

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

We ought to think about our baptism more than we do. In our times of doubt and despair, when the assurance of faith and salvation seem far away, when we are troubled by the guilt of our sins and the accusation of the devil, we ought to think about our baptism. At such times our baptism ought to be a powerful means of grace to us.

See "The Significance of Your Baptism"

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MEDITATION

My Love of Jehovah

Rev. H. Veldman

"I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." Psalm 116:1

We read in our King James version: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." We read in the Dutch: "I love God, because Jehovah hears my voice and my supplications." This Dutch version is correct. There is, of

course, very little difference between the two versions — the former speaks of the Lord as having heard my voice and supplications while the latter speaks of this hearing of the Lord in the present tense.

The author of Psalm 116 is unknown, and therefore the circumstances of this psalm are also unknown. This, however, is quite unimportant. If the Holy Spirit had intended to reveal him to us He would have done so. We have this psalm and this is really all that matters here.

Psalm 116 is a song of redemption. This is clear from the entire psalm. We recognize immediately the three parts of our Heidelberg Catechism in this psalm: our misery of sin, our redemption, and our gratitude. And we must not fail to note the personal note of our text and throughout this psalm: I love the Lord because He hears *my* voice and *my* supplication.

* * * * *

I love the Lord, Jehovah — how unspeakably wonderful!

First, I love the Lord, *Jehovah*. As Jehovah He is the I AM, the Rock, unchangeably the same. He is, in the Dutch, the *Zijnde*, we are the *wordende*. He is the I AM, the One Who is; we become. We can never say, I am. We cannot say this because we do not have life in ourselves; we become through another. And we cannot say this, in the second place, because we are never the same, we are always subject to change, physically and also psychically, according to soul. But God is the I AM, Who owes His life to nothing outside of Himself; He has within Himself the eternal source of His own infinite being and life. Moreover, He is in Himself the All-Sufficient One. He is the sovereign Creator of the heavens and the earth, and also the Sustainer of the same. He is in Himself complete and all-sufficient. He needs no creature to add or contribute to His glory. He did not enrich Himself when He created the world. He would not become poorer if the whole universe were to collapse. He is in Himself all-glorious, the God of infinite goodness and perfection, at Whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

And, secondly, I love Him. This word, love, means to breathe after, hence, to long after, to desire. The word emphasizes a constant yearning, longing for Jehovah, His fellowship and communion. Indeed, what an amazing phenomenon we have here! I long for God, for Jehovah, the I AM, the in Himself all-sufficient One, Who needs no man to establish or add to His glory. I long for Him, desire to have Him, to have fellowship with Him, to taste and experience His love. And this is true of me, so completely and utterly insignificant — the whole world is less than vanity, less than nothing; who and what am I? Can you conceive of a greater contrast, of anything greater and more wonderful than the desire and longing in and of a sinner's heart to love the Lord, to seek Him and to want

Him as his own, as the God of his salvation! And, yet even this is not all.

What does this imply? A few years ago we heard of the New Morality, or, if you will, of the Old Immorality. And our present day and age is not free of this. Yes, the central concept of this phenomenon is love. Only, this love is not the love of God. If only we love the neighbor, love one another, we may perform any and every evil under the sun. If we love our family which is in poverty, we may steal. If we love a girl friend, who desires intimacy, we may satisfy that desire. And so we could go on. The difference between the New Morality of today and the Old Immorality of yesterday is that today they attempt to justify it, even by appealing to Scripture. How corrupt it is! This is obvious. Think of all the corruption it brings forth. Indeed, according to Scripture, if you love Me, ye will keep My commandments.

Remember, however, that the Lord is Jehovah, the I AM, the Rock, the Unchangeable One, the God of eternal and infinite goodness and perfection, a Light in Whom is no darkness, the Rock that is infinitely and eternally perfect. To love God, therefore, means that we love as He loves, and also that we love what He loves. To love God means that we love His own, and also that we hate what and whom He hates. It means that His friends are my friends, and His cause is my cause. Then, His enemies are my enemies. What He loves, Himself, I love; what He hates I hate. I long for Him, His fellowship and communion, His City, the City that has foundations. And then I yearn for the day when all this filthy sin and darkness will be no more, when I shall see Him face to face, in Christ Jesus, know Him as we are known, in heavenly and immortal perfection. I love God, the Lord, Jehovah, the God of my salvation.

Indeed, how unspeakably wonderful! I love the Lord, Jehovah, my God, now and forever.

* * * * *

We read "I love" because Jehovah hears my voice and my supplications. Indeed, I love the Lord because He has loved me first. To be sure, the ground of my love of Jehovah is always His love to me in Jesus Christ, His Son our Lord. Now this, we know, is emphasized in the Word of God, in 1 John 4:10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Notice what we read here in this word of God. And, indeed, this truth that the love of God is always first also receives emphasis in this scripture.

Jehovah hears my voice and my supplications. In this expression, the latter word, supplications, explains the former word. My voice here assumes the

form or content of supplication. What else can we do, when addressing the Lord, but pray supplicatingly?

What are these supplications? We read in verse 3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." In verse 4 the psalmist continues: "Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." And in verse 8 we read, "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." And what are these supplications as experienced by the people of God throughout the ages? What are they but the entreaties of a spiritually harassed and distressed child of God? Indeed, these supplications are not carnal, materialistic, the cry and longing for the things of this present time and world. These cries are the supplications of a sinner who has been brought low, who has become brokenhearted, who has learned to see and know his sins and trespasses, who has learned to understand and be fully impressed by the holiness and righteousness of an holy and unchangeable God, of whom it is true that the sorrows of death compassed him. The pains of hell had gotten hold upon him; his soul had been delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. What else can we do, when we know and see in ourselves nothing but sin and evil, that we cry to God for mercy? Indeed, all we can do is pour out our hearts and souls in anguish and in supplication!

And, Jehovah hears us. We understand that this does not mean that the Lord is merely aware of our voice and supplications. The Lord knows all things, sees all things. And yet we read in Scripture that His eye is far from the wicked and that He does not hearken to their cries. But this word of God does mean that He hears us in the sense that He answers us. We pour out our souls to Him in prayer and He always hears us. We never go to Him too often or in vain. He never shuts the door in our faces. He does not say to us, "What, are you knocking at My door again?" He never turns us away empty-handed, never wearies of our repeated crying and supplications. Always He is ready to hear us, to give us relief, to concern Himself with our troubles. The Lord, the overflowing Fount in Himself of all good, never dependent upon any creature, Who cannot receive anything because He is the sovereign Possessor of all things, is always present to forgive us our sins, to relieve us of the misery of our soul, to deliver us, over and over again, from the powers of death and the terrors of hell.

And why is this? Why does He never tire of us, never become weary of our constant crying and begging? Why? Because He is the Lord, Jehovah, the Rock, everlastingly the same, Who, having

loved us in Christ Jesus, loves us with an everlasting and unchangeable love, the same yesterday, today, and forever. These miseries and troubles of the child of God, in addition to all this, are no surprise to our God. Indeed, He has willed them, sovereignly, from before the foundations of the world, in order that He may reveal Himself as the sole and only Saviour of His people. Are not all things known by Him, willed by Him from before this world's beginning? Is He not our eternal Father in our Lord Jesus Christ, and are not all things known by and to Him, even eternally?

Therefore we love the Lord. I love the Lord because Jehovah hears my cry and my supplications. I love Him because He reveals Himself to me as the unchangeable God of my salvation, because He saves me, continues to save me, and leads me in the way everlasting. What else does this emphasize but the wonderful truth that nothing can ever induce the Lord to turn His back upon me, to change in His attitude toward me? This is our experience ever anew. Do not the scriptures declare that His mercies are new every morning? Hence, my love of Him rests upon His love of me, and the work which He has once begun shall be finished in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, of that wonderful love of God the scriptures speak throughout. How else can we account for the fact that the Lord never tires of our crying, is always ready to forgive us and grant relief? It cannot be due to any good on our part, to anything we ever contribute to His everlasting praise and glory. How true it is that this is not love that we loved Him, but that He loved us first and will therefore love us even forevermore!

To Him we cry, every day anew.

Always He hears our crying, our supplications.

O, Lord Jehovah, Thou art the God of my salvation.

Now and even forevermore.

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EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Rev. Marinus Schipper, 1906-1985

Rev. Marinus Schipper went to glory on the second day of the new year, a month and six days short of his seventy-ninth birthday. He was the oldest of our retired ministers in age, though not in length of service in our churches. During the last two years of his life he suffered considerably, having undergone four major operations. He knew that the end of his earthly pilgrimage was approaching, especially after the fourth operation; and he looked forward to the time of his release and his reward.

My own memories of our brother go back to his student days in the early 1930's, when he would occasionally supply the pulpit of First Church and when he helped with catechetical instruction in that congregation. Actually his contact with our cause in a way went back to the time when the late Herman Hoeksema was pastor of Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan; as a youth Rev. Schipper was a parishioner of Herman Hoeksema at that time, and he delighted in telling stories of those early days.

Rev. Schipper began his ministerial labors in our former Grand Haven (Mich.) congregation in 1937. In 1939 he moved to Roosevelt Park, on Grand Rapids' southwest side (later "Second Church"), where he remained until 1945, when he moved to South Holland, Illinois. He stayed at South Holland until 1954, and was there, therefore, during the crucial crisis years preceding the "split" in 1953. During those years he did faithful service in the conflict to maintain our Protestant Reformed position. In 1954 he returned to the Grand Rapids area, becoming pastor of the faithful remnant of Second Church, now known as Southwest Church, leading them in the period of their re-establishment. And in 1962 he heeded a call from Southeast Church, again in a time of crisis, when the congregation was almost destroyed due to the defection of their pastor and many members in an aftermath of the 1953 split. Under his leadership Southeast revived and became a flourishing congregation once more.

He remained pastor of Southeast until his retirement in 1978. It was during those years at Southeast, where I and my family were members for 9 years, that I especially learned to know him as a pastor, a vigorous preacher, a colleague, and a personal friend. Rev. Schipper labored throughout his ministry, therefore, in Classis East. A good many of our people in Classis West will remember him, however, because of the fact that in the post-1953 years he spent many weeks helping out in various congregations in the time when our western churches were in sore need of help and when there was a severe shortage of ministers.

Not to be overlooked in this brief account are two other areas of labor. While he was in the Grand Rapids area brother Schipper labored uncounted hours in the work of our two major standing committees, the Theological School Committee and the Home Missions Committee. In both of these he was always forward-looking and zealous. Our *Standard Bearer* also profited from his labors. For many years he was the editor of the department once known as "Periscope," and now known as "All Around Us." Later he contributed, until his physical condition prevented it, to our *Meditation* department.

And now this faithful servant rests from his labors. Though he would be the first to demur and to remind us of the fact that it was only by grace and that much imperfection clung to his labors, he has left us an example of a faithful servant and a militant soldier in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The funeral service was from Hudsonville Church on January 5. His pastor (and successor at Southeast Church) spoke in connection with Psalm 34:22, "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

May the Lord comfort the bereaved widow, Helen, and the family.

One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty (2)

(Note: The previous installment brought the history commemorated in the "One Hundred Fifty Years" of our subject to the point at which the Secession had become an accomplished fact in the congregation at Ulrum, of which Hendrick de Cock was pastor. The current installment continues from this point by briefly relating the spread of the *Afscheiding*. The reader should bear in mind that this is by no means a detailed account of the Secession and its spread.)

The flame kindled at Ulrum soon spread throughout the Netherlands. To those at all acquainted with Dutch church history the names of Scholte, Van Raalte, Brummelkamp, Van Velzen, and Meerburg — along with that of De Cock — are familiar. All of these, though of varying strength as far as their Reformed convictions are concerned, were agreed as to the necessity of the Secession. And they were the original leaders of the Secession movement. And that movement was blessed of the Lord. Persecution could not stop it. And there was indeed real persecution! A provision of the Napoleonic penal code was invoked which forbade public gatherings of twenty or more persons, with the intent of preventing the meeting of the Secession congregations for public worship. There were fines levied. There was imprisonment imposed. The quartering of soldiers in homes of the Secessionists was used as a means to squelch the movement. But by the end of 1835 there were some 70 congregations, and that, too, in spite of such a severe shortage of ministers that the few who were available had to preach as often as twenty times per week. Often the churches had to be satisfied with the services of exhorters. And while there were individual efforts put forth toward the training of more ministers, there was no central Theological School until the establishment of Kampen in 1854.

But now we take our leave of the Netherlands, though our description of the Secession movement there has been very brief. And we move to the American scene.

In 1847 the Secession movement was transplanted to our country. This began with the establishment of the Pella (Iowa) colony under Scholte and the establishment of the Holland (Michigan) colony under the leadership of Albertus Van Raalte. But what I wish to stress in this connection

is the fact that in effect a miniature of the entire Secession movement, with all its differences of emphasis and with all its strengths and weaknesses, was transferred to this country. That this is true is still evident in the names of the towns and villages round about Holland, Michigan. Zeeland, Vriesland, Drenth, Overijssel, Graafschap, Groningen, Noordeloos are all communities in that area; and they all remind us of the fact that the colonists kept their peculiar identities and also their peculiar religious emphases when they moved to this country. Frequently the early cultural isolation of these colonists has been bemoaned and criticized by historians; but we should remember that it was precisely this geographical and cultural isolation which also made it possible for the Secession movement, with all its internal differences and variety of emphasis, to be transferred to our country and to persist and develop as it did.

It was out of this transplanted Secession movement that our mother church, the Christian Reformed denomination, was born in 1857. And it had its origin not in the Van Raalte colony as such. The latter represented the weaker wing of the Secession movement, and under the direct influence of Van Raalte himself had united at an early stage with the Reformed Church in America. But the more strongly Reformed element of the Secession was represented in the De Cock-Joffers-Van Velzen wing. And it is from the latter especially that the fledgling Christian Reformed denomination came in 1857. The Christian Reformed Church, therefore, stood originally in the historical line of the *Afscheiding*, and that, too, the *Afscheiding* in its stronger and more soundly Reformed aspect.

(to be continued)

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MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

We have come, in our discussion of the order of worship, to those elements in which the minister speaks: the vatum, the benedictions, the prayers and the sermon. In this article we shall be discussing the vatum.

With the many changes which are taking place in the worship services these days, the vatum has been all but lost. Greater efforts are being made, in the interests of novelty and innovation, to make the worship services more informal and to involve in the worship services the congregation itself. The result is that many times worship services are begun in ways which seem strange and foreign, if not downright profane. Upon ascending the pulpit, the minister may greet the congregation with some such words as: "Good morning, everyone," to which the congregation responds. Or: "Good morning, God," with which greeting the congregation joins. Or: "Will everyone shake the hand of his neighbor?" followed by a lot of noise in the auditorium.

What is forgotten is that the worship service is a solemn assembly in which the church of our Lord Jesus Christ meets with her God in the worship of covenant fellowship. It is not an informal gathering of people; it is not a picnic where people who know each other gather for some festivities; it is not even a business meeting or convocation of people who have come to discuss matters of mutual interest. The church gathers with her God in worship. And the solemnity and wonder of it ought to be retained.

In his book on liturgy, W. Heyns points out that the vatum is extremely important because it really sets the tone and atmosphere of the entire worship service. If the beginning of the worship service is solemn and holy, this will set the tone for all the worship which follows. He obviously does not consider the vatum a mere, relatively thoughtless and

unimportant beginning, but insists that it must have a proper place and must itself be proper. With this we agree.

The beginning of the worship service is usually composed of three elements: the salutation or greeting, the vatum proper, and the benediction. The salutation, at least in our circles, is usually the words, "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ," or "Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ." The vatum usually used is: "Our help is in the name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth." The benediction follows upon this.

The word "vatum" comes from the Latin *voveo*, which means, "to vow, to pray to God for something." Apparently, the idea is not so much as Heyns (in the above-mentioned book) maintains — to consecrate or devote; rather the idea is to express dependence upon God at the very beginning of the worship.

This vatum took on different forms in the history of the churches of the Reformation. Luther, in Germany, made no use of a vatum at all. He usually began the worship services by announcing the singing of a song. A Lasco did the same. At Strassburg, where Calvin spent a few years between his two stays in Geneva, the German congregation began its services with the words, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen." Calvin, in the French church, used the same vatum as we use. Although the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574 ruled that the vatum used by Calvin ought to be used in the churches, this was not commonly done. Many different forms were used to begin the service. Sometimes the old formulas used in the Romish church prior to the Reformation were kept: the minister would begin with the words, "Peace be with you," to which the congregation would respond, "And with thy spirit." But gradually, in the Dutch churches, the form used by Calvin was more

and more accepted, and that has remained true till today within those churches which have their roots in the Netherlands Reformation.

It is clear from all this that there are no direct Scriptural injunctions concerning this matter. As we have found to be true with so many of the elements of worship, this too must be left to the discretion of the individual consistories as they decide what form of worship is most in keeping with the nature of congregational worship and what serves best the edifying of the people of God. Nevertheless, the form in general use in our churches is one that, while surely not infallible, is time tested and has proved its worth over the years. It is well that there is uniformity on this matter among us, and changes ought not lightly to be made.

The votum in use among us — "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" — is the last verse of Psalm 124. It might be well to quote that entire Psalm a moment, for the last verse is the doxological conclusion of the Psalm.

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
now may Israel say;

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
when men rose up against us:

Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their
wrath was kindled against us:

Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream
had gone over our soul:

Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a
prey to their teeth.

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the
fowls: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made
heaven and earth.

This "votum" in use in the churches must be taken in connection with the entire Psalm. Evidently, when Calvin introduced this in the French church in Strassburg, this meant a great deal more to the church then than it does to us now. The Reformation faced foes on every side: the pope with his armies of priests and prelates who hated the Reformed people with a single-minded passion; the armies of hostile world powers in Germany and France; the people, who, moved by Rome and their clerics, often took delight in doing what damage they could to the Reformation. The whole movement was in constant jeopardy from a human point of view. How significant it then was that the congregation, when it would come together, would confess before God that, though great and terrible dangers surrounded them, the Lord was on their side; they were escaped once again as a bird out of the snare; their help was in the name of the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

While, certainly, this had great meaning and significance for the people in those days, nevertheless, the fact remains that the same is principally true for the church in every age. Just that we do not know overt persecution as our fathers did, does not mean that we are not in constant jeopardy and danger. We are surrounded by hostile forces on every side. The devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. His demons are his minions who delight in the destruction of the saints — if that were possible. The world is an alarming place, filled with dangers and traps, ready to pounce on the unwary and lure his soul into destruction. And our own weak and sinful flesh is an ally to all these enemies and is constantly attempting to tug us into the snares of evil. How dangerous a place this world is! We would easily be swallowed up and the waters would easily overwhelm us. To be overcome would be the most logical and easily accomplished event in the world. To destroy the whole church would be as easily accomplished as swatting a mosquito — if . . . "If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side, now may Israel say . . . Blessed be the Lord, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth . . . Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth!"

You can sense the quiet exultation that breathes in these words as the church of Christ comes together once again on the Lord's Day, after a dangerous week in the world, and breathes out her confession of hope and confidence in God, Who has safely guarded her.

It is well for us to consider briefly the meaning of these words from Psalm 124. There are just three or four remarks which ought briefly to be made.

In the first place, the church confesses that her help is in the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is the Lord God Himself, but as He reveals Himself to His church. Centrally, that name is Jesus — Jehovah salvation. Thus, without going into detail on this matter, the church confesses that her help is in Jesus, Who is the revelation of God. That is why the name Jehovah is also used here, for that name, more than any other, is the name which describes the Lord God as the One Who is faithful and unchanging to His covenant in Jesus Christ. No wonder the name of Jehovah is described in Scripture as a high tower in which we may find our refuge and hiding place.

In the second place, Jehovah is said here to be the One Who made heaven and earth. The reference is undoubtedly to His great power as He revealed it in the work of creation. If Jehovah, the God of His people, has made the earth and all its

creatures, the stars and planets and shining hosts of heaven, men and angels — and devils — if our help is in His name, then surely we are safe in this dangerous life.

Finally, therefore, the church confesses that her

only help is in Jehovah. It is a confession of our own weakness and sin. It is a confession of our utter helplessness. It is a confession not only that in Jehovah are we safe, but that only in His name will we be safe for all this life till we enter the everlasting Sabbath.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Enemy Beginning to Fall

Rev. John A. Heys

Although Esther did not plan it that way, the time between her first banquet prepared for the king and Haman and the second produced some events that benefited her. Those events served her cause, but only because it was in harmony with God's cause, and because enlargement and deliverance were coming from another place than the one which she and Mordecai expected. It came down from out of heaven, whereas they were looking for some earthly relief and protection.

The first event was not at all to Esther's liking. She did not know that it was taking place and that it would serve her cause. But had she known it she would have been very apprehensive. Questions arose in the mind of the king, and so disturbing became his thoughts that he could not sleep all night. Questions arose in his mind such as, What does Esther want? Is there something going on in the kingdom that she knows and Haman and I do not know? Why is she so hesitant to tell me her request? Why must there be two banquets, and why must Haman, my right hand man, be at these banquets? It must be important because she risked her life to ask me for the first banquet. Does Haman's presence mean that there is something politically wrong? Another plot to kill me?

At any rate we read in Esther 6:1 that the king could not sleep the night between the banquets. Esther's actions must have troubled him after the wine had lost its power over him. And that he feared some political problem is evident from the fact that he called for the book of records of the chronicles. He wanted to review the past to see

whether it would give a clue as to Esther's petition and hesitancy to express it. It was not indigestion that kept him awake. It was a delicious meal, and though he may have overeaten, Scripture reveals, by pointing out that he wanted to review the records to soothe himself, that he was concerned about the kingdom, and perhaps even about his own life.

The king is reminded of a somewhat recent plot to kill him, which plot was exposed by a man whom he did not know any further than that his name was Mordecai. This happened while Esther was preparing for the beauty contest that brought her to the queenship. But she had not yet revealed that Mordecai was her uncle-father. The king also learns that nothing had been done to reward Mordecai for his good deed. And whether the king knew his nationality is not revealed. Whether it dawned on him that here was proof that Haman's charge about the Jews was false and that there were Jews who were very loyal to the king likewise is not revealed. But here was the evidence that all the Jews should not be killed. Mind you, the very man whose actions provoked Haman to seek the death of all the Jews was so loyal to the king that he saved the king's life. It was not to the king's profit that men like that be put to death. It is far more for the king's profit that men like Haman, who plotted the death of the king's protector, should be put to death.

The king, as we began to say, was surprised to find that no recognition of Mordecai's deed had been given. Impetuously he decrees that great

honour shall be bestowed upon him. And entirely apart from Esther's craftiness and Mordecai's pathetic and debasing behaviour in the sackcloth wherewith he clothed himself, the hand of God brought Haman into the court the same moment that the king decided on honouring Mordecai more highly — it turned out to be — than Haman had ever been honoured.

What a day it was to which Haman woke up after a good night's sleep, due to his wife's suggestion of getting Mordecai on the gallows. He would get his revenge! On awaking that morning he stood, figuratively speaking, facing the rising sun and looking for a bright, beautiful day in his life: the second banquet and a way to get Mordecai out of his hair. Little does he realize that behind him is a storm cloud that contains a tornado that will not only destroy all his dreams but destroy him as well.

He had a warning, or, better stated, he had found a fly in his ointment that bothered him. He had left that first banquet elated and in high spirits. He was on cloud nine. And he was eager to get home to tell his friends and his wife what honours had been bestowed upon him. Politically he had climbed as high as a citizen could. He was next to the king. Socially he had now advanced to where he belonged to the elite. The queen, that beautiful woman, had invited him to a banquet with the king. And get this, my friends and wife, was his thought, I alone was invited!

But momentarily all his joy was gone when he came out and left the royal estate. There sat Mordecai in his sackcloth, refusing to stand up when this dignitary, who was so high socially and politically, appeared before him. He would not even move out of the way. Haman had to go around him as he sat on the ground. He found a fly in his ointment that made him furious so that he saw red! He wanted to give Mordecai a swift and powerful kick to get him out of his way. Yea, the urge to kill was strong in him. But we read that he refrained himself, that is, refrained from doing what at the moment he wanted to do, namely, kill Mordecai on the spot. He is therefore so ready later on to take the advice of his wife that he build a gallows for Mordecai and to get permission from the king to hang Mordecai on it.

Now he enters the king's court to get his approval for Mordecai's death. This should be no problem, for it had already been decided that all the Jews must be killed in the twelfth month, that is, in the month Adar. This would only be hurrying the matter up for one man, and then one who insulted the king's right hand man. And since he now belonged to that elite group that might banquet with the king and queen this should pose no prob-

lem. Stepping briskly, confident of what would happen, he enters the court of the king little prepared for the king's command that he honour Mordecai. Little does he expect that there is another man in the kingdom "in whom the king delighteth" other than himself. Did not all the recent events show that he was such a person?

Boldly he therefore prescribes all the honor and glory that he can imagine when the king calls him in for advice as to what should be done for the man who had exposed the plot of the two chamberlains to kill the king. Haman quickly prescribes *royal* honor for himself! He will wear the *king's* apparel, ride on *his* horse, and wear the *royal* crown. Once again it is the hand of God that turns the king's heart so that Ahasuerus does not object to all this. Here is a request far beyond what the king promised Esther, namely, even to half of the kingdom. Here is a request to be accepted by the public in the king's place. The people were to do to him even as they were required to do to the king.

Truly "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). And yet how many are there not today in the church who boast of having prophesied in Christ's name, in His name cast out devils and done many wonderful works? They "saved" so many souls, added souls to the church, really set the church on fire with spiritual enthusiasm and zeal. And yet Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-24). It is not what we think of ourselves or of our works. What counts is what God thinks of them. Do they conform with the whole of Scripture, or with a few selected verses?

But what a humiliation for Haman! It is one thing for a proud man to have someone else be given the honors which he sought for himself. It is one thing to have a nobody, picked up off the streets, elevated above you after all the service you rendered to the kingdom. It is one thing to prepare carefully and thoroughly for your advancement, and then have something unexpected and unforeseen happen that makes it all impossible. But it is another thing to be made a lowly servant to the man who is given the honors you earned. It is another thing to have the man you hate with all your being be given higher honors before the public in whose eyes you were known as a dignitary. It is another thing to be required to take a man off the streets who has publicly despised you, and then tell everyone within hearing distance that this is the man wherein the king delighteth.

How much Haman wished he had not advised the king to bestow so much honor on the man in whom he delighted. What a shock it must have

been to him to hear the king tell him to give this honor to Mordecai! Here was the man he wanted dead by a public hanging on high gallows. Instead he must be a humble servant to cause the public to bestow high honors on this man. He wanted him high in shame; and now he must lift him high in honor.

Those must have been hours of sheer agony for Haman. It must have taken hours for him to parade his worst enemy through the city streets in royal honor, because he hardly got home and they came to rush him to that second banquet. But the thought of that banquet put a bad taste in his mouth. How could he face the king who had humiliated him that much? How could he enjoy the meal? And the queen, would she be as attractive now that his eyes were clouded with shame and disappointment?

Before he went to the banquet his wife and friends prepared him for a complete downfall before Mordecai. There just was no way that a man passed by that way by the king could be restored to his former position. Haman had prescribed too high an honor for Mordecai to return to his own position and respect in the eyes not only of the other political dignitaries but also of the citizens in Shushan. These friends and his wife did not need to be told by an angel of God what was coming. They could feel the direction from which the wind was blowing. The king had passed him by — they did not probably know that Haman had prescribed such an high honor — and elevated his enemy. Unbelief and not faith made them draw the conclusion that he would fall before the Jews. They knew Jewish history but not the God Who made it. And is

it not wonderful how in an atheistic and unbelieving world God does not leave Himself today also without a witness? Men deny Him. Christ they reject as the Son of God, and teach that He was a mere man. And yet, go where you will in the world, east or west, north or south, and you will find that unbelievers and atheists as well as believers say that today is A.D. 1985. They will teach Ancient History and give dates that are this or that year B.C. The whole world reckons time from the birth of Christ. The date is either so many years before His birth, or so many in the period that began after He came into our flesh.

Now, although Haman's friends and wife did not say it that way, their statement that he was beginning to fall before the Jews reveals that they knew the history of God's people, and that the Seed of the woman was going to crush the serpent and his seed. They know that to that day no one succeeded to destroy the nation in which God's church was to be found, and out of which the Christ would come. They are now sure that Haman shall "surely fall" before Mordecai.

We, however, because God has given us faith in His Son, know that all the enemies of Christ and of His church will fail, and fall into the lake of fire. We know, because God in His grace has spoken to us in our hearts, that the honorable and rich of this world will lose it all, while the church will be lifted out of its sackcloth and ashes to walk the streets of gold in the new Jerusalem in white robes of righteousness, to be Christ's royal bride and to know the joy of being those who for Christ's sake are the ones in whom THE King delighteth.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Believing all the Prophetic Scriptures

Rev. G. Lubbers

Chapter XVIII

The Mystery of the "Seventy Weeks" in Daniel 9

THE BOOKS BY WHICH DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE DURATION OF THE DESOLATIONS

(Daniel 9:1-3, continued)

It should be remembered well that these desola-

tions which came upon Israel were no afterthought on the part of God, nor should we forget that God had definitely foretold the "desolations" which would come upon the land, the holy city, the temple, and the people of God! Often we do not read well, nor do we remember what we read!

Such was too the sin of Israel in their entire history.

And they tempted God to wrath (Ps. 78:32; II Kings 23:26-28).

But Daniel remembered the words of Moses, the man of God. He read and remembered the great and precious promises. He read with a glowing heart of the future of the church, that Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. 9:26-27). How he must have pondered the promise of God to Abraham, "in thee shall *all nations* be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 28:3, 4)! And how could Daniel have overlooked, Bible-student that he was, the promise of the dying patriarch Jacob concerning the things which would surely come to pass in the future when he says, "Gather yourselves together, and hear, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. 49:1). How the prophetic meaning of the words of God through Jacob to Judah must have been a matter of deep meditation and prayer for Daniel: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee . . . The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering (see footnote) of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Yes, the nations, the nations would come to Judah. Was this not the very warp and woof of the hymnology of Israel (Ps. 72:8-18; Ps. 87:3-7)? Yes, glorious things are spoken of Zion! Daniel could not have overlooked such beautiful Scripture promises concerning the future of Israel, in their being the salvation of the Gentiles, as we have in Psalm 18:49: "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15:9). David sang in the Spirit, "For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." How often Daniel must have had in mind the unforgettable, brief but important Psalm 117:1: "O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise Him all ye people" (Rom. 15:11). And, not to quote more, notice such beautiful passages as are quoted in Romans 15:10, 12. Yes, there would be a root out of Jesse, and He shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust (Is. 11:1).

Great and precious promises in the "books."

And these books were the canonical Scriptures!

By these he *understood* the number of the years of the Desolations upon Jerusalem. And Daniel, on the basis of these Scriptures, these "books," believed in hope against hope. He did so, standing fearlessly before kings, yea, believing with a faith concerning things not yet seen, even in the lion's den when already an old man!

What did Daniel understand? The term in the

Hebrew translated "understand" is from a verb which means in the Kal degree "to distinguish, discern, to know, to have understanding, to be wise." It is far more than merely "to read." It is also far more than mere intellectual knowledge of some chronological data, or some important news. It meant that Daniel had a basic, correct and spiritual knowledge of the meaning of the "accomplishment" of the seventy years of the desolations upon Jerusalem. One can very well hear very emphatically and yet not understand the thing heard spiritually, even as one can very well see a thing without perceiving its meaning and God-intended import. A very clear example we find of this in Isaiah 6:9, 10, as this is quoted and applied by Jesus in Matthew 13:11-13. (Compare also John 12:37-41; Acts 28:25-28!)

Surely Daniel understood what God was "accomplishing" through these "desolations" in His sovereign mercy and love to Israel. When Judah goes down into Babylon in captivity a voice is indeed heard in Rama, weeping and lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, because they were not. But that is not the end according to the "books." God will, finding fault with the former covenant, make a new covenant "after those days." Things will be "better" then, in a better high priest, and better blood will be shed, and a better temple will be built (Jer. 31:33). And all Rachel's tears shall be forever wiped away from her eyes! All this good is accomplished in Israel. This is the proclamation of a veritable chorus of prophetic voices in the "books." Read Isaiah 2:1-6; 65:1 ff.; Hosea 1:1 ff.

Yes, Daniel had in these "books" the more sure prophetic word, and he gave diligent heed to them until the day dawned and the day-star of hope arose in his heart — yea, in the dark place of Babylon!

He is not without hope in the world!

And he represents the true Israel of God, which hope in God's mercy, and also cry unto Him, as God's elect, day and night. God will surely hear them, although He is very longsuffering over them (Luke 18:7, 8).

Thus Daniel understands the text in Jeremiah 25:11, 12.

He notices that this is altogether according to the promise of God to Israel already spoken by Moses in the plains of Moab, before they enter into the promised land. In that remarkable chapter, Leviticus 26, there are two sins singled out which would be of such a nature that Israel would come under the curse of the Lord and under His hot displeasure, in ever intensifying degrees. However, if they repent in the "land of their enemies," when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled — then

"will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember: and I will remember the land" (Lev. 26:40-42).

There were to be four such visitations upon Israel in the backslidings of idolatry and of not keeping the Lord's Sabbaths, and the desecrations of the service of God in His temple. First, there would be the curse for contempt of God's law. God would appoint over Israel "terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, cause sorrow of heart." They would sow their seed in vain, for their enemies would take it. (Confer Judges 6:11, etc.) If Israel did not heed these judgments there would be a *second degree* of the wrath of God. The "I will punish you seven times more for your sins." Then God will break the pride of their power, make their heaven as iron (no rain) and earth as brass (famine in the land). (Confer: I Kings 8:35, 36; 17:1; 18:1; II Chron. 7:13.)

But God will turn down the thumbscrews of His judgments if they do not repent. More and more, as Israel departed, God's judgments increased in intensity. They were increased "sevenfold." Then God would bring "seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins." God will walk contrary to Israel and "I will bring the sword upon you, and I will avenge the quarrel of My covenant." And if they continue to walk contrary, God will in His fury chastise them seven times more for their sins. Finally, God will scatter them among the heathen, and draw the sword after them, and the land shall be desolate and the cities shall be waste.

Thus Daniel read in the "books." He understood the nature of the desolations as coming from the scourging hand of God! But Daniel also knew what the "books" said concerning the return of Israel, when God would remember His covenant of old. For God will not cast Israel away, neither abhor them to destroy them utterly. A remnant will return of Judah from which Shiloh shall come and to whom the peoples shall be obedient, worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

The *time* has come!

It is the time when Cyrus' command shall "go forth." It is the time that the "command goes forth to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah" (Dan. 9:25). And in the hope of the sure fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, Daniel prays. It is the only ground for his supplications, the sure mercies of the Lord. God *becomes* the pleading ground, the rock-bottom basis for Daniel's fervent supplications.

DANIEL'S PRAYER AND CONFESSION OF SIN

(Dan. 9:3-19)

This prayer of Daniel uttered before the face of God is as fervent as it is historic in nature. There are prayers and prayers. There are the general prayers which fit the needs of every hour and time. The model prayer which Jesus teaches His disciples fits every need and every hour, and is a model for every generation of the church. However, there are also prayers which are uttered in times of deep need and distress in a particular age and hour. Think of the prayers of Abraham, pleading for the birth of a promised son (Gen. 15:2), or pleading that Ishmael might live before the LORD (Gen. 17:18). Or again, think of the prayer of Isaac for his barren wife, Rebecca (Gen 25:21). Later we see Jacob agonize in prayer before the Lord at the river Jab-bok, when Esau is approaching with four hundred men. See him, humbled before the face of the Lord, confessing his sin and all his unworthiness; and in that same night hear the great cryings and supplications when the angel of the LORD wrestles with him, and Jacob triumphs in the prayer of faith that will not, will not let the angel go, until he blesses him (Gen. 32:25).

These latter prayers are unique. They cannot be prayed by every saint as they were by these mighty wrestlers in prayer.

Then there are the prayers of other saints. Think of the prayer of Samson when he would pull down the walls of the palace of the Philistine merry-makers in honor of Dagon. What a mighty prayer of faith. And it was heard. Or think of the penitential prayer of David as so unforgettably expressed in Psalm 51. And then, lastly, think of the prayers of Hezekiah in the temple when 185,000 soldiers surround Jerusalem (Is. 37:14-20).

Yes, many more prayers at special occasions could be mentioned. However, what we have cited makes it unnecessary to remind the reader of the great prayers of Moses as he stands in the "breach" pleading for Israel's salvation at the time of the making of the golden calf, or to refer to the great prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (Ex. 32:30-35; 33:12-17; II Chron. 6:12-53).

*Footnote:

The term "gathering" is the translation of a feminine noun "*yiqqehah*" which really means: obedience, submission. The "peoples" shall give willing obedience to Shiloh, the new obedience of faith. This shall be in the "last times." (See Is. 2:3; Joel 2:30; Acts 2:17-21.) Jacob, in the prophetic Spirit, sees vistas of distant Pentecost, fully come.

Read the Standard Bearer!

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Integration and Segregation (2)

Rev. H. Veldman

We are calling attention in these articles to the subject, Integration and Segregation, as it is held before us in I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We concluded our preceding article by referring to the amazing and wonderful unity of the church of God and of Christ. In the world it is integration or segregation, not both. The oneness as advocated by the world is based upon equality, upon socialism. In the church it is integration and segregation.

The church of Christ is one, whether we be bond or free, and these bondmen remain slaves. The question of poverty over against riches, of slavery over against freedom, of power and authority over against submission does not affect the unity of the church one whit. The scriptures do not advocate equality, do not advocate the abolition of slavery, the wiping out of all lines of demarcation between the various classes of people. In fact, this is exactly the wonderful characteristic of the unity of the church, that it is precisely this distinction between the bond and the free which serves to emphasize and focus attention upon the glorious unity of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is this true? How must this amazing unity of the church of Christ be understood? Let us use an illustration. Let us use the illustration of a league or pact or covenant between various nations of the earth, of nations that differ in size and resources. Imagine, if you please, if a nation such as Russia were to live in peaceful coexistence or cohabitation with a country such as the Netherlands. How this would emphasize the idea and reality of a true unity! Rich diversity is an absolute requirement for the manifestation of unity. If all the nations of a covenant or league were equal in resources, in military might and preparedness, then their living in peace-

ful coexistence with each other would simply mean that they were equally afraid of one another. But when a country as the Netherlands can live in peaceful cohabitation with a mighty nation such as Russia, it must mean that there must be an inner bond uniting the two nations.

How applicable this is to the church of the living God and of Christ! Indeed, this church of Christ is completely and utterly unique, the only organization or organism of its kind. The world seeks unity only in the way of equality. The world's solution of its problems, we have noted, is that of socialism. The world thinks that men can live with each other only upon the basis of equality, when the poor have acquired the wealth of the rich, when the slave is on equal footing with his master, when the child shares the authority within the home with his parent, when there is no longer any distinction between bond or free, when equality reigns supreme. But the church of God and of Christ is that unique institution where the bond and the free come together; the poor and the rich, the high and the lowly, the male and the female, the employer and his employee remain as they are, but are united into one grand, glorious body.

What a wonderful unity this is! The rich and the poor, the master and his slave dwell with one another in blessed accord, the one never seeking to supplant the other. The poor do not desire the wealth of the rich, the slave does not seek the freedom of his master; all the different classes of people within the church of Christ have learned to say with the apostle Paul, in Philippians 4:11: "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It need not surprise us, therefore, that the world has accused the church of Christ of being anti-social, anti any improvement. Indeed, it must be true that there is truly an inner bond between all these different classes of people, far sur-

passing all natural bonds and distinctions. The church believes in integration and segregation, is utterly unique, the only body and organization of its kind. What a wonderful unity!

* * * * *

This word of God, in I Corinthians 12:13, calls attention to the realization of this unity of the church of God, first of all, in the words, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." We do not propose to enter into a detailed exposition of these words, or of what follows in the text, that we all have been made to drink into one Spirit. The apostle is obviously speaking here of Spirit baptism. Water baptism is not another baptism. We have only one baptism: Spirit baptism. Water baptism is only a symbol of Spirit baptism. If one sees a Mr. Smith walking on a bright summer day, he does not say that he sees two Mr. Smiths. He sees only one Mr. Smith and his shadow. Now we have been baptized by one Spirit into one body. This Spirit has transferred us out of one body into another. He has removed us out of the body of mankind whereof Adam is the representative and organic head, and into the body whereof Christ is the Head. This was accomplished centrally upon the cross, and spiritually by the Spirit of all divine grace. He has translated us out of the body of sin and death into which all mankind was plunged because of Adam's sin, and into the living body of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Now we can understand, on the one hand, the unity of the church of God and of Christ. Why this wonderful unity? Why is it that we are one, whether we be Jew or Gentile, bond or free? Why is it that our position in life, whether it be that of male or female, cannot affect it? Why? It makes no difference whether we be rich or poor, professor or student. This is due to the fact that we all have been baptized by one Spirit into one body. It is therefore the one and selfsame Spirit Who unites and binds us. We have all received from that one Spirit the same life, are therefore controlled and governed by a principle that is far deeper than any outward and material circumstances. This is the first and basic reason why the church of God and of Christ is so utterly and completely unique, the only one of its kind.

And, secondly, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit. We have been made to drink into one Spirit, and this drinking, once begun, has never stopped. In Scripture the Holy Spirit is identified with living water. We read in John 4:13-14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall

be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This "well of water" is the Holy Spirit. How terrible is the agony of thirst! The agony of hell is likened to thirst. Ask the desert traveller who craves a drop of water and there is no water in sight! Ask the child of God, who craves for the living God and His fellowship and is barred from Him by a gulf which he cannot possibly span. To drink into one Spirit refers to that activity of faith whereby we consciously enter into this Spirit, this well of living water, and enter into the blessed fellowship of God. Then we drink of the forgiveness of sins; then we enter, consciously, into the blessed love and communion of God; then God is not far from us, but is very near us, the God of our salvation, now and even forever. And now we understand, also in the light of this wonderful truth, the wonderful and amazing unity of the church of God and of Christ. We *all*, regardless of who and what we are, have been made to drink into this one Spirit, the fountain of everlasting life and glory. Again, it makes absolutely no difference who and what we are, whether rich or poor, white or black, male or female, of high or low degree; we all have one thing in common: the life of the alone blessed God through His Holy Spirit. We are all sinners, yes, but saved by grace. Indeed, in Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord. Although pilgrims and strangers in the earth, we are all heirs enroute to the Jerusalem that is above. The carnal and materialistic issues of this present life, the things that are earthly and carnal do not attract us. We have something far better: the glory of the city of our God!

* * * * *

One hears much nowadays of integration and segregation. One hears much nowadays of unity, of unifying the church of the living God. Let us not be deceived. There is nothing scriptural or Christian about any of these movements of church mergers. These movements are not from above by the Spirit of God. They are movements that are sponsored and prompted from below. The church's cry and striving for ecumenicity is all at the cost of the truth. The Spirit of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ does not operate at the cost of the truth. Indeed, without the truth, we understand, no real unity is possible. This ecumenical movement will surely lead to the harlot of Revelation 17.

Having all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and having all been made to drink into one Spirit, let us be a truly Pentecostal church. O, I am not speaking of Neo-Pentecostalism, the Pentecostalism of our present age. Having received baptism once, water baptism, they are not satisfied

with this. They desire and seek a second baptism, a Spirit baptism. They desire a second baptism because they would perform miracles, speak in tongues. The apostle Paul, a learned man and able to speak in tongues, declares that he would rather speak five words that are understood than a thousand words in a strange tongue. Paul had no special desire to speak in a strange tongue. But these Neo-Pentecostals seek a second baptism. They are carnal. Why should they seek a second baptism? Is it not enough to be baptized by one Spirit into one body, to drink into the one Spirit? Is it not enough to taste and experience the forgiveness of sin, the assurance that we are righteous in Christ before God, heirs of everlasting life and glory? The psalmist declares his delight in being merely a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord (Ps. 84:10). Is it not enough to be enroute to the City that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God? We want more? We would speak in tongues which neither the people to whom we speak nor we ourselves understand? To whose edification is this? And we would perform miracles? What kind of miracles

would we perform? Do we wish to perpetuate a Christian's life here upon the earth rather than see him enter into the City of our God? Shall we be satisfied with merely the "ordinary, common" blessings of salvation?

Let us be a truly Pentecostal people, endowed with the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of the crucified and risen Christ and Lord. Having been baptized by that one Spirit into one body and having been made to drink into that one Spirit, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, rich or poor, employer or employee, let us all walk together, as unified by that one Spirit of all the blessings of salvation, seeking one another, having fellowship with one another, admonishing and comforting and instructing one another, until that wondrous day when, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall attain unto the full status of the children of God and be made conformable, fully, unto the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, then to know God as we are known, and to see Him, in Christ, in the new heavens and upon the new earth.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Revelation — Christ's Victorious Return (1)

Rev. J. Kortering

The Book of Revelation, also called the Apocalypse (from the first word of the Greek text), unveils for us the things that must come to pass that lead to the return of Christ. With His return, all things are brought to the final conclusion. In Genesis, we learn of the beginning of all things, the creation of the universe, of Adam and Eve, and of Paradise. The beauty did not endure, for man disobeyed God and the whole world was plunged into sin and death. The history of redemption follows in the rest of the Scriptures. Here in Revelation we see the end of all things, the new heaven and earth. Here the angel does not bar the way to the tree of life; rather its leaves are for the healing of the nations. The water of life flows freely. The devil does not lurk in the background to tempt, he is cast into

the lake of fire. The New Jerusalem is the city four-square which radiates the glory of God in the new heavens and earth. Truly the victorious Christ has come and made all things new.

AUTHOR AND DATE

The author identifies himself as John (see 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). He does not call himself John, an apostle of Jesus Christ, but, "servant of Christ," "brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus." Because of this there is a debate as to whether the same John authored the gospel, epistles, and the Revelation.

Other things enter into this discussion as well. We summarize the things that favor Revelation being authored by John the apostle as follows:

1. There are many similarities between the gospel, epistles, and the Apocalypse. Examples: use of the name Jesus without the article, use of words such as logos, lamb, witness, and true are common in all these works. The vocabulary and structure are similar.

2. The author is familiar with the churches in Asia Minor. The Apostle John came to Ephesus around A.D. 69 and 70. He centered his labors in Ephesus as he reached out to surrounding cities (where we find the seven churches). He was exiled to Patmos during the fifteen years of Diocletian and returned to Ephesus during the reign of Nervius.

3. The early church fathers accepted the authorship of John the apostle, e.g. Irenaeus and Clement.

Certain other things seem to mitigate against John the apostle as being the author. Such things as:

1. There are differences between the Apocalypse and gospel (letters). Such things as vocabulary and grammatical structure. The sentence structure in Revelation seems awkward and sometimes crude in style in comparison to the gospel.

2. The fact that John does not identify himself as "apostle" seems contrary to his usual custom of doing so.

3. Some of the early church fathers questioned and even denied that John the apostle was the author.

It certainly is reasonable to conclude with the church of the past that John, the apostle, the author of the gospel and letters also wrote the Revelation (Netherlands Confession Article 4). He was familiar with the seven churches, having labored among them extensively. The differences in grammar and style may be attributed to two things. First, John was writing about a vision. The heavenly character was difficult to describe. Secondly, some even suggest that John may have used a secretary to write his gospel and letters, but now while imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos, he had to write with his own hand, and this accounts for the differences. While thus suffering for the sake of the gospel, he viewed himself, not so much as apostle, but as partner in the tribulation.

OCCASION AND DATE

There are two suggestions given as to the date of the writing.

The first is as early as A.D. 68-70. This would place it near the end of Nero's reign. We summarize the arguments cited in Harrison's *Introduction to the New Testament*. This is the view of Wescott, Hort, Lightfoot, and Salmon, among others.

1. Jerusalem is mentioned in chapter 11 as

though it were still standing (these men interpret it literally). Furthermore, an event of such magnitude as the fall of the city would surely have been noticed in the Apocalypse if it had occurred.

2. Appeal is made to the statements in chapter 17:9-11 to the effect that five kings have fallen, one is, and one is yet to come. The beast that is to come is one who was and is not, one who is an eighth, and yet of the seven. This reflects the current legend concerning Nero, that he did not really die, but would appear in the East and assert his power.

3. Some interpret Revelation 13:18, the number of the beast 666 as an example of gematria, that the numbers of Nero Caesar written in Hebrew characters have numerical value yielding exactly the required sum of 666.

4. An early date is thought to be in accord with the rather uncouth character of the Greek of the Apocalypse. John refined his writing later on when he wrote the gospel and letters.

Arguments in favor of a later dating, toward the end of the reign of Domitian, around the year A.D. 96 are as follows:

1. This was the understanding of the ancient church in the main. The church father Irenaeus, e.g., says, referring to the Revelation, "It was seen not very long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian."

2. This later date agrees with the condition of the churches in Asia as reflected in the letters of the churches. Ephesus had left its first love. Sardis was virtually dead. Laodicea was lukewarm. A considerable interval had taken place between the founding of the churches and the time of the writing of Revelation.

3. It was during the reign of Domitian that the worship of the living emperor began to be promoted in Asia. Nero's persecution seems to have been confined to Rome and was mostly political. Domitian loved to be addressed as "Lord and God," and doing so became a mark of loyalty to the emperor. Refusal to participate was sufficient grounds for proceeding against the recalcitrant.

4. Laodicea appears as a prosperous city (chapter 3). In the reign of Nero it was destroyed by earthquake, but rebuilt by the time of Domitian.

The main reason for rejecting the early dating of the writing lies in their wrong interpretation of the symbols of the book. Historically the evidence favors the later dating of A.D. 95 or 96.

Since the book is addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4), the question arises as to how broadly we should apply this. The churches are explicitly listed. Yet, we know they were not

the only churches in Asia Minor. Why did the Holy Spirit select these seven? We must answer this along these lines. The word addressed to them was for all the churches of that time. These seven were selected as representative of all the rest. These seven were selected as representative of all the rest. Each church had its own strengths and weaknesses so that, taken together, they form a composite of the spiritual needs of the church at any age. The number seven symbolizes the covenant, hence these churches represent God's covenant people in this world, struggling to maintain the cause of Christ. The message, then, is for the church of all ages. We must examine ourselves to determine whether we are strong or weak and heed the admonition of Christ, "He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This leads us to point out that the purpose of this letter is threefold.

1. It was written to correct and encourage the church of Christ as she does battle with the forces of evil. The greatest enemy is within the church: apostasy, spiritual decline, heeding seducing spirits. Well may we listen to the warning of Christ to repent and remember from which we are fallen.

2. Persecution loomed large upon the horizon, and the church needed encouragement. The worship of Domitian as god posed a great threat for all Christians. As persecution became the practice of Imperial Rome, the saints needed to look to Christ to remain faithful.

3. The greatest hope for all saints is this, Christ is coming again. The whole book of Revelation unfolds before us the great future of the saints. It explains that Christ will come in the way of tribulation. In all these things, the church is more than conquerors through Christ, Who loves us. His call, "Behold, I come quickly," stirs us on to faithful obedience. A careful reading and study of this book prepares us to endure unto the end.

METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

As part of the introduction to this book of Revelation, we face the question as to how it is to be interpreted. Various writers have used different methods, and this has contributed to the confusion in trying to understand the meaning of this important book. Some methods used are:

1. Spiritual method: an attempt to allegorize much of the book. Some in the early church taught a literal return of Christ to earth for a thousand year reign. In rejecting this, these men spiritualized the book (reduced it to a struggle between good and evil) and rejected any historical application.

2. Praeterist Method: All prophecies of the book have been fulfilled during the early Jewish conflict and during the time of Nero. It was written for the church of that time, and only chapters 20-22 are future.

3. Continuous-Historical Method: By symbolic language, the book explains all history, from John to the end of the world. As example, the first two trumpets of Revelation 8:7, 8 are interpreted as reference to the attack by the Saracens and Turks on Rome. The beast of Revelation 13 is the Pope. By trying to fit the details into a historical sequence, there arise endless differences as to what symbol of the vision fits what historical event.

4. Futuristic Method: All details of chapters 4-22 refer to some events that must yet take place. It all refers to events connected with the one event, the return of Christ.

The book of Revelation must be viewed as prophecy that pictures in symbolic form what has and will take place in history in connection with the eventual return of Christ. We are not given the details as to who or when, rather what takes place and how it affects the church as she looks for the return of her Lord.

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

The Significance of Your Baptism

Rev. Ron Cammenga

For most of you, the sacrament of Baptism was administered to you in your infancy. At that time

you were all unaware of your baptism, that you were baptized, and the meaning and significance of

your baptism. The Baptists suppose that this constitutes an objection to infant baptism. We Reformed deny the validity of this objection. As our Form For Baptism states, "And although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ . . ."

Although at the time that you were baptized as infants you were altogether unaware of the meaning of your baptism, you must not remain unaware of its meaning. Through the instruction of your parents and the church, as well as your own study of these things, you must be made aware of the tremendous significance of your baptism. For your baptism is of the greatest significance. The event of your baptism, now many years ago, is an event that has the most important implications, not only for all of your earthly life, but for all eternity.

The first important significance of your baptism is that it marks you as a child of the covenant. The significance of your baptism is that it identifies you as one born in the church, as a member of the people of God. You are not a heathen who stands outside of the sphere of the church of God, and altogether apart from the knowledge of the gospel. The Heidelberg Catechism, in Q.A. 74, teaches that by baptism we are "distinguished from the children of unbelievers . . ." And the Belgic Confession, in Article 34, the article entitled "Of Holy Baptism," states that by baptism we are "separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him, whose ensign and banner we bear . . ."

Baptism is a mark of distinction. Just as circumcision in the Old Testament clearly identified one as an Israelite, distinguishing the people of God in the Old Testament from all the heathen nations about them, so baptism in the New Testament identifies those who have been baptized as belonging to the church. The baptized child is the child, not of unbelieving, but of believing parents. He will be instructed and trained, not in the world, but within the church.

In the second place, the significance of baptism is that it functions as a powerful means of grace. Baptism has power, tremendous, saving power. That power is that it is an instrument for the strengthening of our faith.

There are several Scripture passages which emphasize the saving power of baptism. The Apostle Peter writes in I Peter 3:21 that "baptism doth also now save us . . ." Baptism functions in our lives in a saving way. In Acts 22 Paul records his conversion on the Damascus road and his subsequent call

to be an apostle of Christ. In the passage he also recounts Ananias' coming to him in Damascus and restoring his sight. In verse 16 he records the word of Ananias to himself immediately after his sight had been restored: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." This verse teaches that baptism functions to wash away our sins. Again, baptism is of saving power. In Titus 3:5 we read, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Here baptism is called the "washing of regeneration."

Baptism has saving power, of course, not because of some inherent power in the water of baptism, or because of some mystical power possessed by the minister who administers the baptism. The Heidelberg Catechism very clearly denies this in Q.A. 72: "Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself? Not at all: for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin." The Belgic Confession states in Article 34, "Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God . . . Therefore the ministers, on their part, administer the sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord giveth that which is signified by the sacrament."

Baptism has saving power because God is pleased to use the sacrament as a means of grace and faith. The sacrament is not an empty ceremony, of no real value. But the sacrament is the means by which God is pleased to give us that which is signified by the sacrament. Baptism saves us because God uses the sacrament to give us *the assurance* of our salvation. Baptism washes away our sins because God uses the sacrament to assure us of the washing away of our sins: ". . . that I am as certainly washed by His blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water . . ." (Heidelberg Catechism, Q.A. 69). Baptism is the washing of regeneration because by means of the sacrament God gives believers *the assurance* of their regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

Always these are the great questions and the great struggles in the life of the believer. "Am I a saved child of God? Has Christ died for me? Are my sins washed away? Does the Holy Spirit live and work in my life?" And now baptism is a mighty means of God to give to the believer the assurance of his salvation and faith.

This is true, of course, only as we think about our baptism, contemplate and meditate on that baptism. Baptism isn't some kind of automatic means

of grace, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. But we must think about our baptism, and we must consciously consider the great significance of our baptism. We must do this all our life long. Our baptism ought to be a means of grace to us our whole life. The Belgic Confession, in that same 34th article, says, "Neither doth this baptism only avail us, at the time when the water is poured upon us, and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life"

We ought to think about our baptism more than we do. In our times of doubt and despair, when the assurance of faith and salvation seem far away, when we are troubled by the guilt of our sins and the accusations of the devil, we ought to think about our baptism. At such times our baptism ought to be a powerful means of grace to us. Martin Luther tells us that when he was tormented with doubts and fears, he would often write two words on the table in front of him with chalk: "*Baptizatus sum*," that is, "I have been baptized." Often the reality of his baptism was the means of God to bring Luther out of his despair and give him the victory in his spiritual struggles. Our baptism ought to be the same for us.

The third significance of our baptism is that it constitutes a call to us to holiness of life. Since we have been baptized, we must walk as those who are baptized. As those who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, we must live to the glory and praise of this God, and not to ourselves. Since baptism is a sign and seal of the washing away of our sins, we must not walk in sin, but we must hate and flee from our sins. Since we have received the sign and seal of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, we must live as those who are regenerated. Since we are holy, we must be holy.

It is this that the Form For Baptism calls our part in the covenant. "Whereas in all covenants, there

are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

Now it is exactly by refusing to walk in this holy way that the reprobate, carnal seed shows itself in the church. And when it does, that seed must be dealt with. That seed must not be allowed to remain in the church, comfortably at ease in Zion, trusting that they have been baptized and therefore they have nothing to worry about. But that carnal seed must be dealt with. It must be disciplined, and if there is no repentance, excommunicated.

But even then, they have been baptized. And that baptism is significant, significant forever and forever. It increases their guilt before God, and it increases their punishment in the condemnation of hell. On the great day of the judgment, and forever as they suffer in hell, the fact of their baptism will always be before them. And in the endless ages of hell, the pagans will point their fingers at the sons and daughters of the church who despised their baptism and trampled the blood of Jesus Christ under foot, and say to them, "You knew! You knew! You were baptized; you had the sign; you had believing parents; you had the instruction that we never had." And forever their baptism will be a testimony against them.

But for the believer, for the believing young person, his baptism is a great comfort and a mighty encouragement. It is the great means of God in his life to distinguish him from the world, to give him the assurance of his salvation, and to incite him to holiness.

GUEST ARTICLE

Amazing Love of Father

Rev. R.G. Moore

I would like to consider with you a portion of the truth of God's Word as it is given to us in I John 3:1-3. We read a very blessed truth in these verses.

It is good to reflect upon them for awhile; and thus we shall through this meditation. First we quote the text referred to above: "Behold, what manner of

love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

We read in our text that "we shall be like Him." It is evident from the context that the pronoun "Him" is indicative of God. This of course does not mean that we will become gods, for this would be heresy, a heresy which some would follow today. However, by taking an earthly figure implied in our text we shall try to discern the truth of this clause. Let us look at a child in this life. A male child, one that has just been born, is a frail creature and certainly not the equal of his father who begat him. However, as this child advances in years, the resemblance between him and his father may be strong — so that beholding the child, men may say the child is the very picture or image of the father. He may have his father's eyes, profile, mannerisms and character. In a word, the child takes right after his father. He is like him.

In light of the above figure we may grasp something of the meaning of our text when John says, "we shall be like Him." The promise of God found in our text is precisely that when we, God's people, shall have appeared with Christ in glory (and we will), we shall be like God, our Father, who begat us, according to His perfect will. Of course, the resemblance then will be perfect, as we are taken to perfected glory. So then, as God is righteous, so will we be righteous perfectly. As God is holy, so will we be holy perfectly. All vestiges of sin will then be wholly obliterated. We will love as God loves, desiring His desires, thinking as He thinks, and willing His will. We will speak and act as He speaks and acts, we will desire and love the things that He desires and loves, which is above all His own blessed self and His people redeemed in Christ.

In other words, we will take right after God in the true spiritual sense, being the perfect creaturely likeness of our God in Christ. In the likeness of God we will show forth perfectly the glories of God's virtues as we are conformed to the image of His only begotten Son. What amazing love of God!

For He adopts us as His children. By nature, apart from Christ, we are not like God at all — in reality totally unlike Him spiritually. It cannot be otherwise, as by nature we were children of darkness, of disobedience, yea even of Satan. For we committed sin and were unrighteous, as John says in another part of this epistle: "He that committeth

sin and doeth unrighteousness is of the devil and is not of God." We have believed the lie and we partook of Satan's nature. We did his lusts and with him pitted ourselves against God and hated Him. In the words of Paul we were dead in sins and trespasses: "Walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

But God has called such as we are by nature, His sons! No wonder the exclamation of the immensity of God's love. Our God has adopted us! As rightfully as we belonged to Satan, in whose power we willfully placed ourselves in the way of our sin and its guilt, so now we belong to God and are rightfully His, through His adoption of us and through His calling us sons. In the earthly figure a child, should you adopt one, becomes yours legally. This takes place by a judge pronouncing the child yours. This action of the court is put into writing, signed and sealed, and he becomes yours — heir to you.

So did our God, the judge of heaven and earth, pronounce such as we are His sons. His elect chosen in Christ He views in the cross of Christ, and on the basis of Christ's redeeming work He adopted them, who were children of darkness, to be His children. Wonder of grace!

Let us return to the figure. The child that one may adopt may or may not look like us. We could take all the care possible to select a child that shall appear like us. And our hopes may be very high that the child will grow up to be like us. But, in fact, the very opposite could happen — that not only the child may not look like us at all, but also he may, in spite of our labor and instruction, manifest himself as rebellious and unruly, etc.

On the other hand, our God does not adopt us upon the basis of who we are, or what we look like. In fact, spiritually we were as unlike God as we could possibly be, being children of darkness, deformed spiritually, blind, naked sinners. By nature we were undone sinners, driven by the curse of the law — even headed to sure and eternal destruction, and that rightly. Totally depraved we were. But this did not deter God from loving us in Christ. For He is ever unchangeable, and in elective love He has adopted us, calling us sons. For God is not limited as man, nor by man, as the error of free-willism would teach. But God is able and desirous to remake us, and He does, so that we will look like Him. He in Christ raises us from our spiritual death, as He cleanses us from all of our sins by the blood of His only begotten Son. He creates in us a new spirit and inscribes the law of His kingdom upon our hearts, that we may live in its liberty. Even now God, by His Word and Spirit, impresses

His likeness upon our minds and wills, so that we are become like Him. John says, "Now we are sons of God."

Yet this is only very imperfect, for sin still riots in our flesh and taints the best of our works. Even the holiest of men confess that they have but the beginning of new obedience. Reading Romans seven we see the apostle Paul also so confessing. It is the experience of every child of God. The result of this is that the spiritual resemblance between us and God is in this life so very far from being perfect that John says, not that we are like God, but that we shall be like Him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when it shall appear, we shall be like Him." A child, when just born, is a frail creature, but a potential man. Looking at the child, all we see is a defenseless babe on its mother's breast. But we know that when that child is full grown, he shall be like his father. Now it is concealed, but it shall appear that he is his father's son.

In this life, God's people are babes in Christ. We are now become sons. Yet, that babe in Christ is potentially a spiritual man, only that man does not yet appear. What we mean is that, looking at the child of God, you indeed see a babe in Christ. We are spiritually frail, weak and infirm. We walk only with great effort in the ways of God's command. We speak the language of the kingdom of heaven only with greatest difficulty. However, we know that when it shall appear what this babe (what we) shall be, that that which is now for the large part hid shall be revealed in glory, then shall we be like our heavenly Father perfectly! This is the promise of the gospel! What amazing love of our God bestowed upon us in Christ.

It shall come to pass, and this without fail. John says, "We shall see God our Father." Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Understand that we who are finite, shall see God, Who is infinite and eternal. How? Our text says we will! We shall see God's face, which is wholly adapted to our capacity to see and know. That face is Christ Jesus. In Him in heaven we shall see the glory of God and know Him. The infinite goodness of His invisible Being, the love, mercy, and compassion of God we shall see perfectly in Christ. Even as Christ said, He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father. Verily we shall see God as He is!

Already now in principle we are sons and see Him, only now not as He is, that is, not in all His fulness. Your child, when he is still young, often does not see you, his parents, as you are. As parents, you sacrifice and toil for your child. When your child is sick, you nurse him back to health.

You share his joys and his sorrows. The interests of your child lie close to your heart, and often you bear your child on the wings of prayer to God. In love you rebuke, admonish, and chasten your child. In a word, you deeply love him. But this is often precisely what your child fails to discern. The child can be very critical of you and your actions with respect to him. He can be rebellious or filled with complaint. They may see you as too exacting, questioning even the justness of your guidance — so much so that he may even doubt your love. And it goes to show you that, because of sin and the lack of understanding, your child does not see you as you are. However, as your child grows into a man, he often looks back upon the way you led him, how that you instructed and corrected him, and now discerns that all you did was for his good and done in true love.

Spiritually, so is it with us, beloved in the Lord. Dwelling in us, that is, in our flesh, is no good thing. For we are still sinful — though children of God. Very much are we like that immature child. We too often murmur and complain to God, we even all too often become critical of God's ways with us. Like Asaph we can become envious of the foolish and the prosperity of the wicked. And sometimes we will even question whether God loves us, while the fact is that He so loves us that He has us engraved in the palms of His hands. What great sacrifice God made for us. He gave His only begotten Son over to the accursed cross, that we might not perish but have everlasting life. Further, He washes us of all our sins in Christ and realizes in us the fruits of Christ's atonement, and still further preserves us in His power unto the incorruptible inheritance. He cares for us each day perfectly, and this despite our murmurings and complaints. It reveals that now we still do not see God as He is. O! the darkness caused by our sin.

However, we are going to grow up spiritually. In fact, even now under the preaching of Christ and by His Spirit we are doing this. But when that spiritual man, concealed often in us as we are babes in the faith, shall have appeared, we shall be like God. Then the resemblance between us and our God shall be perfect. We shall be His friends and He shall be our God in perfection.

How we will bless God and sing His praises. We shall be like Him! Even now that hope is sure in our hearts. For we are now sons in Christ. O! How great the love of our God!

*Take time to study
the Standard Bearer!*

News From Our Churches

January 15, 1985

Rev. Jon Smith has accepted the call to Trinity Protestant Reformed Church of Houston, Texas. Rev. M. Kamps has declined the call to Hull Church in Iowa. A welcome program for Rev. Bekkering and his family was held December 19th at Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan.

While Rev. Miersma is laboring in New Zealand, please send all bulletin announcements for First Church in Holland, Michigan to Mrs. Brent Overway, 791 South 96th Avenue, Holland, MI 49423; telephone — 722-4848. Grandville Church in Grandville, Michigan has a new bulletin clerk: Rev. J. Kortering, 3212 Calvin Ct., Grandville, MI 49418. Please forward any changes in bulletin clerks or clerks of the consistory to me so that they can be put in the news.

Loveland Church in Colorado has changed their evening service to 6:00 P.M., except for the months of June through September. Grandville Church has made the following change in its order of worship. At the conclusion of the worship service, while the congregation remains standing, the consistory will

shake hands with the pastor. The pastor and one elder will then exit to the back of the auditorium. The congregation then leaves the auditorium as families, including their children. The pastor and elder extend greetings to our families and visitors as they leave the auditorium. This will give better expression to an orderly conclusion to the worship service. This gives the office bearers opportunity to express greetings to the congregation and thus express the true love for one another in Christ.

The Evangelism Committee of South Holland Church in Illinois has received correspondence from Japan. A married couple from Japan was referred to South Holland by someone in Australia who received pamphlets from South Holland. Perhaps we will have some new subscribers from Japan in the near future.

The Office Bearers' Conference was well attended on January 8 at Southeast Church in Grand Rapids. Prof. Hanko gave an encouraging speech on the "Elder's Role." DH

Report of Classis East

January 9, 1985

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, January 9, 1985 at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Each church was represented by two delegates. Present also was Home Missionary Kenneth Hanko and the Rev. G. Lubbers. The Classis also welcomed Rev. W. Bekkering, who attended Classis East for the first time as a delegate.

The business of this session was ordinary for a January Classis. Much time was spent in voting. The voting results were as follows: Classical Committee: Rev. J. Kortering to a three-year term; Delegates *ad examina*: primus three-year term: Rev. G. Van Baren, secundus three-year term: Rev. W. Bekkering; Synodical Delegates: MINISTERS: *Primi*: B. Gritters, C. Haak, J. Kortering, G. Van Baren; *Secundi*: M. De Vries, R. Flikkema, M. Joostens, B. Woudenberg; ELDERS: *Primi*: C. Kuiper, D. Lotterman, D. Ondersma, G. Van Overloop; *Secundi*: W. De Kraker, G. Feenstra, W. Koops, P. Miedema. Rev. C. Hanko and Rev. H. Veldman were elected to serve as church visitors with Rev. J. Heys chosen as alternate.

The January Classis is also the occasion for the submission of subsidy requests, this time for fiscal year 1986. Covenant's request for \$11,500, Kalamazoo's request for \$7,000, and Byron Center's request for \$6,259 were approved and now will be forwarded to Synod for its approval. In connection with Byron Center's request, considerable time was spent on discussing whether subsidy should be granted since this congregation now has 32 families, thus over the 30-family guideline. Classis decided, however, that the circumstances in this young congregation required that this subsidy be granted. Grandville informed the Classis that their congregation would be self-supporting beginning January 1, 1985.

Expenses for this meeting amounted to \$496.00. Classis will meet next on May 8, 1985 at Kalamazoo.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the SouthWest Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to fellow member James Schipper and family in the passing of their father, REVEREND MARINUS SCHIPPER.

May the bereaved family be comforted with the Word of God found in Revelation 21:4 — "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away."

P. Lotterman, Pres.
C. Kuiper, Vice Pres.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 1, 1985, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HENRY T. KIEL celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren thank our Heavenly Father Who gave them to us. We pray that God will continue to be near them and bless them in the years ahead.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts." (Psalm 145:3, 4)

Tom and Kathy Verbeek	Sandy Kiel
Jeff and Barb Steenholdt	Dan and Deb Kiel
Tom and Marcia Kiel	5 grandchildren

Kalamazoo, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Congregation and Council of SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to our member Mrs. Linda Young and her family in the death of her father and our fellow saint MR. BUD BYLSMA, who went to his eternal rest on January 3, 1985.

May the truth "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" sustain us all the days of our journey.

Rev. Carl Haak, Pres.
Harlow Kuiper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The SouthEast Protestant Reformed Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society expresses their sympathy to our sister, Mrs. Marinus Schipper and her family in the death of REV. SCHIPPER. We thank God for the faithful labor and preaching of the Word performed by Rev. Schipper as our pastor for 16 years.

Ps. 34:22, "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian High School will be hiring one full-time faculty member for the 1985-1986 academic year. Those who can serve the school in the areas of vocal music director, mathematics, science, and computer-related courses are encouraged to apply. Applicants should send letters of application to Covenant Christian High School, 1401 Ferndale S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504, attention Mr. Frank Block, Education Committee Chairman.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of First Church of Grand Rapids, MI, express our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Helen Bylsma and family in the loss of her husband and their father, GERARD.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1)

Mrs. G. De Vries, Pres.
Mrs. C. Pastoor, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

The new address of the Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church is: 8360 Clyde Park Ave., S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315.

The name and address of our new Clerk is: Mr. Kenneth Kuiper, 6551 Ivanrest, S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315. His phone number is: (616) 534-1927.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kuiper, Sr., in the death of her father, MR. GERARD BYLSMA. May the grace of God comfort you in your sorrow.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of the SouthWest Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express their Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Schipper and family in the death of his father, REV. MARINUS SCHIPPER.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:5)

Mr. Darrel Huiskens, Pres.
Mrs. Roselyn Moelker, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Congregation and Council of SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their Christian sympathy to our dear member, Mrs. Helen Schipper and her family in the death of her husband and God's faithful servant, REV. MARINUS SCHIPPER, whom God took unto Himself on January 2, 1985.

"The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate." (Psalm 34:22)

Rev. Carl Haak, Pres.
Harlow Kuiper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, expresses their sincere sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. William Kooiker in the death of her brother, RICHARD MULDER.

May our Covenant God comfort her and grant her His peace.

Mr. Ron Koole, Pres.
Mrs. Thomas De Jong, Sec'y.

IN LOVING MEMORY

On January 3, 1985, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and brother, GERARD E. BYLSMA, at the age of 68 years. We rejoice that he is in Glory with his Lord and we pray that Jehovah, our Covenant God, will uphold us by His Grace and give us the peace that passeth all understanding.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

Mrs. Gerard Bylsma
Gerald and Bonnie Kuiper
Donald and Judi Doezeema
Duane and Shirley Gunnink
Paul and Linda Young

Mrs. John Bartelds
Mr. Ralph Meyer
Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Griffioen
Mr. and Mrs. George De Vries
and 16 grandchildren

First Church,
Grand Rapids, Michigan