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Entertainment

Entertainment is the amusement, pleasure or instruction derived from conversation, discourse, and argument. It is the pleasure which one receives from anything interesting which holds or arrests our attention.

Whether alone or in a group, at home or away, young people have a desire to be entertained. Entertainment to break monotony of daily toils may be all right, but how about the evenings the Young People's Society meets? Is there something more interesting then, too? Does a party (of any kind or description) keep us from going there? We, as people of God, certainly cannot have more pleasure or instruction anywhere else, than to study and search God's Word. With this in mind, our entertainment will never be first, but always last. We must show by what we do and by what we do not do, whom we are. We should be distinguishable from the world even in our entertainment. The problem is not, "Is there sufficient entertainment?" but "How shall we as Protestant Reformed youth entertain ourselves?"

Today we live in an extremely evil age, and sin is rapidly increasing. Worldly entertainment, such as, auto racing, drinking, and attending theaters, is being practiced by young people who have been brought up in the sphere of the church. Many indulge in these various pleasures on Sunday as well as week evenings, although some may take time to attend Church services or Young People's meetings first. The latter two, not only are corrupt in themselves, but also require unnecessary buying and selling on the Lord's Day. Do we find pleasure in these? I think it better, that we do not classify the above as entertainment.

I think we can get a group together at someone's home and find some good indoor entertainment. Or suppose we are to find entertainment from conversation, discourse, and (or) argument. Think of one or more of those questions that time and again arise in our minds. Get the group of young people together and discuss it. This way, we can enjoy ourselves, probably be instructed, and possibly amused.

As far as outdoor entertainment in winter is concerned, ice skating and sledging are fine. It is a splendid way of getting away from all winter indoor monotony, whatever your work may be, whether it be at home, school, or office. It is good physical exercise as well.

Some of us like to read. This is very
timely entertainment. One may receive much knowledge and wisdom by reading. The main question is not “How much do you read?” but “What do you read?” If you plan to spend some time reading, what do you reach for first, the sport page, the funnies, or possibly the beauty columns? Or do you pick up your daily paper, quickly read the head lines of the front page and cast it quickly aside with little or no thought. I hope our reading does not consist of only this. It will profit us little or nothing. But I hope we are eager to reach for the “Beacon Lights,” “Standard Bearer,” or some good book, wherewith we may enlighten our minds and benefit our souls.

Many of us listen to the radio much of the time. What then do we listen to? News, music, and stories. Though it may not be thoroughly entertainment, we should listen to the news. We know most of it is corruption either in our own country or abroad. By hearing it daily, will remind us that the time in which we live is marked by evil. We must remain here for a time in the world living as pilgrims, but not of the world, lest we perish with it. The world will constantly increase in corruption and sin. But the Church need not fear, but look steadfastly to the coming of the Lord of glory.

Music? What kind? “Entertaining music” you say. Music that is the product of the ungodly, that the world entertains itself with?

Oh, yes, at Christmas time they sing carols and Santa Claus songs often on the same program. On rare occasions throughout the rest of the year the same principle is used. We cannot mix God with the world. Aside from our “Reformed Witness Hour,” religious programs in word and song are apt to lead astray. Let us be on our guard!

“I just can’t miss that story.” Oh, yes, dramatic performances. Over radio you can’t see the performance, still the principle is wrong. We are given one life to live to the glory of God. We may not imitate sins of other people to entertain, nor be entertained by such. On television and at dramatic performances you see these things, so much the worse. Many programs over radio, are only a means to bring the sound of the world into the home. Television besides the latter, brings the sight as well.

When alone or as a group, young people enjoy singing. What then do we sing and what is our motive, to sing to God or to men? Today the world has many pleasing tunes, and words to them that are hatred to God, and full of unbelief. Others, so-called hymns, have a form of godliness, but deny the true Christ. There are countless Negro spirituals and modern hymns that are sung merely because of their pleasing tunes. Do we move the Psalter aside to sing any of these? I think this is done all too often. Yes, we may and should sing hymns, but we should be careful as to what we sing. We should sing nothing that is untrue.

True singing is from the regenerated heart to God. When we sing, let us not sing for entertainment only, but as a means to praise God with our lips. Let us think of the beauty of the words of our Psalter, remembering that they are scriptural. All that we sing, should be such that is to His glory that through our singing, God is Praised and Glorified.

All the world does is to satisfy its sinful amid evil lusts and desires. How is it possible for the child of God to have pleasure in walking in the evil of the world?

We, Covenant young people, have been brought up in Christian homes and schools. Some of us even had the privilege of attending our Protestant Reformed schools. We have been and are being taught the truth concerning the Scriptures and confessions. As regenerated children of God, by His grace, we love this truth, and hope to be instructe
further therein. Therefore, we should have no pleasure in the darkness of the world, but try to pattern our lives so that others seeing our walk of life will know we are not of the world, though the approval of men, we will not gain. Hence, we should not find entertainment in and with the world, but in the midst of those we love in Christ.

Beverly Hoekstra
Hull, Iowa.

DONATIONS FOR "BEACON LIGHTS"
Oak Lawn Singspiration .................. 31.25
South Holland Society .................. 3.65
South Holland Church ................. 19.06
Second Prot. Reformed Church ....... 29.65
Ladies Aid, First Church ............ 50.00
Second Church Singspiration ......... 53.40
Radio Choir Singspiration .......... 99.80

Notice to Societies: Those of you who use "Beacon Lights" Bible Outlines may be interested to know that the editor, Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, is willing to answer in "Beacon Lights" difficult questions which may arise in society discussion. However, when you send in questions, please observe the four following stipulations:

1. The questions should be significant ones, not questions concerning insignificant details.
2. The questions sent in may concern either the question-outlines, or problems or questions that arose in connection with the society discussion and on which there was difference of opinion or lack of a conclusion in society.
3. The questions should be clearly stated, with the particular difficulty concisely put.
4. The questions should come from the societies, not from individual members.
Itchy Feet

Many people seem to have trouble with it. A person hardly knows what to do with such feet. One can rub them, beat them, or try all kinds of things to cure them, but they still itch. They itch when you go to bed, they itch when you get up (and that is worse — have you ever tried to rub your feet when you have your shoes on?).

Of course, there are all sorts of cures. Those cures range all the way from soaking them in a very weak formaldehyde solution to the wearing of white socks. Finally, if all these solutions fail (and what a disappointment to admit that one was unable to cure it one's self), a person can obtain medical assistance. Such is one form of itchy feet.

But a person can have itchy feet in yet another sense — somewhat in a figurative sense. Such feet are usually attached to young people, although even older people are not without the ailment. One gets the desire to pack up and go on the road. The symptoms usually become more pronounced as the fine weather approaches. Where to go and what to do becomes the problem. Approaching spring and summer means vacation — short though it may be, and vacation means that for another year one will, to a certain extent, cure his itchy feet.

Although we as Protestant Reformed young people also get itchy feet, we know the cure for it, don't we? Oh, they get itchy feet all right, that is evident from the questions that are being asked now already. "How are Hull and Doon coming along with their convention plans?" "Do you know what the theme and divisions are already?" "Who is going to be on the program?" "How are we getting there from Michigan and Illinois, on a chartered bus?" "Will we meet the young people from Colorado and South Dakota again this year?" "Will the young people from Redlands and Lynden be able to come now?"

Now I do not pretend to be a doctor of any sort or fashion, but possibly I can give you a little peep behind that "corn curtain" in order to quiet those itching feet until the proper time. In the first place, the farmers of Iowa are working hard already. Farm machinery is being reconditioned, seed is being obtained, the hogs are being fattened — there's no doubt about it, the banquet will be something we are all going to remember.

There has been other bits of news seeping through the "corn curtain," and it is evident that the Hull and Doon convention committee is not sitting idly by. Rumor has it that they have already sought information concerning the badges we will wear. Where to go and what to do on the outing is being discussed. The good people of Hull and Doon are being warned that they might have to give up their comfortable beds during the convention week.

And although it was labeled TOP SECRET, I think it can safely be revealed now: our intelligence service intercepted a letter coming from behind the "corn curtain" which contained the following interesting facts: (1) a theme has been chosen, although its divisions are not yet certain; (2) a theme song has been decided upon. What they are, has not been ascertained as of this late Jan. 18. Nor has it been discovered whe...
the exact date of the convention will be. But I can assure you that we will put our best men on this task. If they have ferreted out any additional information in time for the next issue, we will be sure to inform you.

Our men who have been trailing the Federation Board members also have reported. Although the reports are yet sketchy, we have pieced them together and submit to you the following. There seems no reason to doubt that they plan to charter a bus. The following sounded a bit strange to us, but the reports say that it possibly will be of the dog family. The report states also that the Board does not intend to allow anyone to sleep more than two hours on the bus at any one time. (They are more cruel than even I imagined.) It seems they have games planned which will keep everyone on their toes, or at least on the edge of their seats. I sincerely hope, however, that the report was incorrect when it stated that everyone was going to have to count all of the corn stalks along the way.

So, young people, hold back those itchy feet until August. Be patient, but get prepared. It's not too early to make definite plans for the convention now. I can't urge you to join the crowd, for we are not a very large group, but I do urge you to join the rest of the Protestant Reformed young people at Doon and Hull. The Lord willing, we are going to have a large representation of young people there in August. And it's going to be a week of fun and physical recreation not only, but there will be the spiritual fellowship of young people who are one in faith. And by no means least are the three speeches which are delivered. What a privilege, young people, and what an honor for us when three qualified men of God are willing and desirous to prepare speeches, in connection with a particular theme, especially for the young people. An opportunity to hear these speeches we shouldn't pass up even if it meant traveling 5000 miles.

In the brief time which remains between now and the convention, I have a suggestion for you and your society. As you should know, our conventions are the place for individual societies to bring up business which concerns the whole. Now surely there is some suggestion which you or your society has which might benefit all of us. I realize that it might be difficult to think of new and better ways in which our convention and Beacon Lights could be run. It is a fact that everything apparently has been going smoothly in the past few years. Yet there must be ways in which future conventions can be made even more profitable than those of the past.

I would suggest the following which could possibly be carried out in the next month. The program committee of your society could appoint one or more people of the society to make a complete report on how a convention takes place and include in it suggestions for improvement. Then the society can thoroughly discuss the report. From the discussion there will probably arise some very definite suggestions which then could be made in the form of a proposal. (Proposals must be sent to the Federation secretary, Thelma Pastoor.) In that way we can lay the ground work at this convention for even better ones in the future.

P. S.: We received a special news flash since the above went to press. One of our informers has told us that the Federation Board believes that anyone can come from Michigan and Illinois and go to Hull or Doon by bus, can spend the entire week there, and return for less than twenty-five dollars! (I suppose that is true only if one doesn't eat on the way or buy too many souvenirs.) If we can rely on the above information, our advice to the young people of Mich-
Preparation

The Means Of Grace

We must devote a few articles to the all important subject of the means of grace in our discussion of "preparation."

This is of central importance in our entire series of articles, because all that we have discussed in past issues — catechism, society, consistory service, etc. — means nothing apart from the means of grace. There is only one means of grace; there is only one means which the Holy Spirit uses to apply grace to the hearts of His people; and that is the preaching of the Word. And the preaching of the Word is of central significance in the life of the Christian, and in the life of the covenant youth in the midst of this world.

In this article, I wish to say a few things about the means of grace as to their meaning. It is not my purpose to go into detail concerning these things, but I have in mind a few practical observations which should be brought to your attention. But before we can discuss these practical observations, we must know of what we are speaking.

We speak much of means. We speak of means of travel, the means of communication, the means of achieving a specific purpose; and we speak in disapproval of that old saying, "The end justifies the means." There are also certain means which God uses to continue our existence in this life. They are means which are inherent in our creation and in our relation to this creation. They are means that are appointed by God, so that if use is not made of them, our existence is terminated. There is the means of food to sustain our life. There is the means of oxygen to enable us to breathe, which is also necessary for life. There are the means to keep warm; to escape the fury of the elements; to quench our thirst; etc. When God created man, He created these means to sustain man's existence. They will always be means for a specific end; bread will never poison; oxygen will never kill; but always these means are used by God for the same purpose. It is this confidence in the means which God has created for our existence, that enables us to continue to live. If we violate the use of the means of our life, we will die.

There are also, therefore, means for our spiritual existence. God has ordained means to give us spiritual life, and to continue our spiritual life while we yet live in the world. They are means which God has ordained for a very specific purpose, and which will not be used therefore for any other purpose; and that is to sustain the spiritual life of the saints in this world. To refuse to use these means results in death. For only by these means does God give life to His people.

They are called means of grace. They are means which God employs through the Spirit of Jesus Christ to apply grace to the hearts of His people.

The next question is, therefore, what is grace? We will define grace in brief as spiritual holiness. The person who is spiritually and morally and ethically holy, is gracious. But God alone can be said to be gracious. There is no creature who is gracious, for God only is the Holy One. Therefore grace also means, the power of God whereby He makes His people to be holy. But when the people of God are holy, they are saved. They are do
livered from the power of sin and death; they are made righteous; they are made perfectly clean; they are preserved from falling into sin; and they are brought into heaven. In short, they are made the recipients of the full salvation of God. So grace means, therefore, the power of God whereby He saves His people. Means of grace are therefore, means which God uses to save His people.

It is important to stress the fact, in the first place, that God uses these means to save. These means are not like the means of our natural existence which are prepared and used for that purpose, but which we can take or leave. They are means which God has ordained and which He uses. There is no human cooperation in the use of these means. God gives grace; man does not take it. God gives grace by means; man does not employ the means by his own power. Although it is true that man consciously makes use of the means, and consciously therefore receives for himself grace, it is not as though anyone in the world can make use of these means; for it is only those who have already received grace, who make use of the means of grace, and therefore receive more grace. We must emphasize that they are means which God uses to save us, and not means which we use to save ourselves.

It follows from this that therefore the means of grace are only for the elect. Those whom God has determined to save from all eternity, and those therefore, for whom Christ died, are the only ones who receive the grace of God through the means of which we are speaking. Therefore, to those whom God has chosen, the means will accomplish the purpose for which they have been ordained. God sees to it that the means of grace are used to save every one of the elect without an exception; but also to save only those. They only receive grace through the means of grace.

It follows also that these are the only means by which the elect are saved. Because God has ordained certain means to save His people, He uses only those means because He has bound Himself to them. It is conceivable that under certain circumstances other than the ordinary, God may use other means than the means of grace to bring someone to conscious salvation. But we must be careful that we do not de-emphasize the means as the God given means whereby He brings His people to full and complete salvation. It cannot be gainsaid that in the salvation of the people of God in the line of generations, from the beginning to the end of time, there are no other means of salvation but the means of grace to which God has bound Himself.

The means of grace is one. That is the preaching of the Word. But this must wait for another issue.

H. Hanko

THE SHADY DOZEN

"I heard . . . . . ." 
"They say . . . . . ." 
"Everybody says . . . . . ." 
"Have you heard . . . . . .?" 
"Did you hear . . . . . .?" 
"Isn't it awful . . . . . .?" 
"People say . . . . . ." 
"Did you ever . . . . . .!" 
"Somebody said . . . . . ." 
"Would you think . . . . . .?" 
"Don't say I told you . . . . . ." 
"Oh, I think it is terrible . . . . . ."—The Outlook

ITCHY FEET

(Continued from page 5)

igan and Illinois is to lay aside the money now, or, if it is not available yet, find ways of earning it as soon as possible. (Who has ever heard of a vacation as this one will be, all for the small expenditure of less than twenty-five dollars?)

Gise Van Baren
More About God

In 1924, the year marking the historic origin of our Protestant Reformed Churches, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church expressed concerning Rev. Hoeksema that he was Reformed but with a tendency toward one-sidedness. Since that time, in various and repeated forms, the allegation has been made against our Protestant Reformed Churches that our doctrine is one-sided and, consequently, the addressability of the gospel becomes lost, and the responsibility of man is denied, etc., etc. In the most recent debacle of our churches, a part of its former leadership and membership has succumbed to these charges, adopted for itself a gospel of conditions, and now stands with the opposition hurling against us the same malicious slander and untruth.

If these charges are true, they would certainly be reflected in our doctrine or conception of God which is, of course, basic to all other doctrines. But the amazing fact is that not we, but those who oppose the truth maintain a one-sided conception of God. And a one-sided conception of God is certainly false. This we will proceed to make clear.

God is, not as we would philosophically postulate Him to be, but rather, He is as He has made Himself known in His own revelation of truth. We cannot possibly confine the Infinite One within the limitations of a human definition. Apart from His own revelation we cannot even know Him and, for this reason, it would be the height of presumption, and the folly of the biggest lie, to begin to circumscribe God from the basis of human reason. There is no surer way to make a false image, perpetrate idolatry, and serve the lie.

God must speak concerning Himself. Only then do we arrive at a true knowledge of Him. This He also does in His Word which declares that “He is one only simple and spiritual Being.” (See Belgic Confession, Art. 1) GOD IS ONE!

This means, in the first place, that all other beings that either profess to be God or are called Deities by others, are no Gods at all. Even though the number who worship them is legion, the mere fact that they are served by the creature, does not make them God. It is common knowledge that man is idolatrous by nature.

But what does the Word of God say “I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.” (ls. 44:6). “Is there a God besides Me? yea, there is no God: I know not any.” (Is. 44:8) GOD IS ONE!

Secondly, the oneness of God means that all of the virtues, attributes, and perfections of God are one. They are inseparable. This is due to the fact that the sum of His infinite perfections constitutes the fulness of His incomprehensible Essence. When, then, we speak of His attributes, and for the benefit of clarification, even distinguish them, we must constantly be mindful that these distinctions do not separate. Usually we speak of God’s attributes as Communicable and incommunicable, and the former are then further distinguished as those of (a) Intellect, (b) Will, and (c) Power.

In this connection we do not purpose to discuss these attributes as such, however profitable that might be. We aim rather to emphasize the importance (}
maintaining their essential ONENESS. Not to do this is to create a one-sided conception of God, which our accusers do with their philosophic theory of common grace; and which the Truth can never tolerate. A one-sided emphasis is laid upon such virtues of God as love, mercy, grace, kindness, etc., and the revelation is seemingly forgotten, or wantonly ignored, that God is equally just, righteous and holy. Separation is made in the very Essence of God and that only is retained concerning Him, which is pleasing, and acceptable, to vain and foolish man. Inevitably, the result is that even those things concerning God, that are retained, and have a semblance of truth (though a one-sided and, therefore, half-truth, which is the lie) are distorted. The love, grace, and mercy of God is then applied to all men without distinction which **could never be done if these virtues were inseparably connected with the equally important attributes of justice, righteousness, and holiness, as they should be, if the oneness of God is to be maintained.** This is subtle error; far more deceptive than the avowed and open denial of theism. It is the error of many hymns, (the contrast of the Psalms) that have a sickly, one-sided emphasis. When an undue emphasis is laid upon the Transcendence of God, at the expense of His Immanence, the result is the error of Deism. When His Immanence is stressed, ignoring His Transcendence, the result is the error of Pantheism. And, when certain ethical perfections of God are maintained at the expense of others equally important, the result is a denial of the Divine Veracity. This, too, is serious error involving not only one's theological conception but plaguing every sphere of practical christian living.

What then is the truth?

Our Heidelberg Catechism maintains correctly the inseparable unity between the mercy and justice of God in Lord's Day 4. The subject matter treated there concerns the effects of man's fall into sin. Man, in consequence of the fall, is "wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all wickedness, except he is regenerated by the Spirit of God." (q. 8) In view of this, it would appear to our mode of thinking, that God could no longer justly demand of every man perfect adherence to His entire law, for to do this, man is no longer capable. Thus we would reason that the justice of God must recede into the background or be altogether obliterated so that we may see only Divine mercy, according to which, God reaches down and saves the sinner from the plight of his misery. In the gospel, it must be presented as though God mercifully wills the salvation of all, promising, offering, inviting all to be saved. It is not pedagogically wise to preach the severity of God's justice.

But this is exactly wrong, according to the Catechism, and leads to a denial altogether of Divine justice, and thus to a denial of that which God really is; for justice is part of His perfect Being. Instead, Divine justice must be maintained. God is a God Who is terribly displeased with sin, and will punish it in His just judgment temporally and eternally. The soul that sins must die. And when all souls have sinned, all must die. The wrath of God is manifest from heaven upon all the ungodliness of men. He is angry with the wicked every day. To make it different, is to deny His own revelation.

But, isn't God also merciful? Indeed He is, but remember that there is no conflict between His mercy and His justice. These two are inseparably part of the same Divine Being. Hence, mercy can never be a disposition in God to save or deliver all men at the expense of justice. Mercy is Just. And, therefore, mercy is the determination of God to save His people in Christ Jesus in the way of justice. Christ bears the penalty of
eternal death for them. He pays for their transgressions, and on the basis of His just merits, God mercifully redeems His people.

To make a mercy for all, (or grace for all), necessitates a Christ for all. Not only then is the truth concerning God abrogated, but the truth concerning Christ also falls. Error is destructive. Where it gains a small foothold, it undermines the very foundations. All that is ultimately left is a heap of spiritual ruin. And whatever may be the object of error's attack, its ultimate aim is the denial of the God of Truth!

Know the truth, therefore, for the truth shall make you free and then shall ye be free indeed. Begin with knowing GOD, for His fear is the principle of all wisdom! 

Rev. Gerald Vanden Berg

BIBLE OUTLINE

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Chapters 6 and 7

Introduction:

The material of these two chapters can hardly be separated, and therefore in our question-outlines we will treat it as a unit. The choosing of the seven deacons leads up to the narrative of Stephen's dispute with those of the synagogue of the Libertines. And the latter in turn leads up to the narrative of the trial and martyrdom of Stephen.

This section is important because in many ways it marks a turning point in the history of the early New Testament church. First of all, we may note that there is a marked change in the life of the church itself, a change that occasions the appointment of the seven deacons, and, therewith, a change in the institutional life of the church which becomes permanent, so that we still have deacons today. In the second place, there is a change as far as the relation between the church and Jewry is concerned. The enmity of the Jews, though real and bitter, had therefore been somewhat restrained in its manifestation. With the martyrdom of Stephen, however, the break becomes very open and public; and the martyrdom of Stephen becomes the signal for the outbreak of a vicious persecution. In the third place, we have, in close connection with the preceding point, the beginning also of the chain of events that occasions the spread of the gospel beyond the immediate confines of Jerusalem. The church and the preaching of the gospel of the risen Lord are, as it were, forced out of Jerusalem. And finally, this section marks a turning point also in so far as it introduces us to Saul the persecuter, who is destined to become Paul the apostle.

In all this we must surely not forget the main idea of the entire Book of Acts. The matters mentioned above are in no wise to be divorced from the idea that the Holy Spirit here records the things which Jesus continued to do and to teach.

With this "bird's eye view" of the section in mind, let us ask ourselves some definitive questions.


A. The Occasion. vs. 1.

1. When did this take place, and what is meant by the words, "in those days?"
2. How is the above expression further defined? What did the circumstance of the increase in the number of the disciples have to do with this matter.

3. The dispute:
   a. Who were the parties in the dispute? What is meant by "Grecians" as over against "Hebrews" in this connection? Were these actually Gentile Christians, or were they Hellenized Jewish Christians?
   b. Why should the above difference between "Grecians" and "Hebrews" lead to the neglect of the Grecian widows?
   c. What is meant by the "daily ministration?" Cf. also vs. 2.
   d. Were the apostles themselves a party to the dispute? To what extent were they involved?

4. What does this incident reveal concerning the early condition in the apostolic church according to which believers had all things in common? Could this condition be long maintained? Why not?

B. The Decision of the Apostles. vss. 2-4.

1. The presentation of the matter to church. Notice, in this connection, that we are not told exactly how this matter was brought to the attention of the apostles. The murmuring somehow was directed to the apostles, though not at them. Notice, too, that the apostles evidently see cause for action. This matter may not be allowed to disrupt the life of the church. Whether the complaint as such was justifiable is not stated. The narrative would seem to imply that it probably was, judging from the circumstances of the complaint as well as from the fact that the apostles take definite action to remove all occasion for complaint. At any rate, the complaint was present, whether justifiable or not; and the apostles do not judge between the two parties, according to the narrative, but rather take immediate steps to correct the occasion.
   a. What, as far as the apostles were concerned, was evidently part of the occasion for the trouble that arose?
   b. Did the apostle feel that they could give more attention to the work of charity? Why not? Was not this care of the poor widows an important part of the work of the church?
   c. Though the question is not of great importance, it may probably be discussed to an extent: considering the size of the church at this time, how could the entire multitude of the disciples be called together? Would such a gathering be allowed in Solomon's porch? Or were there, perhaps, various meetings, probably each under the direction of one of the twelve?
   d. Why did the apostles call the matter to the attention of the church?

2. The decision:
   a. Who were to choose the men whom the apostles wanted to assist in the work of the daily ministration?
1) Is this the beginning of a democratic form of government in the church?
2) What is the relation between this choosing of qualified men and their appointment to the office? Who appointed them? The people? The apostles? Christ Himself?

b. What must be the qualifications of the men chosen?
1) Why must they be men of honest report? What is meant by “honest report”?
2) What is meant by “full of the Holy Ghost”?
3) What is meant by “wisdom”? Why is “wisdom” necessary to fulfill the duty of deacon? What is the relation between being filled with the Holy Ghost and being full of wisdom?

c. What, according to vss. 3 and 4, is to be the work of the men appointed, in distinction from the work of the apostles? Does this also mean that the deacons are to give their attention exclusively to “prayer, and to the ministry of the word”?

d. How is it to be explained that the apostles can, apparently without any direct commandment from the Lord institute this new office? Is this incident comparable to their “presumption” in the appointment of Matthias?

C. The Appointment and Ordination of the Seven. vss. 5 and 6.

1. The appointment:
   a. What was the reaction of the multitude to the apostles’ plan?
   b. The seven men chosen:
      1) Is there any special significance in the fact that seven were chosen? Cf. also vs. 3.
      2) Which two men are given special mention in the list of deacons, and what does this indicate?
      3) What do these apparently Grecian names indicate?

2. The ordination:
   a. Who ordained the deacons, and why was this necessary?
   b. What was the necessity of the prayer that is mentioned in vs. 6, and what can be said as to the probable contents of this prayer?
   c. What is the significance of the laying on of hands?

D. The Significance of the Appointment of the Seven. vss. 1-6.

In our questions we have repeatedly referred to this event as the appointment and ordination of deacons, taking for granted, therefore, that these men were deacons, and that this is the beginning of the office of deacon in the church. If you have read the passage carefully, however, you will have noted that the term “deacons” does not occur here, and that we have more or less assumed something in using that term in this connection. And we may also state that the opinion that these men were deacons is by no means unanimous. For the sake of coming to a conclusion on this matter, I present here several explanations of this passage which have been given, and suggest that you discuss them:

1. The oldest view of the church holds that in this appointment of the seven we must see the origin of the office of deacon.
2. The view (which is the very opposite of the first) that the service to which these men were appointed involved no ecclesiastical office at all. Theirs was simply a business function, and they were a sort of "committee" appointed to take care of this "business."

3. The view that the function of the seven is the same as that of the elders mentioned in Acts 11:29, 30. In that case they were elders to whom the additional task of the daily ministration was assigned.

4. The rather closely allied view that the office of the seven included that of elder and deacon.

5. The view that the service of the seven was only temporary, and that their appointment was an emergency measure for that special occasion.

In studying this question you should, of course, consult other passages of Scripture which speak of the deaconate, such as 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Bear in mind also that the Form of Ordination of Deacons mentions this passage from Acts 6. If Acts 6 does not speak of the deacons' office, then we shall have to change it.

It may also be interesting and profitable in this connection to make a comparison between the work of these seven deacons and the work of the deacons in our own churches. Is their work comparable? Are our deacons occupied mainly with the so-called work of "charity" in our day? Or has their work frequently degenerated into the work of a kind of business office of the church? And if there is fault to find, how can this be remedied? What are the deacons to do, for example, if there are not many needy in a congregation?

E. The Fruit of this Appointment. vss. 7, 8.

1. For the church at large. Note: What is recorded in vs. 7 is not necessarily a continuation of the narrative about the deacons. It is at least partially connected, however.

   a. What does vs. 7 indicate concerning the growth of the church and the preaching of the gospel after this interruption by the dispute concerning the Grecian widows?

   b. What is especially noted in vs. 7? Did this "secession" by large numbers of priests have anything to do, perhaps with the increased enmity of the Jews which followed?

2. As to Stephen:

   a. How is he described here? What does this description mean?

   b. Is this of any significance as to the question whether the appointment of the deacon met with divine approbation?

   c. Did these wonders and miracles have any connection with his deacon's office?

   d. Were they of any significance, perhaps, as to the persecution of which Stephen became the object?

   (to be continued)
Scraps and Facts

For some time I have been collecting bits of interesting and informative anecdotes and facts concerning the plant and animal world about us. This article, therefore will not be in the form of a running account, but rather a collection of scraps about familiar animals.

Before the year 1850, there was not an English sparrow in the United States; that year eight pairs were imported by the Brooklyn Institute. In Mexico there is a wild turkey that has a habit of sitting in a tree when pursued and then never lets her eye off her pursuer. The story goes that a coyote will run around the tree until the hen gets so dizzy that she falls out and is eaten; thus the expression, “Dizzy Hen.” The Bob-white has been known to have as many as thirty-two eggs in her nest at a time and the problem is that there is not enough room for all. She solves this by placing the eggs on end so that they take a minimum of space.

Did you ever wonder how the leadership of a flock of geese is determined? It seems that the strongest male parent of a small flock assumes leadership and that a real contest ensues when several small flocks band together, again with the strongest of the strong winning the favored position. It is a fact that the pheasant has the most acute sense of hearing found in any game bird. The life span of small birds has been found to be somewhere between ten and fifteen years, for such birds as robins, thrushes, swallows, etc. Larger birds such as the crow and the parrot live much longer on the average.

A few interesting facts about bats are these: They are among the most accurate flyers in the world and, when they are flying, they get tangled in nothing; not even a woman's long hair. Bats do have eyes, and can use them, with the exception of a few entirely cave-dwelling species which are said to be totally blind. They are not classed as birds and give birth to their young; thus they are mammals and do not lay eggs. A bat can carry almost double its own weight while in flight; more than any other flying animal can.

It seems strange that the ever-present carp was unknown in this country before 1877. At that time we imported 350 young fish from Germany for the purpose of stocking some streams. Certain species of the Horned toad can survive in a piece of cement for over a year. During this time they are hibernating and have no need for nourishment. There is a species of frog in Africa that reaches a weight of ten pounds, and native tribes in French West Africa and Cameroons consider them a delicacy.

Some households have both a cat and a bird and this presents the great problem of saving the bird from the cat's claws and jaws. One cure for the cat might be the use of a strong whip. If this doesn't solve the problem, take the bird from the cat's mouth and douse it with pepper before allowing the cat to eat it. It might be wise at the same time to keep a bell around the kitty's neck so that you know what is going on. The Cocker Spaniel was known as the “cocker spaniel” centuries ago in England where they were used for flushing woodcock and other birds of this kind. A dog, similar to common ones today, was the only animal ever domesticated.
by the American Indian; he was then the only animal friend a man had. No pork of any kind should be fed to dogs. Potatoes, too are banned as part of dog diet.

It may be quite surprising, but rabbits do swim. Fact is that the swamp and marsh rabbits are excellent swimmers; all rabbits will resort to water to escape predators. When animals are caught in a trap by their feet or legs it is quite common that they twist off the appendage in order to get free. If they do chew themselves free, they will only gnaw at the portion of the leg which has been numbed by the trap. The front legs of a deer are not joined to the body . . . the front legs are connected to the body with muscles and ligaments. Deer have no gall bladder, though many people aver to the contrary.

During the early 1880's bison or buffalo were finally hunted from the western plains. Records indicate that in 1882 over 200,000 were killed, in 1883 40,000 and in 1884 only 3,000. The Biological Survey estimates that there are now about 22,000 buffaloes on this continent.

It would appear that the ferocity of mammals increases as proportionate size decreases. Mink, marten and other animals of this type are more blood-thirsty than the larger carnivores, while the smaller members of the weasel family pass the larger members of this group in ferocity. The tiny insect eating shrews are fierce and aggressive; and such animals, if increased to the size of, say, a cougar, with their characteristics increased in proportion, would probably be the most terrible of existing carnivores.

You have undoubtedly noticed at one time or another that animals and birds become aware of approaching rain or bad weather. It is most probable that their ear membranes are more sensitive than ours and thus they can detect the difference in air pressure. Bad weather is indicated, for instance, when bees become irritable and linger near their hives; when the garden spider strengthens its web; when ducks raise themselves on their toes and become noisy; when roosters crow during the evening, or at other odd times, or when oxen and deer raise their noses, sniff the air, and go into huddles.

There is no real explanation for the fact that horses have a great antipathy to the camel, but it seems to be instinctive. Though this aversion has been noted for many hundreds of years, no real explanation has been presented. It may be that the camel's odor is objectionable to the horse.

A rattler and copperhead snake are dangerous the minute they are born . . . they are born alive, snapping and ready for all kinds of trouble. A snake is the only vertebrate animal that can swallow things larger than itself. The water moccasin is strictly a southern snake. The snakes called moccasin in the north are a harmless variety. Venomous snakes are not too common in the north anyway. According to Prof. W. B. Hermes of the University of California, the bite of a Black Widow spider is fatal to human beings about once in a hundred times.

Very little of the chamois that we buy in the store is made from the skin of the chamois, an antelope of the high and most inaccessible mountains of Europe and Western Asia. It is made from various skins and is dressed with fish oil. The compass points true north from Charleston, South Carolina, on a north-westerly line that passes close to Columbus, Ohio, and runs through Lansing, Michigan, into Lake Superior. According to experts, osage-orange wood and palm or yew wood is suited to make excellent bows for hunting. By the way, Jim Bowie did invent the Bowie knife. However, it was fashioned to his orders by James Black, a western blacksmith around 1830. This rests upon the testimony of Dan
W. Jones, former governor of Arkansas, with whose father Mr. Black spent his last days. The mistake that a negro made the knife seems to have crept in due to the blacksmith's name.

Should you ever want a map which would give you all the details of a particular area . . . say your county; all you need do is to write to the Geological Survey, Washington, D. C. and one will be forthcoming.

Did you ever know that there are about three hundred varieties of oaks? and that fifty-five are native to America?

**Seven Mammal Myths:**

1. That porcupines “shoot” their quills;
2. That a prairie dog, burrowing owl, and rattlesnake live amicably in the same burrow;
3. That the mating habits of opossum are different from that of other animals;
4. That the red squirrel habitually attempts and many times succeeds in performing surgical operations on gray squirrels;
5. That skunks use their tails to flick their scent;
6. That beavers suck air from logs to make them sink; and
7. That bats are blind.

**Seven Snake Myths:**

1. Myth of the single-horned rattlesnake.
2. Mythical belief that many female snakes swallow their young in order to protect them.
4. Mythical belief that a rattlesnake does not hiss.
5. Myth of the hoop snake.
6. Myth of the snake that milks cows.
7. Myth of the snake that whips human beings to death.

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**The Seven Sleepers:**

Are the bear, the raccoon, woodchuck, jumping mouse, chipmunk, skunk, and bat. We know of no other seven mammals which are so designated, though there are others that hibernate.

Dwight Monsma

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**O LOVE DIVINE!**

O Love Divine! that stoop’st to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earthborn care,
We smile at pain while Thou art near.

Though long the weary way we tread,
   And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
   Our hearts still whispering, “Thou art near.”

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
   And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
   Shall softly tell us Thou art near.

On Thee we cast our burdening woe,
O Love Divine, forever dear;
Content to suffer while we know,
Living or dying, Thou art near!
Amen.

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

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**LET US PRAY**

Grant, Almighty God, that as Thou hast, in various ways rectified and daily also dost prove how dear and precious to Thee are mankind, as we enjoy daily so many and so remarkable proofs of Thy goodness and favor.—O grant that we may learn to rely wholly on Thy goodness, so many examples of which Thou settest before us, and which Thou wouldst have us continually to experience, that we may not only pass through our earthly course, but also confidently aspire to the hope of that blessed and celestial life which is laid up for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ alone our Lord. Amen.

— John Calvin
Slow Down

Friday, January 6, four teenagers, two girls and two boys were riding after a basketball game. They were in a brand new car, hopped-up for added speed and power, belonging to the father of one of the girls, a new car dealer. There had been a slight drizzle that night and the roads were wet and rather slippery. They turned off a busier street onto a darkened side street. On this street the car containing these four high school students went out of control, the reason not known. Going over the curb, at a terrific speed, it crashed into a tree on the terrace in front of a house. Then, spinning around, it skidded up an embankment and came to rest with the rear end against the front of the house.

The car was wrecked badly, so badly that police had to pry open the doors with crowbars to free the four mangled, almost unrecognizable persons trapped within. Of these four, three would never ride in a car again. One boy was killed instantly, the other died a few hours later at the hospital. The one girl passed away five days later, the other, at the time of this writing, was listed in good condition, but still in the hospital.

I saw the smashed auto several days after the accident. It was a gruesome sight that will not easily be forgotten. The front half of the car is hardly more than twisted metal. The interior is a jumbled mess with the seats pressed close together. The dash and steering column were shoved in so far that the steering wheel was located above the back seat, tight against the roof, scarcely more than three feet from the rear window. The seats and floor were spattered with blood. Chipped on the dashboard were teeth marks made by one of the girls when she was pitched forward. That wrecked car is a grim reminder of the dangers of fast, careless driving.

With today's horsepower war going on, with emphasis more and more being placed on speedy cars, with ever increasing rates of traffic fatalities, we would do well to listen to a warning for safe, careful driving. We, as Christians, and thus partakers of Christ's anointing, have a calling and responsibility to fight against sin, flee from it and lead Godly lives. We must love God above all, with our whole being, and our neighbor as ourself. And, loving God and our neighbor for God's sake, we must strive to keep His commandments.

Notice the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." Did you ever stop to think that when you're behind the wheel of your car you are in a convenient place for transgressing this command? Regarding this commandment the Heidelberg Catechism instructs us that we may not wound or kill our neighbor but must "prevent his hurt as much as in us lies," that is, as much as we possibly can. It answers also, in response to the question "What doth God require in the sixth commandment that I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger."

Remember this commandment the next time you're driving, for your calling holds true in all phases of life, no matter where or under what circumstances you may be. If you drive recklessly or speed, not only are you breaking laws of the God-ordained authorities, but you are violating this commandment. That speeding and reckless driving are dangerous, I trust no one will debate. And God plain-
ly teaches us that we may not wilfully expose ourselves to danger, that to do so is to kill. But not only do we have a calling in regard to ourselves. We have a duty over against our neighbor also. We must love him and strive to prevent his hurt. And this we can never do by placing ourselves in a position that could easily result in his death.

Therefore, young people, and I might include older ones also, remember your antithetical calling. Drive as a Christian. Keep from placing your life and the lives of others in jeopardy. Oh, I know, it’s so easy to become careless and take chances, but don’t forget God’s command to us, “Thou shalt not kill,” and drive accordingly. Remember too, an automobile can easily change recreation into a wreck-creation.

OUR COURT CASE

After all attempts at an out-of-court settlement failed, the case between The First Protestant Reformed Church, plaintiff, and Hubert De Wolf and his “consistory,” defendants, came up before Judge Thaddeus B. Taylor in the Superior Court of Grand Rapids. Proceedings and testimony before the court lasted from Tuesday, May 25, 1954 until Tuesday, June 15, 1954. On December 23 of the same year came the court’s decision: “The relief therefore, as prayed for by the plaintiffs, will be granted . . .” The De Wolf group, however, appealed this action to the State Supreme Court.

Therefore, last month, the case came before the eight justices in Lansing. On January 5 at 2:30 P. M., Mr. Linsey, attorney for the De Wolf group, spoke for a half hour before the court and the following morning at 10:00 spoke for another half hour. After this, Mr. Tubbs, lawyer for the consistory of The First Protestant Reformed Church, spoke for the same length of time. This was followed by a five minute rebuttal by Mr. Vander Wal, the other attorney of the De Wolf group. This rebuttal closed the proceedings of the case.

After all the necessary cases have been heard by the court, each of the eight justices is assigned a certain number of cases. Later, after study, each presents their own opinion to the rest of the justices who can accept, reject, or modify it. Then the decisions are publicly announced the first week in April.

We can patiently wait with confidence during these days, for we know that all things, including the hearts of the judges, are in the hand of our all-wise God and Father. We know that whatever the outcome may be, it will be good, for “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” We know too that we have the truth, that we are maintaining it, and that we will, by God’s grace, continue to maintain it. This is all that is important. We can but trust in His providence knowing that His grace is sufficient for all our needs.

Jim Jonker

REFORMED (SO-CALLED) OR SEMI-ARMINIANISM

Semi-arminianism is Arminianism in a reformed dress. It is a type of Arminianism that looks like a lamb but is really a wolf. To make good this statement requires that we first have regard to Arminianism proper. Its basic tenets are the following:

1) Faith is a condition to salvation.

2) The will of man is morally free, that is, depraved man can will to reject Christ or to believe in His name and be saved as he, man, chooses.

3) To say that God determines man’s choices is to reduce man, conceptually, to a stock and a stone. God’s counsel
therefore, is not the cause and fountain of man’s good choice, will, decision, determination to be saved. Accordingly, this good choice is not worked in man by God, but originates in man himself.

4) From all eternity God determined to bestow salvation on those whom He foresaw that they would fulfill the condition set by Him, namely that they believe; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end His divine-succors, so that election was conditional, and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity and persevering wickedness.

5) Jesus Christ, by His suffering and death, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but those who believe in Him can be partakers of His benefits.

6) The truly regenerate may lose true justifying faith, forfeit their state of grace, and die in their sins.

7) Grace accordingly is resistable.

8) God in His mercy and thus well-meaningly offers His grace to all.

9) The preaching of the Gospel is grace to all.

10) The promises of God are conditional.

Any nine of these ten propositions are necessarily implied in any one of them. What it means is that also the system of thought of heresy is one organism of thought; it is the one lie, so that, for example to say that faith is a condition to salvation is to say all the rest.

Every one of these ten propositions are contained in Rawlson’s “Elements of Divinity” as defended by him. Rawlson, we should know, was an avowed Arminian.

Arminianism is a deceptive and misleading heresy. For it, too, wears a reformed dress; though a wolf, it, too, looks somewhat like a lamb. This is owing to the fact that often its thought-processes are along lines that have a thoroughly Scriptural and reformed sound. Allow me to quote a little from Rawlson’s work to shew how true this is. In the chapter on the effects of the fall of man we come upon statements such as the following:

“The true doctrine upon this subject, which we shall endeavor to sustain by evidence, is this: that all mankind are by nature so depraved as to be totally destitute of spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually.” And then this, “That spiritual death, or the loss of divine image from the soul (which are, but other words for total depravity,) was included in that penalty, has already been shown in the preceding chapter. The argument then amounts to demonstration, that all mankind are by nature in a state of moral pollution, properly expressed by the phrase total depravity... Now if all men are not involved in the penalty, we must flatly deny the word of God, which plainly and repeatedly represents death, in every sense of the word, as a penal infliction, a judicial sentence pronounced upon the guilty, as a just punishment for sin.” End of quotation. This is the true doctrine of the Scriptures, isn’t it? Concerning repentance Rawlson has this to say, “To suppose that the carnal mind can turn itself to God, by its own innate, undervived energy, work out repentance unto salvation, is to set aside the doctrine of total depravity, and contradict those Scriptures which refer to God as the author of repentance.” End of quote. This, too, is stating the matter as soundly as one could wish isn’t it?

According to Arminianism, faith, too, is a gift of God. Says Rawlson, “And as God is the proper author and finisher of faith, because it is through His merciful arrangement, and by the aid of divine grace imparted, that we are enabled to believe, we may therefore say with pro-
propriety that in these acceptations faith is the gift of God."

Of justification he has this to say, "Justification changes our relation to law—it removes our condemnation, but does not change our nature, or make us holy. This is sanctification, which is, indeed, the immediate fruit of justification."

In the chapter on regeneration one may read, "The native state of the heart is hatred to God... It is only divine grace, regenerating the soul, that can slay this enmity, turn back our nature's rapid tide, and cause the affections of the soul to flow out after God and heavenly objects."

And finally this from Rawlson's pen, "Nothing that man can do can avail anything toward purchasing salvation by merit; for when we have done all that we can do, we are unprofitable servants. The work of salvation in all its stages, can be performed either in whole or in part, by none but God, and this is entirely a work of grace..."

Truly, how much this wolf resembles a lamb.

But, of course, there is a question here. It is this: If God is the author of repentance and faith, how can faith then still be a condition unto salvation? Rawlson has the answer. It is this: The power and grace to repent and believe is an endowment of God. God, therefore, may be said to be the author of repentance and faith. But God is not the author, originator, of the good will, decision, determination to put His endowment into use by actually repenting and believing. This is of man; it is the condition that man must fulfil. (See above under propositions 2 and 3). If he does so, God will perfect his salvation by justifying, regenerating and sanctifying him and by ultimately crowning him with life in glory but always and only on the condition that man continue of himself to decide to put God's endowment — power and grace — into use by actually repenting, believing, seeking, knocking, praying, striving, etc. And this, of course, must mean that faith as an act is also out of man. According to Rawlson (and all Arminians) in the point of view that man as assisted by God's power and grace decides to believe and also believes actually, God may be said to be the author of faith as an act. But in the point of view that the act of faith is the expression of man's sovereign decision to utilize God's good gift (power and faith) by actually believing, man and not God is properly the author, the originator of repentance and faith as acts. And so, if, on the other hand, man sovereignly decides not to put God's good endowment—power and grace—into use by actually repenting and believing, God can do nothing about it except cast the profligate into eternal perdition. God stands helpless over against man's determination not to be saved. This verily is the idea. And this is Arminianism. Arminianism is a horrible heresy. It dethrones God and deifies man by seating his will in God's throne. The Arminian will let God do everything for the sinner except one thing, namely originate and sustain in man the goodwill, decision, determination to be saved of God. Of this good will, decision, man and not God is the author. O yes, God will save you O sinner. He is exceedingly willing. But and mark you but you must believe, that is decide to believe by actually believing. This is the condition that you must fulfil and then God will do all the rest.

It is interesting to notice how Rawlson puts all these ideas into words. He writes, "And as God is the proper author and finisher of our faith, because it is through His merciful arrangement, and by the aid of divine grace imparted, that we are enabled to believe, we may therefore say, with propriety that in these acceptations faith is a gift of God. But all this is far from admitting that faith is in no sense the act of the creature.
Indeed that it is the act of the creature in an important sense, is implied clearly in what has just been presented. For, after all that God has done, man must act — his agency must be put forth, or faith cannot exist. Not that he of himself can do any good thing — his sufficiency is of God; but through Christ strengthening him, he can and must exert an agency in believing. God has never promised to believe for any man; nor can any man ever possess faith till through grace he exercise the ability with which God has endowed him. From what has been said, we think it evident wherein faith is both the gift of God and the act of the creature."

This is familiar language, isn't it? We have heard it before, have we not, from those who accuse us of minimizing the activity of faith? It ought now to be plain why in his sermonizing the arminian preacher spends all his time telling his hearers that they must do something — repent, believe, strive, pray, seek, knock — why in his preaching he lays all the emphasis on the activity of faith. According to his conception, the sinner, himself, sovereignly determines whether or not God is going to be able to save him. If the sinner does not repent and believe God stands helpless and the result is that the sinner perishes in his sins without God being able to do anything about it. This is his conception.

But, one may say, should not the human proclaimer of the Gospel continually, without ceasing, call sinners to repentance and exhort God's believing people to lay of sin, put on Christ and walk in newness of life? Yes, of course, he should, but not, certainly, as moved by that arminian conception but as moved by the right conception. And this right conception is that our repentance in all its parts, thus not alone the grace and power to repent but the good will, decision to repent and our actual repenting as well, is out of God and that, therefore, He, through Christ Who loved us and gave Himself for us, is the sole author of it. And what is true of repentance is also true, of course, of our believing and praying and striving and seeking and knocking.

This is the right conception. And this conception must also be preached always and continually. It must constitute the content of every sermon preached. For it is the Gospel, the only true Gospel.

Of course it is we and not God that repent. But this does not mean that, as the arminians say, we in part are the author of our repentance. Our repentance in all its part is solely God's work in us. This, I said, is the only true Gospel. But this true Gospel the arminian preacher will not proclaim. And if he is one of those reformed arminian preachers, occupying a pulpit in a church that has this true Gospel on the books, he will, of course, not openly deny this true Gospel. He will even insist that he believes it. But he will keep silence about this true Gospel in the pulpit as much as he dare and devote all his time to telling his hearers that they must do something. And hereby it becomes evident that the man is an arminian at heart engaged in preaching arminianism not so much by what he says as by what he does not say. He refrains, as much as he dare, from bringing this true Gospel in the pulpit and is forever telling his hearers that they must do something. And his excuse for not preaching this true Gospel anymore than he does is that it is not necessary seeing that everybody knows about it anyway.

Truly Arminianism is a subtle and misleading heresy, owing to the fact that as was said, though a wolf, it resembles a lamb. But if Arminianism is subtle and misleading, much more so this Reformed (so-called) or semi-Arminianism. This is owing to the fact that, though also a wolf, it looks a good deal more like a
lamb; it is owing to the fact that it has two faces, the one reformed and the other arminian. Let us make good this statement.

On the one hand it maintains 1) that faith is a condition unto salvation, in the language of DeWolf that “God promises unto every one of you that, if you believe, you will be saved,” and, “our humbling ourselves is a prerequisite to entering the kingdom; 2) that God’s promises are conditional and unto all; 3) That God in His mercy offers His salvation unto all soul for soul; 4) That the preaching of the Gospel is grace unto all.

In these propositions are necessarily implied all the rest of the Arminian tenets cited above such as that the will of man is morally free, that Christ died for all, and that election and reprobation are conditional.

On the other hand, it is also maintained by this Reformed Arminianism 1) that election and reprobation are unconditional; 2) that the will of man is morally bound; 3) that Christ died only for His elect.

Now these two sets of propositions are contrary. They can no more be harmonized than the two propositions All men are mortal and no men are mortal. Hence both cannot be believed. If this so-called Reformed Arminianism believes the truth, why then does it not shed its Arminian face? And so it could also be asked, if this so-called Reformed Arminianism believes the lie, why does it not shed its Reformed face? For this double faced, double tracked theology is a horrible thing, wonderfully deceiving, calculated only to mislead.

G.M.O.

Our Sacraments

What do our sacraments really mean to us? I am afraid that we are letting them become a mere formality. How many of us stop to think what our Baptism form means, until an infant is baptized in our church? And how many of us stop to think and meditate on the beautiful sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, until preparatory week, or the night before, or even that morning of the Lord’s Supper?

Let me briefly put a few pictures before our minds. We read in our Baptism form, “And do you promise to instruct this child in the aforesaid doctrine to the utmost of your power?” And we answer, “Yes.” But what does this mean? Does it mean that our form is designed only for our parents? Not at all. There is a much deeper and ultimate purpose. There, it is the word of God declaring to our parents to fight the old man and put on the new man, by guarding them from evil, and instructing them in the fear of the Lord, that when old, they will not depart from it. But there is also a lesson for us as young people. We have promised in the Sacrament to live according to the law of God and submit to his will. Our parents answered the questions for us, unto the day when we take our place in the church. Haven’t we, or don’t we intend to make public confession of our faith in the congregation of the saints in our respective churches? Fellow young people, we have that duty, and highly esteemed privilege, as Protestant Reformed youth, to continue in that truth to which we answered in our infancy through our parents, and to which we answered ourselves when we confessed our faith.

Concerning our sacrament of Communion, which, indeed, is beautiful, there is another lesson. Here we have that wonderful truth, which our catechism puts so clearly before us, that we are not ou
own, but belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross that we might be saved. This sacrament strikes us more directly. We are saved from before the foundation of the world, for we read, “By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God unto eternal life.” Let us not throw away our lives before the swine of this world. Are we to sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. What a treasure is ours, young people. To live the life the world sets before us, should be, and is, the highest impossibility. We are given the torch of truth. Let us hold it high that we may be a shining light in this world of darkness, of the lie, of the Devil.

Although this article is short, I hope that it will set us to thinking. We have a distinctive calling as Protestant Reformed Young People. The heritage is ours, to our children and to our children’s children. Let us make it an everyday objective to walk as children of God in the light of these sacraments, instead of walking one week, or one day out of a year. Remember, that ball game can wait another half hour, or an hour. And that important meeting isn’t quite so important. That radio program or T.V. program isn’t a “must” in our lives. Put a little more time to studying and thinking on the Word of God and I assure you, that you will find a much richer life. Don’t let our sacraments become a mere ritual, or formality. Let your light so shine, that you manifest yourself as a Christian, and as a child of God.

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Our Basis for the Separation of Church and State

Do we have a basis for the separation of Church and State? How do we know if they are separate? Let us discuss a few points on the subject.

First I refer you to Article 36 of our Confessions of Faith as it appears in the back of our Psalter. This article is titled, “of Magistrates.” And I quote in part — “We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, hath appointed kings, princes, and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of anti-Christ may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. Wherefore, we detest that Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and would subvert justice, community of goods, and confound that decency and good order, which God hath established among men.” This article seems very strong for the unification of Church and State. But I will elucidate further a little later in this article.

There are also passages in Scripture which seem to suggest the unification of Church and State. Let me also quote one of them: concerning the people of Israel we read in Exodus 21:6 — speaking of the servants who, after six years of service to their master, would not leave without money in his hand — “Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door posts; and his
master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him forever.” This also is an indication of a unification. However, it is interesting to note that these passages either reflect on the Old Testament Dispensation or on a direct excerpt from the Old Testament. Even though, however, we read of a unification in the Old Testament, be it to God’s glory, that we also have a very sharp distinction. For we read in 1 Samuel 13:8-14 how Saul the King of Israel had made an offering unto the Lord which was not his duty. It was the duty of the priest to prepare the offerings. It was the duty of the church and not of the state.

But let me go further into this basis. Acts 20:28 reads, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” And again in Mark 16:16 we read, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” And in Ephesians 6:7, “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” And again very emphatically in Matthew 22:21 we read, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” These and many other texts clearly illustrate the separation of Church and State.

Does this now mean that we are to do our daily activities oblivious of our civil authorities and laws? God forbid! Our civil laws are God given. We are called to live as a peculiar and a separate people, but also to be under civil subjection. We are to obey all statutes and laws so long, and I repeat, so long as they do not have as their ultimate objective, to destroy and tear down the statutes of Christ and His Church.

We are not to be Anabaptistic, and reject all higher powers of the land. For God has set Kings and Princes as rulers of the land. We are placed here also by God, to be subject to the higher powers. However, we are to be strong in the faith. Let us hold fast to the truth that is ours. Be subject to your overseers, but always in the fear of the Lord.

Gordon King

A CHRISTIAN
Walks in the Light of God’s Word:
If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:6, 7

Has Christ as His example:
He that sayeth he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. 1 John 2:6

Has no love or place in his life for the world:
Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. 1 John 2:1-17

Is Taught by God’s Spirit:
But the anointing that ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. 1 John 2:27
We'll have to be perfectly frank with you concerning the next "Beacon Lights" Singspiration. We felt that it was time another singspiration be held at our Creston church, but you know how small Creston is. We're going to have it there anyway, and we'll set up chairs in the aisles so that there will be room for a few more people. To be sure you get a seat, I would advise you to come as early as possible on the evening of February 12. It's going to begin at 9:00 p.m.

B. L. Public Relations Committee
Rich. Bos, Chairman