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Risen Indeed

In this season of the year when we again approach the day upon which we take special note of the resurrection of our Lord, it is mete that we take note especially of the signs which accompanied His resurrection.

Did you know that the world cannot see those signs, and even if they could see them, they have no meaning for them? They simply consider the whole thing a farce. This was what the world thought already when Jesus was on earth and at the time of His resurrection. They said, “The disciples have stolen the body of Jesus out of the tomb, and now they say that He arose from the dead.” All this, in spite of the fact that a huge stone was rolled against the door of the sepulchre. Besides, the sepulchre was heavily guarded by the soldiers. It simply would have been an impossibility for the disciples to steal the body of Jesus.

Thus to the world the whole thing seems foolish and ridiculous, but to us who are of the household of faith, who belong to the church as being living members of the body of Christ, to us it is a matter of faith. For we look at those signs with the eye of faith. Not only that, but we look at them in the light of the Word of God which He has so beautifully revealed to us. And the Word of God comes to us in the Holy Scriptures not only, but it is also written in our hearts.

What then are those signs, and what do they mean. If you will turn to John 20:1-10 with me, there we see the first few signs. First there is the sign of the fact that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre. We read that there was a loud noise and an angel rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

The question has been raised whether Jesus arose at that time or whether He had arisen before this time. Without going into detail on this point, it is my conviction that Jesus had already arisen. Jesus had completed all His work, all that God had required of Him. So why should He stay in the grave longer than necessary. I believe He arose one minute after midnight, so to speak. He had tasted death and corruption in our behalf, being our organic as well as legal head. As for the fact that the angel rolled the stone away, this was merely a sign that Jesus had risen. At the same time, it was a manifestation of the power and might of our glorious Triune God. Amidst the rumble, the soldiers were as dead men. Yet they let themselves be persuaded
by the Pharisees to say that the disciples stole the body while they slept.

When the women arrived at the sepulchre, they saw that the body was gone, and Mary immediately concludes that the body was taken away. And she comes to Peter and John and tells them as much. Peter and John rush to the sepulchre and see that the body was very truly gone. But they see more. The linen clothes which had been wrapped around the body of Jesus and the napkin which was around His head are lying as if undisturbed. Yet the body of Jesus was no longer inside. What convincing evidence of the fact of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus! Also, this very clearly indicates that Jesus arose with a glorified and spiritual body which could emerge from the linen clothes without disturbing them.

When Peter and John returned to their homes, Mary stayed behind. She took one last look into the sepulchre and there she saw two angels, one at the head and the other at the feet of where Jesus' body had been. They were again emphasizing the empty linen clothes.

But Mary doesn't even notice. She says, "The have taken away my Lord." And she turns herself and meets her Lord face to face. But she doesn't recognize Him. But when Jesus speaks to her heart, "Mary" He opens her eyes and she says, "Rabboni" which is to say "Master." Jesus forbids her to touch Him because He had not yet ascended. Then He instructs her to tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. Oh yes, He is risen indeed. Also, we have the testimony of the angels when the women first came to the sepulchre. They said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" What a wonderful Gospel these angels proclaim here. Why seek ye the living among the dead? These women had thought to do a last service for their beloved Lord. They thought that the least they could do was to perform this last rite of administering these expensive spices and aloes. These spices were expensive in those days. The women probably chipped in their little mites they had saved in order that they might buy the spices. A last work of love upon their beloved Jesus. That is why they were so disappointed when they saw the empty tomb. Then they heard the wonderful message of the angels, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen!"

Besides all this evidence we have discussed so far of the fact of the resurrection, there are all the rest of the appearances of the risen Lord between the time of His resurrection and His ascension. These are all considered as evidences or signs of the resurrection.

That resurrection has a great significance for us also as young people in the church. It means that the work which Christ set out to do unto our salvation has been consummated. There is only one thing still to come and that is the ascension of our Lord and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and that took place on Pentecost. Now He is in heaven at the right hand of God from whence He sends His Spirit, the Comforter, into our hearts. And with that Spirit, He leads and guides us into all the truth. And now we still have the promise of His second coming when He shall take us unto His bosom in heavenly glory.

Yes, Jesus Christ our Lord is risen indeed. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is risen and He lives. Oh, yes, He lives! That is not only the confession of the child of God, but also his comfort. He is not dead, but He lives. And if you ask the child of God, "How do you know that He lives?" then that child of God will say with all humility and contrition of heart, "He lives, oh yes! He lives within my heart."
BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

BECAUSE—

Because my Savior suffered
   Upon dark Calvary,
A flood of richest blessings
   Has been poured out to me!

Because for sin He suffered,
   Forgiveness now is mine;
Because He bore the darkness,
   The light for me doth shine!

Because His soul was troubled,
   I have eternal peace;
Because He groaned in spirit,
   My song will never cease.

Because for me He traveled
   The way of poverty,
I now possess true riches.
   He gives abundantly!

Because He bore men's hatred,
   My portion now is love;
And he, the "Man of sorrows"
   Gives joy like that above!

He passed through death's dark waters
   Eternal life to bring;
And now for the believer
   Dread death has lost its sting!

He lives! His resurrection
   Assurance now doth give;
Because He lives—He said it—
   With Him we too shall live!

"—Marie L. Olson

The life that counts is linked with God;
And turns not from the cross, the rod;
But walks with joy where Jesus trod—
That is the life that counts.

I am so sorrowful, so sick and faint;
Long so to feel Thee nigh;
Have pity on me, tempted Son of God,
And do not pass me by.
On Christian Education

The year 1956 started off on the wrong foot for many people, but especially so for devotees of classical literature who suddenly discovered that their beloved Bard of Avon was being subjected to heavy crossfire on both sides of the Atlantic. Their stumbling block was an upstart New Yorker who began to push even harder his claims that Shakespeare as a writer, was more fiction than fact. His accomplice in this degrading affair is none less than an English clergyman who agreed to allow the opening of a tomb in his diocese in an attempt to prove that Shakespeare was really a game poacher in self-imposed exile from his home town of Avon, and that he hired out as a glorified errand-boy to one, Christopher Marlowe, who did the actual writing, but because he too was on the Queen’s “Wanted” list, kept himself hidden in the castle of his patron. Calvin Hoffman of New York, tells the story this way: William Shakespeare was a spirited young farmer who supplemented the family larder with some of the royal game from the woods and fields near Avon. In doing so, he aroused the ire of the local gendarmes, and fearing that the evidence against him was too strong, he sought to lose himself in the slums of London.

Marlowe, meanwhile had been writing plays which are similar to those later attributed to Shakespeare, but in his extra-curricular activities, crossed up the royal authorities who accused him of treason and set out to arrest him.

Marlowe countered by bribing the local coroner to put his (Marlowe’s) name on the death certificate of a drunk killed in a tavern brawl, and as far as the outside world is concerned, Marlowe was dead. He then hired young Shakespeare to act as his “front” and channeled his writings through him to the publishers.

Whether Mr. Hoffman’s contentions prove to be real or rumor means little to us, who have been educated largely in parochial schools where Shakespeare was treated merely as the most popular of the classical writers. But in many public institutions of learning, he is spoken of in an attitude of near-worship, and any contradiction to this thinking is looked upon as irreligious.

We can easily understand why these people strenuously oppose even the suggestion that their hero was actually a heel. If proven to be so, not only their idol, but also their self-respect (having believed in a false notion) would be trampled on the hard cobblestones of public ridicule.

How different this attitude is from that maintained by those who have been educated in our Christian schools. There, while Shakespeare is looked upon as the most popular writer in the English language, his real function is that of a part in the overall plan of God to glorify himself through creation. So then, whether Shakespeare has a place as an author in his own right or merely as Marlowe’s errand boy, he is fulfilling his part of God’s plan. Nothing more, nothing less.

In our times changes such as these have become the norm rather than the exception. Many facts that were held to be the absolute truth a few years ago, have been found erroneous, and to some people this proves that all truth is relative. Our most cherished beliefs today, according to this theory, may be the joke...
of tomorrow. Those who uphold this principle even apply this to our conception of God.

If all our concepts are based in the One Truth, then changes, whether in society, science, or whatever sphere they occur, cannot frustrate or even confuse us.

Often as youngsters, and sometimes more so as teen-agers, we are ashamed that we attend parochial schools, thereby setting ourselves apart from those who attend the public schools. Never be ashamed of this. You are receiving the more complete education, simply because that which is taught is treated, more or less, according to subject matter, in the light of scripture, the most solid base any education can have. Because the treatment of subject matter in the light of scripture frequently varies according to basic doctrines, we will naturally be more satisfied with the teachings in our own schools.

With this kind of education you will not be thrown into turmoil every time the authorship of classic literature is challenged or a new element is discovered that "just wasn't supposed to exist."

Charles H. Westra

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Preparation

THE PREACHING OF THE WORD AS A MEANS OF GRACE

In the last two articles I have spoken of the meaning of "means of grace" and of the means of grace in particular. We noticed that the term implies just exactly what it says. "Means of grace" are means which God uses to apply grace to the hearts of His people. God limits Himself to these means so that only through them do the elect come to a conscious knowledge of their salvation and participation in the life of Christ. We also noticed that the means of grace were really one: the preaching of the Word; but that this preaching of the Word took place in the ministry of that Word, in the administration of the sacraments and in the exercise of Christian discipline. And finally we noticed that all things are in reality means of grace to the elect, for all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. But that all things can only be considered as means of grace as they are understood in the light of the preaching of the Word. They can never be means of grace apart from that preaching.

In this article I wish to say a little about the preaching of the Word as a means, and also include some practical observations with a view to our main subject, Preparation.

What is meant by the preaching of the Word?

There are all kinds of interpretations of this in our day when, in our country especially, everyone is rather interested in having their names inscribed upon the rolls of a particular church. The Roman Catholic Church, with their emphasis on the sacraments, and their false interpretation of them, denies the need for the preaching of the Word and has all but lost it in their church services. Modern day evangelicalism has turned the preaching into the heart rending pleas of an emotionally aroused speaker who pleads with his audience to accept Jesus Christ,
to come forward and make their decision to receive Christ as their personal Savior. Modernism in all its forms in the churches of America has transformed the preaching of the Word to a social gospel when the subjects and themes of sermons are of this nature: The Need to Vote; Housing Shortages; Racial Inequalities; Displaced Persons; The Cold War; etc.

And even in reformed circles, the preaching of the Word has been changed into a well meant offer of grace, and a general dispensing of grace to all that hear, and a promise that is to all on the condition of faith.

These are all denials of the preaching of the Word, and as such cannot possibly be considered as means which God uses to bestow upon the hearts of His people the benefits of salvation.

As over against all these false ideas concerning this important subject, what is meant by the term, preaching?

True preaching as a means of grace always has several important characteristics about it. In the first place, true preaching means that Christ Himself is the Preacher. Christ Himself speaks His own Word to His people whenever there is not a travesty made upon preaching. And Christ speaks this Word through the Church. He never speaks in any other way except through that church which is His own body. And He speaks that Word through His Church by means of the office of elder and the ordained ministry, for the minister himself is nothing other than an elder called to the particular duty of preaching in the midst of the people of God. So that when a true minister of the Word is speaking, then the Word which he speaks is always the Word of Christ.

In the second place, the content of that Word which Christ speaks is always the truth of the Scriptures, the central theme of which is the triune God as the God of salvation in Jesus Christ Who saves His people from their sins.

And in the third place, this preaching is always a means of grace for the elect, and for them alone, since they are called by the operation of the Spirit to a conscious knowledge of the life that they have in Christ. That Word consciously calls them out of the darkness of their sin and out of the death of their misery into the life and light of the kingdom of God and of Christ. Thus they receive the grace of God through the means of the ministry of the Word.

It stands to reason then, that no social gospel, no altar call, no well meant offer or general promise can possibly substitute for the ministry of the Word.

More in detail I will not go, for the matter was discussed at some length in another article in this department a few months ago.

And so I want to make some practical observations to you, the covenant youth of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

These observations are three in number.

1) It is rather common among our youth to think lightly of the ministry of the Word especially on the Sabbath Day. It is rather common to find excuses if possible to stay home from church or to attend other churches than the churches of our own denominations. We have not a deep realization of the importance of this ministry of the Word for our spiritual life. We are busy with so many other things which attract our youthful attention, that there is very little time to devote to the listening of God's Word. And when we go out with boys and girls of other denominations, we think nothing of neglecting our own church services to attend others. And when finally we are ready to enter the state of marriage, then the words, "I love him/her" seem to be a sufficient excuse to have our membership transferred from our church to a church outside of the boundaries of our
denomination. And if we attend church rather regularly in the congregation of which we are a member, then it seems to be the time to allow our mind to wander to all kinds of different things or even to catch up on some much needed sleep. I know it is difficult to listen to a sermon. The point is that since the preaching of the Word is a means of grace, it is of central importance in our lives. And even though we are yet the young people of the church, and maybe more so because we are the young people, the preaching of the Word is very important to our spiritual growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2) Therefore, to benefit spiritually by the preaching requires some preparation on our part. To stay out late Saturday night is not conducive to being blessed by the preaching on Sunday. Saturday night should be a time of getting ready for Sunday, and preparing ourselves to hear the Words of Christ. But also Sunday should be spent in getting ready to go up to the house of the Lord, for the more time that is spent in preparation, the more of a blessing will we receive from the preaching. If we spend our time in Scripture study and in prayer, then the excuse will not need to be made, that we “don’t get anything out of the sermons.”

3) And realizing the importance of the preaching of the Word in our spiritual life, we should also think about taking an active part in that preaching at some time in the future. Especially our young men should look forward to a time when, if God wills it, they will be called to serve as elder or even as minister in the midst of the church.

We need the grace that God bestows upon us through the preaching of His Word. In a world of sin and temptation when we must strive against temptation every day, and when it is difficult for us to fight the good fight of faith, then as soldiers of the cross, we need the spiritual refreshment of God’s Word to continue the battle. And by means of an active participation in the ministry of that Word, we will be prepared to take our place not only in the midst of the church on earth, that place in the forefront of the ranks of the Christian soldier, but also in the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

H. Hanko

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**GOD’S WAY**

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sov’reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessing on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

— Cowper, 1779
TRUTH vs. ERROR

The God of Holy Writ

Recently we received several copies of an unaffiliated Presbyterian periodical which bears the name, “The Contender,” and is edited by Rev. Malcolm R. Mackay of Nova Scotia, Canada. In two of the issues we received, Rev. Mackay very ably writes a true critical analysis of Billy Graham’s doctrine as contained in the latter’s book, “Peace With God.” We enjoyed reading these articles which contain a heart-warming, Scripturally-backed attack upon the Satanically inspired doctrines of Arminianism which are more and more making inroads into Reformed (?) circles, leading captive silly people who claim to be Reformed but are deceived by vain and subtle philosophies. With the same vigor the author attacks the Arminianism of the “Three Points of 1924” in two other issues of “The Contender,” pointing out that, “The Synod’s declaration has laid the foundation for the denial of the heart of the Biblical and Reformed faith, — the sovereignty of God and unconditional election.”

To reproduce these very refreshing writings in their entirety is quite impossible in our allotted space. However, since we have been discussing the conception of God embodied in the first article of our Belgic Confession of Faith, we do like to pass on to our readers a few excerpts which reflect on what the author has to say about Billy Graham’s (Arminian) conception of God. We quote:

“Graham’s ‘God’ Merely ‘Provides’ Salvation, Makes It ‘Possible For Us’; He SECURES It For None.”

Under this heading, Rev. Mackay writes then as follows:

“On page 33 of Peace With God, we find Graham teaching the standard Arminian doctrine of ‘salvation’ which is totally different from the Biblical doctrine. He speaks of ‘Christ’ merely as ‘providing man with salvation.’ He says that ‘God sent His Son’ ‘to make it possible for us to have access to Him.’ Then he refers to God’s ‘providing’ of this possible salvation as ‘the help He has sent’ and says that ‘if we ignore’ this help, ‘we cannot cry out to Him for mercy when the punishment we deserve falls upon us!’ According to Graham, who follows the regular Arminian teaching, salvation is merely ‘provided’ and ‘made possible.’ That is all that ‘God’ has done or can do about it. The rest is up to man. If he makes use of this ‘help’ he is ‘saved,’ if he does not he is ‘lost.’ Salvation is thus made to depend ultimately upon the exercise of man’s will, his ‘decision.’ (Or upon his ‘faith’—G. V. B.) And here is where Graham shines, for the one thing that he is noted for above all else is high-pressure on men and women into ‘decisions’ to make use of this ‘help’ which is ‘provided’ by God. Everyone who reads the papers is told how many of these ‘decisions’ Graham gets his hearers to make for this weakling ‘Christ’ (God) who makes salvation merely ‘possible.’”

Will my reader stop to ask what is the difference . . . the essential difference between this God of Graham and a God Who offers or promises salvation to all upon the condition of faith? Isn’t it obvious that had Billy Graham been delegate to our Classis, May 1953, he would have voted strongly against the condemnation of the statement: “God promises everyone of you salvation if you believe,” even as the Arminian Baptist Dr. Fuller
publicly did? We do not doubt that Graham would unhesitatingly sign his name to the “Three Points” and express whole hearted agreement with them. And why not?

It is a serious question that we now face! Is our God the “weakling” of Arminianism or is He the “Sovereign” of the Reformed Faith? Ultimately all other questions resolve into this one! Face it and answer it we must and do all through life! Young people, which God will you and, pretty soon your children and future generations serve? That’s why the matter of Truth vs. Error is so serious! Don’t you see?

Concerning the truth about God, the Rev. Mackay writes in the following paragraph:

“In contradiction to this Arminian theory, the Bible teaches that God sent His only begotten Son to bring into effect the salvation of all those whom the Father has given to Him, that is, the elect. He infallibly secures their redemption when, in due time, it is applied to them by the Holy Spirit. As one proof of this, please read the entire 17th chapter of John. See also John 6:64, 65; 10: 26-28, 8:47, Acts 13:48, I John 2:19 . . . Christ did not come in a vague and indiscriminate way merely to ‘provide’ salvation equally for all men and then leave it up to every man’s ‘free will’ to receive it or reject it, as he pleases. No! Christ had a specific task to undertake, as it is stated so clearly in Matt. 1:21: ‘Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.’ This statement of divine revelation glorifies God, and keeps sinful and corrupt man in his proper place, — as under the sovereign will of God and subject to the destiny decreed for him. God does not consult man about what He does (‘Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him?’ Isaiah 40:13; ‘How unsearchable are His judgments, and his ways past finding out!’ Rom. 11:33) Much less does the efficacy and certainty of man’s salvation hang upon such a flimsy thing as the fickle will of sinful, corrupt, dying (dead) man.”

The same contrast is pictured by this author of the two directly opposite views of Christ. He writes, “The ‘Christ’ of Billy Graham and fundamentalists is a weak, anemic person who wants to and purposes to ‘save’ all men everywhere, and is trying desperately to do so, but never even remotely succeeding in what he wants and tries to do . . . The Christ of fundamentalism is a Christ who is constantly being defeated, thwarted, disappointed, side-tracked, ignored and generally rendered ineffective. The ‘Christ’ of fundamentalism claims to be ‘God’ but it is a futile and pathetic claim at ‘best.’ He has no plan which man cannot upset, and which he does not have to change according to the actions of men. He has not ‘power over all flesh’ as does the Christ of the Bible.”

Concerning the Christ of Scripture, he writes: “The Christ of the Bible is a ruling King; the ‘Christ’ of fundamentalism wanted to set up his kingdom long ago, but was thwarted by man. His so-called ‘gospel’ has become such a failure that he is now telling his ‘servants’ that the gospel cannot at all meet the present world situation but only the exercise of physical ‘power’ in the future.” It is the Christ of the Bible Whose “I will — determines that His elect people — and no others — are to be ‘with me where I am’ John 17:24.”

Then again: “They cannot be the same Christ although both bear the same name. Names can be very deceiving. Remember, the Idealist who is worshipped by the modernists, — the ‘fairest flower of humanity’ — also bears the same name, ‘Christ.'”

(Continued on page 17)
THE BOOK OF ACTS
CHAPTER 8

Introductory remarks:

It is not difficult to see the connection between the introductory verses of this chapter, vss. 1-4, which tell of the rise of persecution, and the remaining section, which treats the missionary-ministry of Philip. Nor is there by any means a lack of connection between this chapter and the general idea of the Acts. Here we have quite evidently a further fulfillment of the Lord Jesus’ words: “Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” And therefore, it is also very clear at this point that the persecution that arose following Stephen’s martyrdom was futile on the part of the enemy, because much rather than destroy the church and thwart the spread of the gospel, it was a means in the Lord’s hand to fulfill His own Word, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . .” And in the light of the above, it is plain, finally, that this chapter forms an integral part in the narrative of the things which Jesus continued to do and to teach.

We may conveniently divide the chapter into the following sections: 1. The first general persecution. vss. 1-4. 2. Philip and the apostles at Samaria. vss. 5-25. 3. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. vss. 26-38. 4. Philip on the way to Caesarea. vss. 39-40.

I. The First General Persecution: (vss. 1-4)

A. The circumstances of this persecution:

1. Can it be determined at approximately what time this persecution took place? (Note: we have at more than one occasion pointed out that we do not have in Acts a complete and detailed history of all that took place from the ascension on. It is important to remember that the first seven chapters certainly do not cover a very brief period of a few months, even though we might get that impression from a hasty reading. Luke simply touches the high-lights, as they serve the development of the theme, “the things which Jesus continued to do and to teach.” If we take 33 A.D. as the year of the crucifixion of Jesus, the resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of the Spirit, then it is safe to assume that the first seven chapters of Acts cover approximately 2 to 4 years, a period in which the early New Testament church became established strongly in Jerusalem and environs, and gained its first growth.)

a. We have certain facts in chapters 7 and 8 that may help us:

1) Stephen was stoned apparently without having his death sentence confirmed by the Roman governor.

2) Saul too appears to have a free hand in carrying out his part of the persecution.
b. Can you, by making a comparison of these facts with secular history concerning changes in the Roman governmental set-up at Jerusalem, come to a fairly reasonable estimate as to the time of this persecution?

2. The occasion of the persecution:

a. We read that “Saul was consenting unto his death.” Is there a connection between this and the outbreak of this furious persecution?

1) How is it to explained that Luke has all the details of Stephen’s defense, condemnation, and death? Is it likely, as many have it, that Philip was his source of information? Or is it quite probable that Luke obtained his facts through Paul, who had vivid recollection of the appearance and words of Stephen? And is it not likely that Saul, even though he probably took no active part in Stephen’s prosecution, nevertheless concerned himself vitally with the proceedings at the trial, and came to some conclusions at this time that led to his open opposition against the cause which Stephen represented?

2) In this connection, it may be interesting and fruitful to compare the attitudes of Gamaliel, who wanted to temporize, and Saul, the pupil of Gamaliel, who “made havock of the church.”

b. Does the burial of Stephen and the “great lamentation over him” have anything to do with the outbreak of persecution?

1) The Jewish law forbade public lamentation over executed persons, even though according to the law of Moses they were to be buried.

2) We read that nevertheless devout men,—undoubtedly devout Jewish Christians,—buried Stephen, and made this lamentation over him.

3) Can anything be concluded from this as to the reaction of the church to Stephen’s martyrdom? Had Stephen’s execution the result of cowing the believers into silence and apostasy? Were they afraid to show their love and allegiance toward Stephen and the cause for which he had given his life?

3. The leader of the persecution, and his methods:

a. Saul, the leader:

1) What moved Saul in this persecution, according to his own testimony?

2) Was this a movement independent of the Sanhedrin, or did it have the strong support of the council?

b. His methods:

1) What did Saul do?

2) Does this mean that this persecution used only the coercion of imprisonment, and stopped short of death?

3) What was the total effect upon the life of the church at this time, vs. 3?

B. The Effect of the Persecution:

1. What does the passage say as to the immediate result of this persecution?

a. Does this mean that the entire church at Jerusalem was scattered? If so,
how do you account for it that there was later still a sizeable congregation there, consisting of Jewish Christians?

b. Why did the apostles remain at Jerusalem? Why did they escape the force of the persecution apparently?

c. Is it probable that the Jewish element of the church as a whole escaped the persecution, while the Hellenists (Graeco-Jewish Christians) were especially persecuted?

2. Did this scattering have an adverse effect upon the cause of the church and the gospel?

a. Did the believers abandon their faith when they were scattered? vs. 4.

b. Does the statement in vs. 4 give license to those who are not in office to preach the Word? If not, how is the text to be explained?

c. How is it to be explained that the persecution had a good effect rather than an adverse one?

II. Philip and the Apostles in Samaria: (vss. 5-25)

A. Philip’s labor in Samaria:

1. The place of his labors:

a. The Authorized Version tells us it was “the city of Samaria.” The Revised Version speaks of “a city of Samaria,” probably more correctly. Hence, this could be the old city of Samaria (Sebaste at this time) or another Samaritan city, possibly Gitta, the city from which Simon the Sorcerer came.

b. At any rate, it was in the province of Samaria: 1) What can you say as to these Samaritans and their religion? 2) Is there any significance in the fact that Philip labors here?

2. His labors:

a. What did Philip preach? Contrast Philip’s preaching and Simon’s claim.

b. What lent support to the preaching of Philip in this case, vss. 6, 7? Is there a likely connection between the presence and deeds of Simon and the fact that Philip’s preaching was accompanied by spectacular miracles?

3. Results of his labors:

a. What in general was the reaction to Philip’s preaching?

b. Who was Simon? How do you explain the statement that he “believed”? 1) What position did Simon enjoy among the people? 2) Was Simon entirely a fake, or did he actually possess some supernatural powers? 3) What are some of the legends attached to the name of Simon in later times and in non-Scriptural literature? Do any of them contain any truth?

B. The apostles in Samaria:

1. Why were the apostles sent to Samaria? vs. 14.

2. What did the apostles do?

a. Had not the believers at Samaria received the Holy Ghost? How, then, did they repent and believe?
b. What was this gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed through the laying on of hands? Was it bestowed on all the believers?

3. Simon's "simony":
   a. What did Simon ask of the apostles?
   b. What was wrong in his request?
   c. How did Peter curse him? Admonish him?
   d. Did Simon repent? Was the curse lifted from him by Peter?

4. Further labors in Samaria:
   a. Where did the apostles go from this city in Samaria?
   b. What did they do on the way?
   c. Can this be said to signify the breaking out of the gospel beyond the confines of Jewry?

III. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch: (vss. 26-38)

A. Philip's commission:
   1. Was this journey occasioned by the persecution?
   2. What significance must be attached to the fact that Philip receives directions from the angel of the Lord? Cf. Canons I, 3; II, 5.
   3. Where is Philip directed to go, and what, evidently is the chief purpose of the journey?

B. The conversion of the Ethiopian:
   1. Who was this Ethiopian? What was his court position? What was his religious status? Was he a proselyte?
   2. Is there any significance in the fact that a man of such position and nationality should be a lone convert, intercepted, as it were, on his way back home?
   3. What Scripture was he reading at the time? Was he reading aloud?
      a. What language was the Ethiopian reading?
      b. What is the significance of the fact that he was reading this particular passage just at the time Philip met him?
      c. What question does Philip ask, and what is the eunuch's response?
   4. Upon the eunuch's request, what does Philip do? What is his explanation of the prophecy of Isaiah?
   5. What is the result of Philip's preaching?
      a. For what does the eunuch make request?
      b. What is Philip's reply? Is confession of faith necessary before baptism?
      c. What confession does the eunuch make?
      d. Was this a genuine conversion? Proof?
      e. What became of this eunuch? Was a church established in this case through Philip's preaching? Did this eunuch enjoy the communion of saints on his return to Ethiopia? Is it possible that he himself became instrumental in the spread of the gospel to his homeland?

IV. Philip on the way to Caesarea: vss. 39-40

1. Again, how is Philip directed in his labors? Is the church still divinely directed in its labors?

2. Trace Philip's journey. Is it possible that he labored in Lydda and Joppa, preparatory to Peter's labors there?


H.C.H.
NATURE STUDY

Metamorphosis

The creation of God, of which we are witnesses and a part, is not stagnant and dormant, but is constantly changing. We may take a trip and come back after some time and find that many things have changed and appear to be different than what they were when we left.

This change which we observe is due, in great part, to the process of growth. We observe this in people, especially children, and in the world of nature because all living things grow. A tiny acorn grows into a huge oak tree. A frog egg grows into a tadpole, and finally into a frog hundreds of times larger than the egg.

It is always interesting to observe these processes of growth because we must and do see in all this how great our God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is.

It is all the more interesting, however, when these phenomena do not merely get bigger but are changed in their forms and living habits in different periods of their lives. Some young animals look very different from their parents and from what they will look like when they become adults. The change in many animals is so marked that we can hardly believe that the young are very different, when they come from the egg, from the mature animal. In man of these animals striking changes, that is metamorphosis—must take place before they reach their adult condition.

Not all metamorphoses are the same and not all insects go through a process of metamorphosis and therefore we discuss the subject of metamorphosis and therefore we discuss the subject of metamorphosis under the following sub-topics:

1. A-metamorphosis
2. Gradual metamorphosis
3. Incomplete metamorphosis
4. Complete metamorphosis

A-metamorphosis is a condition not often found in the insect world. It signifies a condition in which there is not change. (a-metabolous). The prefix a is Greek, meaning no. This condition is found in a few orders of small wingless insects such as silver fish, spring tails, head lice and biting bird lice. The little silver fish which often lives in cracks in the walls of our houses is a common example. The young silverfish is a miniature of its parents. It lives in the same kind of

most uniquely in the growth of the frog, from egg to tadpole to adult frog.

We would like to discuss metamorphosis in this article, as it comes to manifestation in the different orders and families in the insect world.

Metamorphosis is a Greek word which means to transform. Biologists use the word to describe the rather abrupt changes, or transformations, which occur in the form and structure of many so-called lower animals from the time of their birth until they reach maturity. This change is especially found in the invertebrates (animals without a supporting inner skeleton) because the young are very different, when they come from the egg, from the mature animal. In man of these animals striking changes, that is metamorphosis—must take place before they reach their adult condition.
crack, eats the same food, and lives the same kind of life that its parents do except that occasionally it molts and sheds its exoskeleton (hard chitinous skeleton on the outside of the body) and so becomes larger. Except by size, one can hardly tell which is which. It hides during the daytime, and comes out at night in search of food which can be anything from crumbs to the glue of bookbindings.

There are other insects which go through a metamorphosis known as **gradual metamorphosis**. These are known as **paurometabolous** (gradual change) insects. These insects undergo gradual changes in their development. The young of these are called **nymphs**, which resemble the parents except for the fact that they are small and disproportioned, and they lack wings (a distinguishing mark of all insects and the presence of six legs). The best example of paurometabolous insects is the grasshopper which can easily be recognized as such; but it usually has to molt six times before it is a mature insect with wings and well-proportioned parts. After each molt the increasing development is noticeable. Termites, earwigs, book lice, **real bugs**, and thrips undergo this gradual metamorphosis.

In certain insects, such as stoneflies, may flies, and most distinctly in dragon flies there are not four distinct changes like in butterflies, flies, and beetles; and yet the transformations are more pronounced than those of the paurometabolous forms (gradual metamorphosis). The process of metamorphosis is called incomplete metamorphosis in these insects. The dragonfly (often mistakenly called "darning needles") is a good example of insects which undergo incomplete metamorphosis or are said to be **hemimetabolous** (half change). The adult lays her eggs in the water and the young which hatch out look entirely different from the adult and are called **naiads** or **nymphs**. It remains in the water as an aquatic animal, feeding on water insects and small aquatic animals from one to five years and molts from ten to twelve times depending on the kind. At the last molt it climbs out of the water onto a stem and suddenly changes to look like the adult.

Among flies, beetles, and butterflies there are four distinct stages in development; viz., egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Such metamorphosis is called **holometabolous** (whole change) development, or **complete metamorphosis**. The eggs are laid and develop into the second stage known as the larva in holometabolous insects. While they are usually called "worms" such as cabbage worms, tomato worms, wireworms, chestnut worms, etc., they differ from worms in that they have fewer segments and fairly well-developed mouths adapted to biting and chewing and hence are usually very destructive. They usually have eyes, a well-developed head, and legs or leg-like appendages. The larva molts several times, that is, it goes through a process known as ecdysis; and the cast-off skin is called an exuvium. The larva, in order to grow, must shed its skin from time to time because this skin is really its skeleton. A special glandular secretion, known as the molting fluid, assists in casting off the outer skin.

The **pupa** is the third stage or so-called quiescent (resting) stage during which time the insect undergoes its most remarkable development. The pupal period is not really a resting period because it is the period of most physiological activity in the life of the insect. It is in this third stage that the compound eyes, antennae, true legs, and wings are acquired. Most pupae usually remain inactive but there are some pupae, notably those of mosquitoes and certain midge flies, which move about but do not

(Continued on page 18)
Christian Reformed Church Grows

Our attention was drawn to a headline on the church page of the “Grand Rapids Press” last month which boldly proclaimed the following: “Membership in Christian Reformed Church Passes 200,000 mark.” The article in connection with this headline noted that the Christian Reformed Church, which hopes to celebrate its centennial next year, has grown very rapidly in the last nine years, for its membership has increased in these years by fifty-two per cent over the total reached in their first 90 years of existence. The entire membership for the 481 congregations of the denomination is now 204,621. “These are significant gains,” said Dr. John Kromminga, denominational centennial chairman, “in view of the fact that the Christian Reformed Church has never attempted to recruit members at the expense of departing from its historic Christian beliefs.”

This last statement makes us wonder. If it is true, one thing must necessarily follow. That is that the Christian Reformed Church has never, in its existence of nearly a century, had or proclaimed the truth, since, according to Dr. Kromminga’s testimony, its beliefs today are the same as they always were. But has he forgotten 1924 and the Three Points of Common Grace? And does he not realize the modernistic trend in that denomination, especially of late, as the result of the adoption of this heresy? For these points, definitely contrary to scripture, greatly elevate the position of the world over against the church. The worldly-mindedness that resulted from this paved the way for many other evils.

Take a look at their stand today on the union question. Or rather, take a look at the lack of their stand on this issue. They have left it an open question. Why? Because they don’t have the courage to make any decisions that might result in a decrease in membership. They can’t have a division in their church. No! Trouble must be avoided at all costs. The world, which according to their common grace theory is not so bad after all, is rapidly making inroads into their church.

Another evidence of this is the increasing show attendance by members of that church. Notice for example the students of Grand Rapids Christian High School. The movies are no longer a hush-hush thing, but are the subject of open conversation. The students do not try to hide the fact of their attendance but openly reveal it. And many, if not the majority of them, go with parental approval. Today, at this school, those that do not go are few and far between and have become the exception, not the rule.

That their doctrine is impure and corrupt is also very evident. One has but to listen to the “Back to God Hour” on Sundays or read the editorials in “The Banner” to realize how far the Christian Reformed Church has departed from the Word of God. For they boldly teach that God’s promises are conditional and that faith is a condition to salvation.

Need we mention other signs of their spiritual weakness? The fact that they defend our modern day evangelists like Billy Graham; the fact that woman suffrage in the church is allowed in their denomination; the fact that many polluted Arminianistic hymns are sung in their churches and schools? They speak for themselves.
Yes, the Christian Reformed Church is growing. And their pattern for success is very simple. Merely lower the denominational walls; don’t worry about being distinctive; above all, don’t be “narrow-minded.” A few more union members, divorcees, or Arminians won’t hurt the church a bit. (And it will increase its size!)

The Protestant Reformed Church is not growing. It always was small, and since 1953 has become still smaller. But do numbers count? Is our size lamentable? By no means! For, although we are not growing in numbers, we are growing spiritually in the truth and knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we earnestly pray that we may never grow in size, yea rather become still smaller, if such a growth would cause us to depart one iota from the truth, which we now proclaim. We pray God that by His grace we may ever keep our denominational walls high; that we may ever arrive, at all costs, not to avoid trouble, but to keep our distinctiveness; that we may always be kept “narrow-minded,” knowing that “wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” May God ever give us courage to fight for the truth, holding fast that which we have, knowing the victory is ours through Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Jim Jonker

A Letter from a Serviceman to his Pastor

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Nov. 26, 1955

Dear Rev. Hanko,

Now we’ve almost come to the close of another month. I surely am happy to see them go by because every one means one closer to coming home. I’ve been here almost 10 months now and eleven months since I’ve been home and seen my loved ones. It almost seems like an eternity since I’ve been home and the seven months ahead look endless too, but God has indeed been with us and He will guide and strengthen us through the days ahead. This past Thanksgiving day was truly a day of thanks to God for all He has done for us in the past year. Certainly we must be and are thankful to Him for all things because He doeth all things for the good of His own, but when God makes the difficult way easy to walk, we can and must be doubly thankful. I am supposed to leave here on June 20, 1956 and I should be home the first part of July. There is a chance that I might get transferred to an outfit that is gyroscopic to the states a little before that so I might get home a little earlier but I’m not counting on it. The only thing to do in the army is hope for the best and expect the worst.

We have had a real nice fall here in Germany. We have had a few rainy and cold days, but on the whole it has been beautiful. We had our first snowfall here in Babenhausen yesterday and it is snowing a little this morning. It has turned quite a bit cooler too, so that I even had to wear my overcoat to the “Young Calvinists” meeting at Heidelberg yesterday. Heidelberg is only 50 miles away but it hadn’t snowed there. As you probably remember, we have a meeting once a month and Chaplain Oostinnenk is the leader. He is leaving for the states in

G. Vanden Berg
January though, so this was the last meeting with him. We are trying to get Chaplain Bunder from the Reformed Church in Iowa (the only other Reformed chaplain in Germany), but he hasn't agreed to come yet. We'll surely miss Chaplain Oostinnenk a lot, though, because he is about the best we could get for this kind of work. Surely is too bad that we don't have more of our Reformed ministers do this type of work which is sorely needed by young church members in the army, and also the chance for missionary work is very good it seems to me. Rev. Oostinnenk enjoys the work very much and wouldn't trade it for anything. He's been in for nine years already.

He was telling us yesterday about the 14-day leave he took the first part of this month to the Holy Land, Greece, Egypt, etc. I'm surely glad he told us about it, because I always wanted to go there but now I don't. He said he never had such a disappointing and disgusting experience in his life as visiting the Holy Land. Everything is so different than it should be. At every historic or biblically sacred spot the different sects try to outdo each other in displays etc., and also in collecting "gifts for the church." In the "Church of the Nativity" there are three sections for the Catholics, Armenians and Greek Orthodox respectively, and each collect their own funds. During the Christmas processions if one faith so much as steps accidentally across the line into one of the other sections there are beatings and riots so that the British guards must stand by fully armed. At the spot of the "ascension" they have a rock on which Jesus is supposed to have stood leaving his imprint, and also they have a hole where the cross is supposed to have stood. At both places they say, "Come, put your hand where His foot was, or where the cross stood." It's so obvious that it is a fake and still millions do it, I guess. He flew over the "Wilderness of Sin" through which the Israelites wandered and said he could easily see how they spent 40 years in it. It is terribly bare, desolate, rocky and inaccessible. In Jerusalem someone slit his trousers too, to get his billfold (the only place on his whole trip — the Holy City). He didn't trust them, though, and had it in his vest pocket. In all he travelled 8000 miles for $125 — mostly air hops.

I sincerely hope that you and the whole family are happy and in good health. I thank you for your much-needed prayers, and remember you in ours, too.

Yours in Christ,
Cornie Doezema

Oh happy life! Life hid with Christ in God
So making me,
At home, and by the wayside and abroad,
Alone with Thee!

METAMORPHOSIS
(Continued from page 15)
feed. In quite a number of insects, the pupae are enclosed in cocoons of silk spun by the adult larva. This is especially true of moths. Other insects use chips, mud and other material in making cases in which to pupate. The adult or imago stage is the last stage of holometabolous insects. The primary purpose of the adults is to produce off-spring. Most of these adults are short-lived, and many of them never feed.

The ways of God are past finding out; also His ways in nature. We can only stand in wonder and amazement at such a great God and say "what God has wrought."

A. Lubbe
Youth and Marriage

(Continued from March Issue)

Therefore marriage, with all that it implies, is impossible between a believer and an unbeliever. There may be certain natural and sexual attractions, but this can never be the basis for a real and durable marriage. An attractive figure with a pretty face does not yet include the necessary ingredients for a faithful wife and a devoted mother. A handsome Romeo, with a red convertible, does not yet guarantee a dependable bread winner, a respectable husband, a worthy father for your children. Young people must undoubtedly learn to love one another. And their schooling will also necessarily carry on well into marriage. Even at best, newlyweds soon discover that actually they are still strangers to each other, which have been cast together in almost constant and most intimate fellowship. Time and again during their marriage they will be learning to love each other all over again under different circumstances and with a much deeper understanding. But the basis for their love must be the love of God. Together they prayerfully face each day, with whatever crises may lie ahead, knowing each other's unspoken thoughts and hidden feelings, even constantly forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven them. The Scriptures do not warn in vain, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness.” (2 Cor. 6:14).

But this also implies that this mutual relation of love is altogether exclusive. God loves His people only, with the severe exclusion of all the wicked. And for His people to turn to another god is spiritual adultery, unfaithfulness, and wicked abomination. So also in the marital relationship between man and wife there is no room for a third party. The husband loves his wife exclusively, and desires no other. The wife finds all her satisfaction in her husband, and makes her position in the home her chief interest. As soon as that exclusive relationship is disturbed, distrust, bitterness, jealousies must arise, and the happiness is destroyed.

Thus the very purpose of marriage is to reflect the covenant life of God and His love for His church. Even in that respect God works in a mysterious way. For God enriches the life of the home with children. Covenant parents are privileged to bring forth the seed of the covenant, to nurture this seed in the fear of the Lord, and thus be instrumental toward the gathering of God's church and the coming of His kingdom. Thus the promise of the Lord is realized, “Thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.” (Psalm 128).

But no discussion of this nature would be complete without also pointing to the fact that in the world you find only a wicked caricature of the holy bond of matrimony. This is true basically, because by nature we are spiritual adulterers and adulteresses. Already in paradise a third party, Satan, interfered and thereby disrupted the covenant fellowship between God and our first parents. Adam and Eve forsook the friendship of God for an entangling alliance with the devil. That bore its bitter fruits in their own marital relationship. The Lord informs Eve that He will increase her sorrow and her conception, and that in sorrow she will bring forth children. Moreover, her sexual impulse and natural desire will powerfully draw her to her husband, and he will rule as a tyrant over her. How evident this becomes among sinful men, where selfishness governs the human heart, and where the motivation of all sexual relationships is “the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.” That revealed itself in that small Hollywood of before the flood: Lamech,
the bigamist, with his beguiling, lustful family. But it also came to manifestation in that which called itself "church," for the sons of God were attracted to the daughters of men by mere sexual appeal, which resulted in mixed marriages and a rapid apostacy. Even among Israel, as well as among the pagans, idol worship was always associated with sexual indulgence. The most abominable forms of fornication were committed under the subterfuge of religion. They only prove the truth of Romans 1, that "they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man . . . wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." But this is no less true in the more modern and cultured sections of the world. According to the testimony of Scripture, we all by nature are "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." That becomes evident from the night clubs, road houses, and taverns which are so prominent in our day. But that also appears from the theaters and dancehalls, which thrive on their sexual appeal. A mere glance at the billboards or at the ads in the daily papers convinces us that the main attraction of the theater is its brazen display of the anatomy, and its shameless delight in immorality. Who can sit out a picture of that kind without being affected by it? Very closely allied to these, and actually much closer within our reach, are the plays of the radio and television. The devil succeeds, at the turn of a knob, to bring the whole world with all her carnal lusts right into our living room. And when you tire of that, he has on hand all kinds of magazines and novels to make it possible for you to share in the iniquities of Babylon, by obscene pictures, vile and suggestive stories, or filthy, off-color jokes.

This is actually only a sample of the loose morals of our "religious" America. Also the world speaks of love, but either exalts it as a god, or speaks of it in a whisper, with a twisted smile behind the back of the hand. To her, love is nothing more than an outburst of passionate lust. People fall madly "in love," sometimes upon a mere acquaintance. They are so infatuated for the moment that all reason is flung to the wind. The fact that they are in love is sufficient excuse for all their foolish antics, rash deeds and indecencies. Too often this results only in a rude awakening after serious and irreparable damage has been done.

Moreover, what the world calls marriage is frequently nothing more than a form of legalized prostitution. Those who enter this state seem to think that this gives them a license to freely indulge in the full satisfaction of their sexual impulses. When they weary of each other, they have no scruples to look around, and either secretly or openly resort to promiscuity. And that in the name of "love," which is the sole governing factor in their lives. If necessary, they will sacrifice their home and their children, and step from one marriage into another, as readily as they would trade an old automobile for a newer model.

In many cases, children are unwelcome, either because they cannot "afford them," or they simply cannot be bothered by them in their mad chase to keep up with the Joneses. The husband insists on his selfish interests; the wife, in turn, wants her equality, or her career. If children do arrive, these are often entrusted to the care of others, so that the wife can live her own life or help support the family.

This is a far cry from the holy state of matrimony, as it is known in the Scriptures. And yet how readily the "sons of God" fall victim to it. How easy it is to set up a double standard of morals. A young man may think that he can take his fling before marriage, but the girl he marries must be chaste in every w
The young woman nurtures the idea that to capture her man she must resemble Jezebel and her escort, both in make-up and dress, but that after they are married they will settle down to a respectable life together. Moreover, we cannot warn too strenuously that many marriages are spoiled before they are ever consummated. True love does not tempt into sin, nor give in to enticements, but is determined to maintain honor and respect for one another, according to the Word of God. Young people who prayerfully seek the guidance of the Lord in their choice of a life-mate (the Lord knows who it is, even though it may still be hidden from us), and prayerfully walk in fear during the period of “going steady” and engagement, will not carry with them through the years that constant reminder that causes them to cry out in bitter complaint, “sins of youth remember not.”

To the young man of the church Scriptures says: “You are strong, you have resisted the evil one.” To refuse to go along with the world in her drunken orgies, or to associate with her in her immoral words and deeds, is not a sign of weakness or cowardice, but of true spiritual courage and manhood.

To the young woman of the church Scripture comes with the exhortation: Let your beauty be the inward adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, a beauty that does not wash off, that has not disappeared when you meet across the breakfast table, and that never fades, but blossoms in matured attractiveness as the years roll by.

To both young men and young women Scripture declares: Keep yourselves unsullied from the world. Don’t be unduly concerned for fear of becoming a lonely spinster or an unwanted bachelor. Don’t marry just for the sake of companionship. There is something worse than not being married, and that is an unhappy marriage. To repent at leisure can take a long time. Don’t marry outside of the church, for you know, as well as I do, that spiritual unity is basis for any unity whatever, also and especially in marriage. Don’t cherish the vain hope that you might still win the girl to your convictions after she becomes your wife. And don’t be so foolish as to imagine that you are just exactly the person to reform a man by marrying him.

Seek your pleasures, your good times, in a clean, wholesome atmosphere. Keep your hearts and minds from evil to keep your bodies pure. Never forget that the spirit is willing enough, but the flesh is weak.

And remember, that you are temples of the Holy Spirit. Ye are not your own. Ye are purchased with the price of the blood of Golgotha.

On the Sabbath

On the above mentioned subject, the staff of “Beacon Lights” asked me to express a few thoughts.

There appears to be considerable interest in this subject at present, for the Rev. Hey writes about it, too, in “The Standard Bearer.” I would like to refer our young people to his articles for he writes about the sabbath from a practical viewpoint and his articles deserve our attention.

The staff asked me, in writing on the sabbath, to keep in mind some concrete practical questions such as: What is the best and most proper way to spend the sabbath? How shall we celebrate the first day of the week as young people or with the family? What shall we do on Sunday in our vacations when, perhaps, we are away from home and from our home church?

Of course, all these questions can only be answered after we have, first of all, attempted to understand what is the idea of the sabbath and for what purpose the Lord has given it to His people.
This question I ask, in the light of Scripture, answer in one word: REST.

This is the meaning of the very word sabbath.

Rest was the idea of the sabbath as God originally instituted it, the sabbath of creation. On the seventh day God rested from all His work which He had made, Gen. 2:2. For that reason God blessed and sanctified that day, Gen. 2:3.

The same idea is expressed in the fourth commandment. In Lev. 23:3 the seventh day is called the sabbath of rest. And a comparison of Ps. 95 with Hebrews 4 yields the same result. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews applies the text from Psalm 95 directly to the sabbath, to the final rest that remains for the people of God. The sabbath, therefore, is God's rest. And we are admonished to labor in order to enter into that rest. Heb. 4:11.

However, the further question is not superfluous: what is rest?

To this question we may reply, negatively, that rest is by no means the same as complete idleness, as refraining absolutely from all activity. The two are not the same. Idleness is condemned in Scripture as sinful. Besides, it is really impossible for man to cease completely from any kind of labor or activity. Even though he may appear to repose as far as his body is concerned, his soul is still very active thinking and willing, planning and desiring. Nor is it even the purpose of the sabbath to refrain from all physical labor and, in this sense, to esteem one day above another. The mother in a family, for instance, still takes care of her family, washes and dresses her small children, prepares meals and washes dishes. The farmer has his chores on Sunday as well as on any other day. To consider the sabbath as a day of physical idleness in which we may not do any work at all is pharisaism. Besides, one may well spend his Sunday without any physical activity and, at the same time, crowd the day with his own sinful work.

The sabbath is the rest of God.

It is a covenant idea.

God always rests, yet He is never idle. From eternity to eternity He is an ever active God. For He lives the life of perfect covenant fellowship. From eternity to eternity He gives, as Father, life to the Son, yet this act of generating the Son is eternally finished and perfect. Eternally the Son is generated and receives life from the Father, yet in perfect rest the Son eternally loves the Father. Constantly the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son, yet this procession is eternally finished. God never labors or toils. Eternally He is a God of rest. Ever He rejoices in the rest of entering into His own covenant life of friendship. And it is this ever active covenant life of friendship that is God's sabbath, His eternal and perfect rest.

Let us always, and more especially on the weekly sabbath, when we do not have to be occupied with our every toil and labors, labor to enter into that rest!

For God has prepared a rest for His people in Christ Jesus our Lord, a rest that is creaturely reflection and realization of His own rest, a reflection of His own covenant life and fellowship of friendship. That is the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Into that rest Christ entered for us as the Captain of our salvation, and by faith in Him, we, too, enter into the same rest, now in principle and, presently in everlasting perfection. It is a rest from sin and corruption unto righteousness and holiness; it is a rest from our own lie unto the truth of God; it is a rest from the death in which we lie by nature unto eternal life and light and glory.

This rest we enter by faith every day, but the weekly sabbath is designed by God for His people as a preparation for
this sabbathic life of every day in the midst of the world.

Every day we are called to live the sabbathic life, but on the weekly sabbath we have a vacation from our daily toil and struggle which God purposes to use as a means to strengthen our faith for the daily battle.

For this reason the sabbath of the New Testament day is first and the days of labor follow. On the sabbath we celebrate the day when Christ entered into His rest, the day of His resurrection from the dead.

The adventist is in error.

Every day we have, by faith in Christ, a foretaste of the final rest that remaineth for the people of God, but the weekly sabbath is designed by God in order that we may have that foretaste in a special sense.

If we understand this idea of the sabbath it will not be difficult for us to answer the question ourselves: what shall we do on the sabbath?

Then we will understand that, also in regard to the fourth commandment, we are not under the law, but under grace and that the law, for us, is not an outwardly binding code of precepts, but the law of perfect liberty.

Then we will no longer consider the weekly sabbath as a day that, as such, is holier than any other day and that to refrain from our daily labor on that day has any special merit or religious value in the sight of God. And then, too, we will not always ask the anxious question: what may we do or not do on the sabbath? For then we will understand that it is our calling to fight the good fight of faith every day and that the vacation on the weekly sabbath is designed for us by God to prepare us for that battle.

For the sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath!

However, although we not esteem one day above another, if we understand this idea of the sabbath, we will thankfully receive that first day of the week and its vacation from our daily labor and toil as a gift of God to us and observe it in such a way that we fill it as much as possible with the things of the Kingdom of heaven and of God's eternal covenant. The observance of the sabbath is a deeply spiritual matter that can be realized only by the believer that professes, in word and deed, that he is a stranger in the earth and that he looks for the city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

That believer will not desecrate the sabbath!

He will not fill the day with all kinds of lust and pleasure and become, especially on the sabbath, worldly-minded.

On the contrary, he will diligently seek the communion of saints in the church of which he is a member. He will delight himself in hearing the pure preaching of the Word and in the celebration of the sacraments. He will not become a "oncer" but attend public worship as often as possible. He will do so wherever he may be, even when he is on vacation. And if it happens that he should be somewhere where he cannot find a church of his own denomination, he should try to discover in what church the gospel of Christ is still most purely proclaimed and attend it.

At home, in the family circle, it is a good custom, especially on the sabbath to rehearse the sermon and to discuss it among one another.

Besides, whether we are at home or on our vacation, we can busy ourselves with many things that pertain to the kingdom of God. We can turn on the radio and listen especially to our own program and thus receive spiritual food. We can study our Bible lesson for our society gatherings during the week. And thus we might be busy with spiritual matters on the sab-
bath day. I do not have to enumerate
then for you.

The sum of the matter is: the sabbath
is not designed for recreation; not even
merely for resting from our daily labors,
but for the purpose that we should con-
centrate on the things of God's covenant,
so that it might have a sanctifying in-
fluence on our whole life in the midst of
the world, and that we might have a
foretaste of the rest that remained for
the people of God. H.H.

Notice:

Due to lack of space, a “Symposium on
Labor” will be printed at a later date.

THE “WHY” AND “WHEREFORES”

O unprovoked love that stills
All murmurings of unbelief!
O sweet beneficence that wills
To turn to rapture all my grief!

Oh, just to lie within Thine arms
In the sweet happiness of peace
Secure from Nature’s dread alarms—
Here rest begins and terrors cease.

To leave the “Whys?” and “Wherefores”
there
With Him Who all perfection is;
To place the “Thees” and “Therefores”
where
Naught but a cold abstraction is.

Perfection must act perfectly—
Almighty love makes no mistakes;
God is the end of mystery—
He, out of chaos, order makes.

Leave in His hands the threads of life
To weave into a perfect whole;
He ends all speculative strife
When fully worshipped in the soul.
—Samuel Levermore

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN
HEAVEN,

whom have we in heaven but Thee, and
there is none on earth that we desire
beside Thee; for Thou alone art God;
beside Thee there is none other Savior.
Throughout this year HALLOWED BE
THY NAME in every thought and deed
as we submit to the loving ministry of
The Holy Spirit. In faith and expecta-
tion we pray, THY KINGDOM
COME, for Thy Lordship in our lives
makes to desire Thy rule in all the
earth. Give us a heart to so trust and
love Thee that in all things we shall
say: THY WILL BE DONE ON
EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. And
as every good and every perfect gift is
from above GIVE US THIS DAY OUR
DAILY BREAD; and as Thou dost
open Thy hand of bounty, open Thou
our lips with fitting praise and thank-
giving. Relying upon Thy free mercy
through our Redeemer’s blood, we
humbly pray, FORGIVE US OUR
TRESPASSES, ever knowing that we
cannot have a spirit of true repentance
and contrition except AS WE FOR-
GIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS
AGAINST US. And, O, Lord, knowing
our weaknesses, we humbly pray, LEAD
US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT
DELIVER US FROM EVIL even as
Thou hast by Thy Son saved us from
the Evil One. And as our Saviour so
taught us to pray, how shall we fail to
receive these blessings FOR THINE IS
THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER
AND THE GLORY FOR EVER AND
EVER. Amen.

—Selected

Amid the busy city, thronged and gay,
But One I see,

Tasting sweet peace, as unobserved I pray

Alone with Thee!
Do you have holes in your plaster? Is the paint falling off your walls? Here is a suitable way to cover up those ugly spots and beautify your room at the same time.

Send your name and address with $2.25 to Elaine Hanko, 1221 Bates St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. and you will receive the beautiful plate illustrated above. On the reverse side is the history of First Church. A bracket is included so that you may hang the plate on your wall.

If you would desire to start a collection of plates with pictures and histories of all our various churches, please mention that fact. If enough of our people are interested, we will also make those available.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 29, at 9 P. M.

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corner

Fuller and Franklin

You'll be sorry if you miss it!