who may alienate an audience.

"Paying broadcasters will counter with the assertion that the free time concept does not guarantee quality programming inasmuch as there is no agreement on what constitutes good religious radio.

"Another consideration: size of audience is not in itself a fair measure of religious program effectiveness.

"Faced with the loss of radio time on commercial stations, some Christian groups are looking to stations all their own . . . ."

In connection with this same subject, a stinging criticism of religious broadcasting is made by a certain Charles Brackbill, Jr., executive director of radio and television for the New Jersey Council of Churches. The following is a quoted summary and partial quotation of his views.

"'It is a picture of confusion, waste, out-dated and incredibly dull programming,' he says, charging that individual producers follow patterns that seem right in their own eyes and fail to cooperate with other broadcasters.

"Brackbill asserts that the Protestant ministry has failed to keep pace with developments in radio.

"'Preachers could always preach,' he declares, 'and they have been doing it on radio since the first religious broadcast. All during radio's heyday of great variety productions, they preached. And now that radio has its strength back, religious broadcasters still preach. They haven't moved backward, they just have not moved.'

"Brackbill suggests that Protestant broadcasters should cooperate if only because they have in common so many problems, such as: (1) ineffective programming, (2) schedule extremities ('And it's our own fault . . . The public interest, convenience and necessity clause of the Communications Act will not protect our poor programming forever'), (3) mercenary motive, ('If Congressional committee ever investigates the deceit and chicanery of some religious broadcasting, there will be a bigger scandal than that of the recent payola exposures'), and (4) denominational pride ('We ought to decide whether we are selling individual automobile brands or transportation').

"'Too much money is being spent to save the lost by programs which the lost never listen to,' according to Brackbill. 'Often the whole program is pitched to the beloved in Christ and then to O sinners in the last thirty seconds. The Christian friends must never stop praying



for God to bless the program in its soul winning, or to send in the money on the chance that a lost one will tune in."

In this same article, Brackbill proposes that all the churches get together to coordinate their broadcasting aims, and try to decide what can be done in order to make religious broadcasting more effective.

This whole matter of religious broadcasting is of no little importance to our churches who are constantly expanding their work in this field. Especially since we now have started a foreign broadcast, developments ought to be closely watched.

Although Brackbill is undoubtedly in favor of some control by the NCC of all religious broadcasting, some of his criticisms are to the point. One who has heard occasionally many of the programs on the air sponsored by every type of religious group has felt the same way that he does.

Nevertheless, the deepest evil of modern religious broadcasting is that the gospel is not preached. This will never be admitted, but it is the deepest cause of the gross misuse of religious radio ministry. Radio has become another means of propagating false religion, and has been prostituted in the service of that which is not the gospel.

The day is no doubt coming that the NCC will gain control of religious broadcasting, and will have its say about what programs will be aired. And we can be sure that once this happens, the Reformed Witness Hour will not be exempt from the criticism of the NCC. The time is no doubt coming when it will be impossible for us to bring our truth over the radio, and to use radio time as a means of witness. Our program, with its emphasis on the truth, will never be tolerated by a liberal organization such as the NCC.

Just recently, while a sub-committee of the Mission Committee was inquiring into the matter of foreign broadcasting, it became evident that there are already some stations who are not interested in our program. There were responses which we received from several stations which would not consider giving us radio time. And no doubt this general attitude will increase.

H. Hanko

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Missionary Notes

At the time of this writing (September 9) the undersigned and his wife are once more in an apartment in Pella, Iowa, situated at 1218 North Main. We arrived here on Saturday, September 3, after a very hot trip, made the more wearying due to the pre-Labor Day traffic on the highways. Now the hot weather of late summer has given way for the cooler air of early fall, and, we believe, that beautiful autumn days will come according to the word of God to Noah.

We look back upon the summer that has passed with its sorrows and joys. Summer in these parts is certainly not the time for lectures, visits or any concerted effort. The climate here is too hot and humid during the summer, and farmers are busy and others are off on vacations, etc. Hence, we can only relate that we preached here in Pella for four Sundays, two during June and one in July and one in August.

It may interest our readers to know that the undersigned preached, catechized, taught Sunday School, led Consistory meetings and gave a Fourth of July address in our South Dakota churches during the month of July. (While in South Dakota we were called to Michigan to the funeral of our dear niece, Agalene Van Baren.) On the Fourth of July the undersigned spoke on "Stewardship In A Democratic Society." It was a good day, all in all. During the month of July we also gave a lecture in Randolph, Wisconsin on the subject, "God's Unchangeable Marriage Ordinance." Of course, even during the summer months, and that, too, in spite of much traveling, copy had to be supplied for *The Standard Bearer*.

Then there were the very busy weeks, called our "vacation." We had the privilege (as had many of our ministers on their vacation) to preach seven times in three weeks, in Creston, Grand Haven and in First Church. There was the ever interesting and joyful Y. P. Convention to attend, with its instructive and timely speeches, its delicious banquet meal, meeting old friends and colleagues, and seeing those who were but children a few years ago also at the convention as young men and women. It seems a long while ago since the first Convention, held at South Holland, Illinois, whither we drove from Pella, Iowa, honored as the first and only speaker at that occasion. One says then: *Tempus fugit!*

Also we might attend and enjoy the outing at Douglas-Walker Park near Byron Center to remember the great goodness upon God's servant, Rev. H. Hoeksema, at the occasion of the forty-fifth year of his ministry. How good it is to meet with friends and brethren.

If I am permitted to say just something of a more domestic nature: we might also officiate and be present in First Church at the occasion of the marriage of one of our daughters, Garretta, to Thomas Newhof. One sees his children marry and leave the paternal home with mingled feelings of joy and pain. Who said that parting was sweet sorrow?

I must not forget to relate that during this summer we also were present to witness the deliberations of the Synod of our churches. It was so very heartening for the undersigned and Mrs. Lubbers that Synod received these two churches, Forbes and Isabel, without a dissenting vote. May these churches press forward in faith and confidence and obedience to Christ's will, expressing their unity in faith and life with all our churches.

However, there was one meeting which was not held, and which I could not attend. I felt and feel that such a

meeting should have been held. I have reference to a meeting which should be called "Mission Day." How wonderful it would be for our people and also for the Home Missionary, should the Consistory of the calling church and the Mission Committee arrange a program with appropriate speeches and song. I think of a very wonderful address which I heard many years ago on a Mission Fest. It was on the subject, "Election and Mission." I shall never forget the three points of the speaker. They were: 1. Election the basis of Mission. 2. Election the directive of Mission. 3. Election the guarantee of fruits of Mission. Points which are well to reflect upon. What a boon to be sent off by the prayers of the calling church, who have the needs of the Mission bound upon their hearts, heeding Paul's exhortation: "withal praying for us, that God would open the door of utterance to speak the Mystery of Christ . . . that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." Col. 4:3, 4.

At the present time we are planning and preparing a few lectures to be given in these parts again. Will there be audiences? We remember: where two or three are gathered! The Lord knows and we wait for Him! And: we are always a sweet savor unto God, both to them that perish and to them that are saved. May the Lord of the harvest give the increase upon our labors.

G.L.

### Contribution On The Hymn Question

Dear Rev. H. C. Hoeksema:

I wish you God's richest blessing upon your work and not only you, but all our members, ministers, consistories, classes and synod. Shall we, however, experience that blessing, we must walk in His ways. The Word of God says that we shall not turn to the left nor to the right and in another place it says that we shall not add to nor take away from that Word. All we need is the Word of God. In our prayers! In our preaching! Also in our singing!

Then if we look at all the so-called churches that begin with thinking that they can express the truth better in song than the Holy Spirit does in the Word, where then are they? They should be a good example unto us that we should not start with this. The devil knows that if we start to play with that we are on his side.

Then they start to say, "But must we then condemn all hymns? I know that there are a lot of good hymns." This is the same as with books. Surely there are a lot of good books, but it is just like brother Huiskens wrote in *The Standard Bearer* that we would not think of reading those good books or sing those good songs on the Sabbath Day in our worship services.

All that we need and can trust is the inspired Word of God. If we sing of the birth, the work, the death and the

resurrection and the ascension into heaven of our Lord, we surely cannot do that with a hymn. Then we need the Word of God, namely, the Psalms.

And what an unrest all this brings into the church. Brother Huiskens surely had a good example when he writes that like a flock of sheep that have heard the bark of a wolf they will cling together. We should thank the Lord for that. That is surely still a sign of life.

Then you say, Rev. Hoeksema, that what brother Huiskens says about the consistory of First Church does not fit. Well, he surely could not blame the consistories of South Holland and Oak Lawn. He must surely use your consistory as an example and then I would say, "Shame on a consistory that even desires or suggests bringing hymns into our churches."

Oak Lawn, Ill.

Mr. R. Rooda

### Reply To Brother Rooda

Thank you, brother, for the interest and concern you show in your contribution.

In reply, the following:

1. Brother Rooda's main contention seems to be that in our church music we must have nothing but the inspired Word of God, namely, the Psalms. In fact, this thought takes up the biggest part of his contribution. I believe that this is a position which cannot be maintained, which Mr. Rooda does not really maintain, and which our churches do not maintain. It is neither the language nor the intent of our Church Order. This is plain:

a. From the fact that Article 69 speaks of much more than the Psalms. The Twelve Articles of Faith, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer are not the inspired Word of God. And therefore, if by Psalms the article means the inspired Word of God, and intends that only this inspired Word of God may be sung in the church, the article is self-contradictory.

b. From the fact, which we all can see, that we *do not have* and *do not sing* the inspired Word of God in our Psalter or in our Dutch Psalms. This is a catchy phrase, "the inspired Word of God." And it has been appealed to more often in support of psalm-singing. And I would certainly say that if it were a question of the inspired Word of God over against mere human compositions, we would have to choose for the former as a matter of principle. But that is not the case. In both our English and Dutch psalters we do not have the inspired Word of God, but *versifications based on the Word of God*. All these versifications involve *interpretation*. Many of these versifications are rather far from the text of Scripture. And some of them can even be called erroneous. Let me give a couple examples. Number 7 of our Psalter is:

1. "On the good and faithful God has set His love;  
When they call He sends them Blessings from above.  
Stand in awe, and sin not, Bid your heart be still;  
Through the silent watches Think upon His will."

This is a versification of: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."

A comparison will show that there is only one little part of these two verses which appears literally in the versification, namely: "Stand in awe, and sin not." The rest is versification and interpretation.

Or think of verse 2 of Number 7:

"Lay upon God's altar Good and loving deeds,  
And in all things trust Him To supply your needs.  
Anxious and despairing, Many walk in night;  
But to those that fear Him God will send His light."

This is a versification of: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Inspired Scripture? The latter is; the former is far from it!

Or in the Dutch compare that old and beautiful favorite, which I too love, 89:8, "Gij toch, Gij zijt hun roem, de kracht van hunne kracht . . ." Compare this with Scripture. It is supposed to be a versification of Psalm 89:18 and 19: "Want Gij zijt de heerlijkheid hunner sterkte, en door uw welbehagen zal onze hoorn verhoogd worden. Want ons schild van den Heere, en onze koning is van den Heilige Israels." A beautiful versification? O yes, and it expresses the faith of the church. But inspired Scripture? Absolutely not; merely a versification, involving interpretation.

2. If the former is true — and it is — then there can be no *principal* objection to other versifications of Scripture, whether Old or New Testament, and to hymns in that sense. And no one need shame himself for thinking of it.

3. But I repeat: let one of the elders of the First Consistory write about the meaning and intent of their overture. I did not hear the wolf bark!

H.C.H.

### IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 12)

Catholic Church? May we not be faithful to the truth without being called bigots? O, that we would be as firm in our convictions and stand for them no matter what the financial, political and economic consequences might be. Give us the freedom of such "bigotry." Then we know that we are pleasing in God's sight.

J.A.H.

### Office-Bearers' Conference

Will be held October 4 at 8 o'clock in Hudsonville  
Protestant Reformed Church

Rev. C. Hanko will be the speaker.

Topic: "Must the Approval of Classis Be Obtained for the Erasure of a Baptized Member?"

All present and former office-bearers are urged to attend.

J. DOCTER, *Secretary*

### Announcement

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

Consistories will please consider this an official announcement and accordingly appoint delegates to attend this meeting.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On October 4, 1960, the Lord willing, our dear parents,

MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH OOMKES

hope to commemorate their 25th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our God Who has given them to us, and that He may continue to bless them as He has done in the past is the prayer of their grateful children.

Mr. and Mrs. William John Oomkes  
Karlene Anne Oomkes  
Ruth Ilene Oomkes  
and 1 grandchild

### THE GOD OF PROVIDENCE AND GRACE

Let all the earth Jehovah fear,  
Let all that dwell both far and near  
In awe before Him stand;  
For lo, He spake and it was done,  
And all with sovereign power begun  
Stood fast at His command.

He makes the nations' counsels vain,  
The plans the peoples would maintain  
Are thwarted by His hand;  
Jehovah's counsel stands secure,  
His purposes of heart endure,  
For evermore they stand.

Psalm 33:1, 2

**NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES***"All the saints salute thee . . ." PHIL. 4:21*

Sept. 20, 1960

Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church, received the call from Grand Haven; Rev. G. Lubbers was also on that trio, the third member being Rev. G. Van Baren, and not Rev. R. C. Harbach, as reported last time.

From a trio which included Rev. R. C. Harbach and Rev. M. Schipper, Randolph's congregation called Rev. A. Mulder, of Kalamazoo.

Rev. C. Hanko, of First Church, declined the call extended him from the Dakota churches, Isabel and Forbes.

Doon's congregation has received the long awaited new edition of the Psalters ordered some time ago. Their new project is already under way, that of purchasing new Bibles for the auditorium and for society use in the church parlors. And, it was from Doon that we learned that Rev. B. Woudenberg was scheduled to speak at the annual meeting of the Society for Protestant Reformed Action Committee.

The Sunday School Teachers' Mass Meeting was held Sept. 16 in Southwest Church. Thus, this Kingdom work among the children of the covenant is again off to a fresh start.

Holland's congregation held an Inspirational meeting Monday, Sept. 12. This is an annual meeting for the preparation for the coming society season. An inspirational address and an appropriate program was planned.

The annual family visitations by our consistories are well under way in most churches, some have already been completed, thus satisfying the tenth question asked by the Church Visitors.

The Office Bearers' Conference will be held at our Hudsonville Church, Oct. 4. Rev. C. Hanko, of First Church, is scheduled to speak on the question, "Must the approval of Classis be obtained for the censure of a baptized member?"

How very familiar is the appeal found in Hope's bulletin reminding the members of the congregation of a second meeting of a society, the first having been poorly attended, this time that of the Choral Society which needs more male voices. We suppose it to be the lethargic result of the summer vacation when spiritual exercises have been suspended. Are we not all, more or less, guilty of such torpor? This same indication of indifference recently resulted in a form letter handed out at a church service in First Church. The letter was from the Men's Society, and was an urgent address to the men of the congregation who could, but did not, attend the first meeting of the society.

Rev. C. Hanko spent eight days in Ferguson Hospital, in Grand Rapids, submitting to corrective surgery. During his two week absence from his pulpit Rev. H. Hoeksema preached twice each Sunday.

Loveland's bulletin quoted a poem entitled, "Remember Me," which was a prayer for God's remembering the fallen sinner by showing him the Way of the Cross. What was so unique about that quotation was that it was printed in the German language! And, a telegram directed to Rev. H. Hoeksema was printed in Loveland's bulletin above the signature of the clerk, Wm. A. Griess, as follows: "Whereas distance prohibits a delegation from our midst, the consistory has mandated me to extend ours and the congregation's heartiest congratulations to you on your forty-fifth anniversary in the ministry. May the Lord sustain you further to the fulness of his counsel for you here, and bless our churches through your further labors as He has done in the past."

*Contribution* — The Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour is happy to announce that Rev. H. Hanko, pastor of the Hope Prot. Ref. Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., will be the guest speaker for the month of October. He has taken his texts from the First Epistle of Peter. His topics will be, "Begotten Unto A Lively Hope," "Hope's Apology," "Armed For Suffering," and "Watching Unto The End." Be sure to listen to the preaching of the Word of God as proclaimed over the distinctively Reformed Radio Program—The Reformed Witness Hour. Free copies of every sermon are available. Write to The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Michigan.

To call attention to the new Year Book, we quote from Lynden's bulletin: "Each family is urged to acquire a copy of the Acts of our 1960 Synod, which met in session from June 1 to 10. A copy costs only \$1.00, and furnishes you with indispensable information concerning the kingdom work our churches have done, and are doing. Also you will have concrete evidence that our denomination is not dwindling away, or falling apart, but is growing in numbers, in spirit, and in enthusiasm. Keep yourself well informed!"

Southeast Church celebrated a great event Sunday, Sept. 4, as expressed in the following bulletin quote: "Today is the first Lord's Day in our new church home. May God's work appear unto us in this place and His glory to our children, and may the work of our hands be established by Him to His praise."

From Redland's bulletin we learn that church activities are once again in full swing, with announcements of first meetings of catechisms and societies taking up most of the space in the issue of September 11.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.