In this issue . . .

FEATURE — page 1
The Fullness of Time
Rev. H. Veldman

EDITORIAL — page 4
Born to Die
Mr. C. Westra

CHRISTIAN LIVING — page 5
Doctrine and Practice (3)
Rev. H. Hanko

TRUTH vs. ERROR — page 7
Christmas — Christian or Pagan?
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

BIBLE OUTLINE — page 9
Acts 14:1-28
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

PENCILS AND CHALK
The Study of Art in Our Schools — page 12
Miss A. Borduin
The Role of the P.T.A. in Our Schools — page 13
Mrs. J. Veltman

MISCELLANEOUS —
The Profit of Christ’s Birth to Us — page 14
Rev. J. McCollam
The Arian Controversy — page 15
Don Doezema
The expression, "fulness of time," is Scriptural. We read in Gal. 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

We must be on our guard against an erroneous conception of this expression. The pagan world, then, is pictured as groping for the light. To be sure, they bow the knee before idols of every description; yet, the fact that they bow the knee before idols must be understood as a seeking by the heathens of the living God. Do we not read in Acts 17 of an altar dedicated to the unknown God, and does this not seemingly imply that they sought the unknown God? This "Common Grace" conception of the "fulness of time" teaches that the Gentile world was seeking for the truth, that this seeking was manifested by so-called noble personages as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Cicero, etc., so that the heathens were striving, yearning for the higher ideal, and were ready to receive the gospel when Christ came. Did not the Gentiles seek after God, speak of the consciousness of sin and guilt, erect altars, burn sacrifices, have priests who officiated for them, so that Christianity, then, is after all nothing more than a refined and reformed paganism? Besides, had not the world made gigantic strides in the development of civilization and culture? Think of the beautiful Greek language, the development of law by Rome, and the construction of roads and highways! This is the "Common Grace" conception of the "fulness of time."

The fallacy of this conception must be readily apparent. Indeed, there were many things which cooperated in the advance of the gospel. This is particularly true of the Greek language (the original language of the New Testament) and the development of roads. But we must always bear the following in mind. First, God always uses all things for the realization and development of His kingdom and covenant. Secondly, whatever development in the world may aid the cause of God's kingdom, this is not because such is the world's purpose or intention, but only because the Lord, in spite of and through all the efforts of the world to improve itself, uses all things unto the realization of His kingdom. Besides, if the heathen world were ready in the "fulness of time" to embrace Christ and His gospel, why didn't they do so?

The expression, "fulness of time," means
that Jesus came at an exact moment in history. He is born at the proper moment. What was that proper, exact moment?

First of all, we must answer this question from the viewpoint of Israel. For carnal Israel the “fulness of time” was that moment in history when they had filled their cup of iniquity and had been spiritually prepared to crucify the Christ. Carnal, reprobate Israel must become ripe for that most terrible crime, the crucifixion of the Messiah. Israel is surely like that fig tree (Matt. 21:18-22) upon which every conceivable labor had been bestowed. They had received the sacrifices, the promises, and all the light which could possibly shine in the Old Dispensation. Christ must come at that hour or moment in history which would clearly reveal that, notwithstanding all the light they had with respect to Christ’s coming, and all the promises, and the fact that Christ is very evidently the fulfillment of these promises, quoting them repeatedly, they kill Him, not because of their lack of natural understanding, but because they hated the light. And they had to be prepared for this terrible deed! Hardened by all the revelation of God, throughout the Old Dispensation, they were finally so filled with hatred and contempt of the things of God’s covenant that, when the Fulfillment of God’s promises appeared, they were ready to crucify Him. Such is the moment of the “fulness of time” as far as carnal Israel is concerned. They were gradually hardened and rendered ripe for their rejection of the Christ throughout the Old Dispensation.

However, we must also look at this moment of the “fulness of time” from the viewpoint of spiritual, elect Israel. And with respect to the people of God it must become fully apparent that the covenant, as established with Israel in the Old Testament, could not bring them one whit closer to the Lord. In fact, Jesus must come at the moment of the complete collapse of the Old Dispensation. The law (the entire Mosaic law) was surely a schoolmaster, leading Israel to Christ. We read this literally in Gal. 3:24. It was such a schoolmaster, in the first place, because it typified the Christ. The typical offices of prophet, priest, and king, the sacrifices of the Old Dispensation, the temple upon Mount Moriah and the palace upon Mount Sion were all symbols and shadows of the Christ Who was to come. Secondly, it was a schoolmaster in the sense that its complete unfitness to save must be fully apparent. Manifest and severe were the duties and obligations which the law imposed upon the people of God in the Old Testament. How severe and every effort-demanding were all the shadows and symbols of the old day! Indeed, if righteousness could be obtained by the law, then the blood of bulls and goats and oxen would surely have effected it. Fact is, however, when Jesus comes He must come at that moment in history when the law’s complete unfitness to save shall have become fully apparent. And this was surely realized! Did the law succeed in bringing Israel to God? The very opposite is true! The Israelitish nation drifted farther and farther away from the living God! Indeed, the complete collapse of the structure of the Old Dispensation, the darkness and hopelessness wherein the people of God found themselves must give undisputed testimony to the fact that Christ alone must be our only Redeemer. Israel was in a state of complete spiritual bankruptcy!

Even this is not all. We have looked at the moment of the “fulness of time” from the viewpoint of reprobate and elect Israel. We must also look at this moment from the viewpoint of the world. First of all, Christ must be born at a time when the world is governed by one government. His death must be the condemnation of the world. Hence, He must be born as a citizen of the world, not only subject to the law of a certain local country, but also to a world-empire. He must be able to say: “Now is the condemnation of the world,” and: “
have overcome the world.” Jesus must be tried and sentenced to death by Rome! Jesus was born when Rome ruled the world! Secondly, with respect to that world two things must be true. On the one hand, it must have reached a very high point of development. The glimmerings of natural light must shine particularly brilliantly. The crucifixion of the Christ must never be ascribed in any sense of the word to ignorance, to a lack of understanding. Man must clearly know the difference between good and evil. And how brilliantly this natural light shone when Christ came! What a high plane of cultural development the world had reached! Think of the development in art, science, etc.! And, on the other hand, the world, notwithstanding all its natural light, must descend to the depth of shame and debauchery and misery. It must be plain that, forsaking God, the world reaps for itself shame and misery, even to the extent (see Rom. 1) that mankind commits things unheard of even in the animal world! When Christ comes it is therefore plain, also to the world, that He is the only possible Redeemer, that all its efforts have culminated in disaster and spiritual ruin. Hence, rejecting Christ, even then, it becomes undeniably plain that they love the darkness rather than the light, even to the extent of rejecting the only possible Saviour.

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What strange talk. Are we not born to live? Does not birth imply a coming into being? What does death have to do with birth?

Death is the curse of God for sin. We all die, and death is inevitable for everyone. In this sense we all are born to die. Physical death is present at birth. For some it may demand a life of only a few moments, for others many years. Every one shall die, unless Christ return before our physical life in this tabernacle has been completed, for then we shall be changed in a moment. But concerning Christ, born to die, means much more than our birth and death.

The entire Old Testament is a long story of the coming Savior and Hope of the nations. Christ is the theme of the entire Old Testament. The protovangel itself is the unifying idea of the entire Old Testament history. Believers during this period longed for the Promised One. Even the mothers in Israel contemplated the birth of the Messiah. They longed for Him and waited for the “Redeemer of Israel.” The prophets, Malachi 3:2, “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap.” And the psalmists, Ps. 2:7, “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” radiate the glory that would be at the coming of the Savior.

The angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, and also to Mary on a different occasion, announcing that the Babe which was conceived was to be called Jesus, for He would save his people from their sins, Matt. 1:21 and Luke 1:31. Here then is the fulfillment of the promise, the Savior is come, born of a virgin.

Jesus was born. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the father) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14. The incarnation, a miracle of God, reveals to us God in the flesh. Very man and very God, Jesus Christ was born.

Why was he born? To die. Oh, not merely a physical death which would be for him a means to glory even as it is for us. His death was unique. He died that others might live. How possible, you say? Only by grace. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. His death was for us. Through His death He bore the curse of God on our sins. Eternally God hates sin. He hates all our sins, even the ones we do in secret. When Christ was on the cross He bore the eternal wrath of God on our sins. That eternal wrath of hell, which we deserve, Christ bore on Calvary for us. This is the death of the Son of God. He was born for this purpose, for it is written, “For this cause He came into the world that the world through Him might be saved,” John 3:17.

His whole life was a life of humiliation which cannot be separated from His death. This life of suffering, however, was not because of His own sins, for Christ had no sin, but because of our sins. All Christ’s suffering and rebuke was part of that death which was to be climaxed in the cross. On the cross God poured out on Him the iniquity of us all.

(Continued on page 17)
DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

We were discussing the question of whether or not the preaching in our churches is too much concerned with doctrine and not sufficiently engrossed with the practical life of the saints. We noticed in a brief glance at the modern church world that practical preaching is the thing of the day, and that in very fact, the Scriptures are not even preached any longer. We also talked about the fact that this type of preaching was usually closely connected with the idea that man had only the need to reform himself somewhat if he wanted to go to heaven, while Scripture emphasizes that man is in need of a radical change of his whole nature which can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit even against man's own will at first. We observed that therefore there was a false line drawn between doctrinal preaching and practical preaching which could not very well be maintained because true practice is always doctrine, and doctrine is always intensely practical. It was this seeming mystery that we were trying to explain.

If it is true therefore, that man stands in need of a radical and complete change of his heart and whole nature by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, then preaching takes on quite a different form. The preaching does not try to tell a person to reform his outward conduct merely, but comes with the truth of the Word of God. God has implanted within the heart of His children a new principle of life, and this life must be nourished and fed. This can only take place through the ministry of the truth. God has drawn His people into His covenant fellowship, and they are turned to God as His covenant people. There is nothing that they desire more than to know the truth concerning their God Who has saved them. This is doctrine. They are separated by grace from this evil world in which they live, and are made citizens of the kingdom of heaven. God has put the desires of that kingdom within their hearts and taken out the desires for the world. They love the life of the kingdom which they shall presently inherit, and concerning this kingdom which they anxiously await, they desire to know more and more. This is doctrine. They are anxious to seek the praises of their God, and no longer desire to seek themselves. But then they are interested only in learning concerning God and His glory. But this is doctrine in the true sense of the Word. Their faith clings to the cross as the only hope that they have amid all the sufferings of this present time. But then of that cross they would learn more. They constantly, in their afflictions cry out, "But I belong to Jesus!" And so of that Jesus Who has purchased them with His own precious blood they would be instructed.

And all this is doctrine—the truth of the Word of God. And yet at the same time, there is nothing more practical. This is true practical preaching, when the minister speaks of the greatness of God, His glory, the strength of His works, the infinite perfections of His being, the power of His salvation. For it teaches them that this glory is revealed to them and in them; this power is displayed in their own lives; this salvation is their precious heritage in Jesus Christ their Lord. This is certainly practical, for
it deals with them, with their sins, with their salvation, with their hope, with their comfort. It takes away their tears and makes them supremely happy even during suffering and affliction. It points them to their inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that will never pass away. It assures them that that inheritance is for them.

And so we may readily say that there is nothing so practical as the truth. And if you would add to what I have said above, that all this also has significance for their calling — their calling in the midst of the world, then I say that that is certainly true. But it must be remembered that God has principally delivered them from the power of sin; He has set them upon the road of righteousness, and they are enabled by grace to walk in that road until finally they arrive safely at their eternal home.

But thirdly, we may add that a believer who loves the truth and seeks to grow in the knowledge of God, also will have no questions about how he ought to walk in the midst of the world. If he knows God as the God of his salvation; if he has covenant fellowship with God in the abiding communion of grace and peace, then the problems of living in this present time will not be difficult. He does not need to be told repeatedly not to go to shows. He does not have to be warned against unrestrained use of television and liquor. He does not have to be constantly reminded that he may not enjoy the pleasures and lusts of this present time. He must be instructed in the truth and taught to love the truth. And if this is the result, he will not fall into all kinds of sins. He knows when he enjoys the favor and friendship of His Father in heaven, and when he does not.

Endless discussions about all the practical subjects under the sun will have no significance for the believer if he does not know the truth of God and if he does not learn to love it. Endless warnings about all kinds of dangers and evils will have no influence even on our young people, if they do not have strong desires to increase in spiritual understanding. Endless laws regulating his conduct will have no effect upon him if he does not seek the truth. Well intentioned people may take a movie house out of a town, purge the newsstands of obscene literature and try to keep the stores closed on Sunday; but if he has no love of the truth this will never keep him from sinning. But if his whole heart is filled with an eager desire to increase in the knowledge of God, he may very well have a theatre next door to his home and never enter.

The believer is placed by the power of God into abiding communion with Christ’s body. His faith reaches out to Christ and relies completely upon Him. Christ is his rock and shelter in the storms of life; Christ is his haven of refuge, his strong tower to which he may flee for protection. But the more he knows and understands the truth, the more he will want to flee alone to Christ. The more he knows about Jesus, the more also he will want to put his trust in Him alone. The more he learns to understand that Christ is strong — that all strength and power is His only, the more he will rely upon his Savior. The more he knows about the truth that Christ rules over all things to bring them to their final end when He shall usher in His new kingdom of righteousness, the more the believer will say, I want nothing to do with this world and all its temptations, for I am going home, to the house of my Father, to the kingdom of my Redeemer. The better a child of God understands the truth and loves it with all his heart, the less he will walk with sin and find companions among the workers of iniquity. To know the truth, the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ is most blessed! That is his delight and his eternal joy! It is better than life for him to know and love his God!

H. Hank
CHRISTMAS — CHRISTIAN OR PAGAN?

"Charles Dickens wrote his most famous story to demonstrate what happens to a wretched, miserly old man when once the Christmas spirit gets to work on him and take over. Something happens at this time of the year to make people easier to get along with. There is something about this season that releases the friendliness and good-will between one man and another which most people keep under rigid control during the rest of the year. Those feelings, carefully preserved in sort of a cold storage most of the time, come forth naturally and spontaneously on certain occasions."

So wrote E. A. Opitz in "The Miracle of the Christmas Spirit." Apart now from the obvious untruth of the last statement in the paragraph quoted, we ask, "But is this the true celebration of Christmas?" Does Christmas mean that people put on a hypocritical mask to disguise their true feelings in order to be piously nice to one another during a short season? Better not attempt then to extend that period as most commercial houses have for years tried with some success to do for it might well prove difficult to hold people under such restraint for a prolonged time! Unquestionably it may be admitted that many of the practices of this season are nought but sheer hypocrisy, superficial piety and as foreign to the true spirit of Christmas as arsenic is to the stomach. If Christmas only means that people act friendly, jovial, kind and generous while there isn't an iota of truth in and back of these actions, it would be better that the whole practice be immediately discarded.

It was once said that the modern celebration of Christmas is Satanically inspired in disguise. It would more properly be named "Satan-mas" than "Christ-mas." But, of course, such an alteration of title would hardly go over well especially with the religious conscious (?) public. The devil is too clever to attempt to impose his own name in the place of the beloved name of Christ. He is more subtle. Instead he, in accord with his deceptive abilities, simply transposes the last letter of his own name from its proper place to the center of his name and out of "Satan" makes "Santa" and then proceeds to maneuver the Christmas celebrations to center around this cleverly concocted idol. The gullible public, including the foolish church, falls hard for this malicious innovation and the devil stands by with glee and delight. Oh, Christ is not wholly ignored for it is still technically Christ-mas but the recognition and honor that is given Him is so irrelevant that it might just as well be entirely ignored. Error is made so dominant and the truth is so ruthlessly suppressed that one must peer through the Christmas conglomerations with microscopic exactness to even find semblances of the latter in it all!

There are some who advocate abolishing the entire practice and strongly insist that the church sins terribly by commemorating the birth of Jesus. As a sample we quote the following.

"God did not require Christmas! Then it is an abomination to Him. He has not indicated in any way that He desires a celebration of the birth of our Lord. In no way does the worldly affair of Christmas, with its materialism and carnality resemble the "spiritual sacrifices" that God has asked to
be offered up to Him. But even if there were any resemblance, we cannot find any single place in His Word where He has bid us or even implied a desire for us to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Neither is there any record whatever that any of the early christians did so. Therefore, if there is absolutely no record for a reason for spiritual celebration of the birth of our Lord, where do we find any justification at all for the God-dishonoring institutions of Christmas; the X-mas tree and 'Santa Claus'?

The argument is two-fold. First, there is no record of the date of Jesus' birth. If God had desired us to commemorate it He would have preserved for us that record. Secondly, the current practice is of heathen extraction. It is simply the adoption of various heathen rites and customs taken over under christian names and given a christian setting. Space does not permit us to elaborate upon all of this here.

Is there any validity in this argumentation?

Our answer is both Yes and No!

We answer No because, in the first place, the argument that there is no express command in Scripture enjoining us to celebrate the birth of our Lord does not hold. It may with equal force be argued that there is nothing in Scripture forbidding us to do so. Further, the same thing is true with respect to many other practices which have always been considered proper by the church. Where do we in Scripture, for example, read explicitly of a command to celebrate the Lord's Supper with certain frequency, to baptize infants, to observe the resurrection, the ascension, etc. Certainly the birth of our Lord is an event of such great magnitude, a revelation of the Wonder of Divine grace that is so marvelous that it merits special as well as daily commemoration!

In the second place the argument that the distortion and abuse of a certain good renders it imperative that the good be altogether abolished is also faulty reasoning. All that can be conceded on this point is that our present traditions are in need of being re-examined and so altered that they are brought into conformity with the pattern of true celebrations laid down in the Scriptures. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

In that regard we can say "Yes" to the objections to the modern celebration of Christmas by the church. Here is a wide area where truth and error have gloriously mingled, obscuring more and more the former and radiating the latter. Traditions become deeply rooted and when they are in error it becomes a painful, tedious and unpleasant process to uproot them. This, however, does not justify leaving them grow till, like trees, they spread their limbs, heavy with foliage, obscuring the light and beauty of the sun. Better that the ax is put to them and with mighty blows they are hewn down so that nothing may mar our vision of "The Sun of Righteousness."

Oh yes, His birth we may - nay MUST commemorate! In it are the "tidings of great joy." God remembers His covenant and manifests His eternal faithfulness in EMMANUEL - God with us! Hallelujah!

Glory to God in the highest
O come let us adore Him!

Having our conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God! Then, - yes, only then can we say, "Merry Christmas" - and that in truth!

G. Vanden Berg
BIBLE OUTLINE

THE BOOK OF ACTS

CHAPTER 14

The First Missionary Journey

(Continued)

D. Iconium (14:1-6)

1. The labors of Paul and Barnabas:
   a. Where did they begin their labors? vs. 1
      1) Is there any significance in the note that “they went both together into the synagogue”? 
      2) What does it imply that they “so spake, that a great multitude ... believed”? 
   b. What was the fruit of their labors here?
      1) Was this rather striking? Was it probably immediate? 
      2) How is it to be explained that there were also Greeks in this multitude of believers if they preached in the synagogue? 
   c. Why did they labor a long time in Iconium? vs. 3
      1) Why is it mentioned that they “spoke boldly”? 
      2) What does it mean that they spoke boldly “in the Lord”? 
      3) Why did the Lord in this case support their testimony with signs and wonders? Was there special need of this at Iconium? 
         a) What is meant by the “word of his grace”? 
         b) What connection was there between the “signs and wonders” and the word of his grace”? 
      c) Was it needful that these signs and wonders were done “by their hands”? 

2. The persecution:
   a. Who were the persecutors?
      1) Is it significant that the Jews instigated the persecution? 
      2) When vs. 2 mentions the Gentiles, who are meant by this? 
      3) What is implied in “made their minds evil affected”? 
   b. What is the connection between vs. 2 on the one hand, and vs. 4, 5 on the other hand?
   c. What was the fruit of the “stirring up of the Jews”? vs. 4, 5.
      1) Who is meant by the “rulers”? Was this the rulers of the Jews and the Jewish synagogue or are the rulers of the city meant? 
      2) Did this persecution come to an actual stoning of the apostles? 
   d. What did the apostles do when they became aware of this plot?
      1) Why did they flee? 
      2) Would it have been proper for them to stay, or was it their calling to flee? 
      3) Where did they go next?
E. Lystra and Derbe: (vss. 6-20)

1. The field of labor:
   a. Why is "the region round about" mentioned?
   b. What was evidently characteristic of these cities?
      1) Are the Jews mentioned?
      2) Is there any reference to a synagogue in this case?
   c. Did this affect the preaching of the apostles? Would it make a difference
      whether they preached to Jews and Gentile proselytes or to outright heathen?
      The text says merely: they preached the gospel.

2. The healing of the lame man:
   a. What details are mentioned concerning this man? Why such emphasis on this?
   b. The miracle as such:
      1) What is implied in "the same heard Paul speak"?
      2) How did Paul perceive that he had faith?
      3) Was this what is called "miraculous faith" or did this man truly believe
         in the Lord Jesus?
      4) Was this faith necessary in order to be healed?
      5) Was this miracle connected with the preaching?
      6) What is the significance of the miracle? How did it serve as a sign of the
         wonder of grace? Does Paul refer to this significance in vs. 16, when he
         speaks of the fact that God "in times past suffered all nations to walk in
         their own ways"?
   c. The reaction of the multitude:
      1) Why is "the speech of Lycaonia" specially mentioned?
      2) Does it look as if the preaching had had any positive effect up to this point?
         Had they been converted?
      3) Who were Jupiter and Mercury? Why did the people choose these two
         gods to whom they likened Barnabas and Paul?
      4) Why did Paul and Barnabas react so strongly against the intention of the
         people to sacrifice to them?
   d. Paul's preaching:
      1) What distinguishes the preaching in this case from that to a synagogue audi-
         ence? Why?
      2) From what does Paul take his point of departure here?
      3) Is it indeed possible to proceed from this knowledge of God in creation and
         providence to the preaching of the gospel?
      4) Was there reason for Paul to think that his preaching against idolatry on
         this basis could find any receptivity? Cf. also Romans 1:18ff.
      5) What antithesis does Paul point to between the idols and God? vs. 15.
      6) What does it mean that in times past God suffered all nations to walk in
         their own ways?
      7) What witness did God give of Himself?
      8) How did He give this witness of Himself?
      9) Does vs. 17 refer to a common grace of God? Explain.
   e. Did Paul's preaching have the effect of conversion upon the people?
1) What is the meaning of "they scarce restrained" them?
2) If it was not through conversion that they were restrained from sacrificing to Paul and Barnabas, what was it that restrained them?

3. Persecution at Lystra:
   a. Who instigated this persecution? What does this show concerning the unbelieving Jews?
   b. Discuss the apparently sudden change and contrast between the earlier intention to worship Paul and Barnabas and the later persecution of them.
      1) How is it to be explained that they went so easily from one extreme to the other?
      2) Are these "extremes" really so extreme? Is there any principal difference between the two? May we say that the latter is the natural development and outgrowth of the former extreme?
   c. The stoning of Paul:
      1) Why was Paul stoned, not Barnabas?
      2) Is Paul's revival to be considered miraculous, or must it be explained through the fact that he was not seriously injured?
      3) Was there also positive fruit at Lystra?
   d. Where did the two missionaries go next, and what did they do there?

III. The Return (14:21-28)

A. To the various churches established:
   1. The confirmation of the disciples:
      a. What is meant by "confirming the souls of the disciples"?
      b. Why did they exhort them to continue in the faith?
      c. Why is it so that we must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation?
   2. The establishment of the congregations:
      a. Why did they ordain elders in every church? What was the work of these elders? Was it possible that in such young congregations they could already find "elder material"?
      b. What was the purpose of the prayer and fasting?
      c. Why did they commend them to the Lord? Why is it specially mentioned, "the Lord, on whom they believed"?
   3. Further labors:
      a. Did the missionaries only return to confirm the churches which were already established?
      b. Where else, according to vss. 24 and 25 did they labor?

B. To Antioch
   1. Why did they return to Antioch? Was this absolutely necessary?
   2. What did they do upon their return?
      a. What was the subject of their rehearsal?
      b. What is meant by "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"?
      c. Why did they abide a long time with the disciples?

(General question: What may be learned from this account of chapters 13 and 14 as to the principles and method of mission labor by the church of today?)

H.C.H.
THE STUDY OF ART IN OUR SCHOOLS

God is the supreme artist. He has made the earth beautiful. His marks are indelibly impressed upon it. We recognize God's attributes and being expressed in the infinity of things about us; in the predominance of three's — triangles of composition from the greatest paintings to the simplicity of a leaf — the Trinity.

The Bible itself is filled with references to God's handiwork in the thunder of the seas, the beauty of the heavens, the majesty of the mountains, the miracle of the seasons. All these have been favorite subjects of painters in every period of art history.

God has endowed us, creatures created in His own image, with an eye to recognize beauty in form, rhythm, balance, color, composition, perspective, light and shade. All these work together harmoniously in the revelation of God. But, of course, only the true Christian can ascribe this beauty to its proper source. Therefore, it is essential that we teach this also to our children.

Art is separated broadly into two main areas: creative art and art appreciation. In both, the fundamentals remain the same and recognition of these is necessary for the appreciation and creation of true art. These principles were as truly established by God as were the scientific laws we all accept as part of His creation.

Since most of us are somewhat ignorant of these fundamentals of art, we need to be taught. We teachers learn them and in turn teach them to our pupils. None of us is expected to be a master, but what is to preclude the possibility of our helping to shape one? This, too, we do with a view to God's glory.

One of the primary lessons in the teaching of art is that of observation. Some children are naturally observant; others need to have shapes, lines, composition pointed out to them.

A few weeks ago our art assignment was to draw a tree. After attempting to illustrate on the blackboard what should make up the drawing of a tree, I said, "Now sketch your tree." On most of the papers the conventional tree appeared — a single straight trunk drawn to the bottom of the page with a clump of foliage on top.

My next statement was, "Get on your coats. We're going out to observe trees. Each one has its own characteristics. I shall point them out to you as we walk." After pointing out several — oaks with their rugged, gnarled trunks; symmetrical maples with straight trunks and thick, close foliage; thinly dressed birches characteristically grouped in three; triangular pines with their branches all the way to the ground — I instructed them to choose a tree and sketch it by looking at the actual object. The difference from their original attempt was amazing. Observation was the key to their success.

The question may arise, "All children like to draw, but how do we introduce them to the work others have done, especially the accomplished artists?" The first requirement, of course, is that they be exposed to the paintings. For real enjoyment a child will choose a picture which contains something with which he can identify himself. It will be related to his experience and background. The broader these are, the more he will enjoy the picture. After he has made friends with a painting, the techniques of

(Continued on page 17)
THE ROLE OF THE P.T.A. IN OUR SCHOOLS

On the evening of October 17 the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute held a Mass Meeting at Fourth Church. One of the features of the program was a panel discussion on the topic: "The Role of the P.T.A. in Our Schools." The panel consisted of Rev. R. Veldman as moderator, assisted by Miss A. Labbers, Mrs. J. Veltman, Mr. A. Heemstra, and Mr. D. Lottermann. Mr. F. Hanko and Mrs. J. Moelker were unable to attend.

Fundamental to the discussion was the general history and purpose of a P.T.A. The first P.T.A. was founded in 1897 to coordinate the work of the home and the school in the education of children. It soon branched out to include a study of child growth, character development, school curriculum, and kindergarten. Its main purposes are 1. to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community. 2. to raise the standard of home life. 3. to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth. 4. to bring into closer relation the home and the school; that parent and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child. 5. to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

Mr. Heemstra showed that as Protestant Reformed parents we must not only inform and educate our children but must mold and develop the spiritual characteristics of the pupil to prepare him to lead a useful Christian life. Such a task requires the combined energies of both parents. By being active together we can develop a much closer mutual relationship between home and school.

Since the Hope Protestant Reformed School has a P.T.A. and the Adams Street School centers its activities mainly around The Mothers Club and The Athletic Association, it was interesting to compare the advantages and disadvantages. The Hope P.T.A. meets four times a year although two of its meetings consist of a program and Open House. Adams also has Open House twice a year with an educational program included. The Athletic Association concerns itself mainly with the school's athletic program. The purpose of the Mothers Club from Adams compares with that of any P.T.A. It usually has some children participation or a discussion on some phase of education at its monthly meetings. Financial support of the school is maintained outside of their meetings. With both parents attending meetings many vital aspects as child behavior, discipline, reading readiness, the science curriculum, etc., could be discussed.

With separate organizations an overlapping of aims and activities is noticeable. Yet, regular attendance of both parents is frequently a problem in a P.T.A. While if both parents are members of a P.T.A. there is a better understanding of the time, labor, donations, sales, etc. that the mothers are part of.

With the closing of the discussion, the panel realized that the education of a child is directly the responsibility of the parent. The school becomes their agent and they must see that the schools are fulfilling their purpose. That parents and teachers are dependent upon each other for a proper evaluation of a child. That parents must become acquainted with the curriculum and its needs. That parents must help to motivate the curriculum as in geography, history, and science. That the more parents feel their responsibility, the greater their interest will be, and the more eager they will become to attend an organization that combines the interests of the home and the school, the parents and the teacher in the education of children.

Mrs. John Veltman
"THE PROFIT OF CHRIST'S BIRTH TO US"

We will never know completely the ruin that sin wrought, in Heaven and on earth, and amongst the children of men. Ever since it first made its appearance, it has brought untold woe, by the separations it has brought about. Separation between heaven and earth; separation between God and man; and separation between man and his fellow-man. These are but a few of the things that are now severed by the operation of the power of sin.

But God, in His mercy, was pleased to perform an act of love, the deepest love, for sinners. Desirous of reconciling man unto Himself, by the death of His Son, God saw that the redemption He was about to perform will unite heaven and earth once again, and will bring about the restoration of the highest happiness for man. To do all this, God became flesh. What an act of condescension!

I conceive of the profit of Christ's birth to us, to be two-fold: it is a profit that is both redemptive and revelational.

Let us consider, first, that the Lord's birth was redemptive. We'll follow the line of thought suggested by the thirty-sixth question and answer of Lord's Day Fourteen. The Lord's birth, in the human nature, was God's proof that Jesus was truly the Mediator. Remember how the Heidelberg Catechism pointed out the necessity of Jesus being both truly God and truly man? (Q. 8) Such a Mediator was the Lord Jesus. He was truly a glorious Mediator. All the requirements, to be a Mediator, He filled. Not one was lacking. Assuming our human nature, and being made like unto us in everything, sin excepted, Jesus was man, and yet remained God. All through His suffering, too. Never would He descend into the depths of our sin, and trespass against God's laws. Personally, He was always free from sin, and its subsequent guilt, even in our nature, and yet He remained God.

Such a Mediator and Saviour we need. As to our birth, we are conceived and born in sin. From the day of our birth we sin, and until the day of our death we sin. Our guilt is imputed and our corruption we have inherited.

On the other hand, the Saviour was conceived and born in innocence and holiness. No sinfulness did He inherit; no guilt of His own did He inherit or incur. Fully desirous of doing God's will to be Mediator and Saviour, He came from Heaven's glory to take upon Himself our nature, and in this way to stand between God and us, and between God and our children, to cover the sins of all His own by the one sacrifice of Himself.

So you see, the birth of Jesus was an integral part of His redemptive work. It was the beginning of the great sacrifice He came to offer.

Nor was this all. The way for the Mediatorial work of Christ was paved by His birth. The one is as vitally connected to the other as night is to day. Had there been no birth, there would have been no Calvary.

In the second place, the profit of Christ's birth to us was revelational. His lowly birth revealed God's faithfulness. Long years before, God had given a promise of a coming Redeemer, who would ransom His people from sin's captivity into the glorious liberty of being free-born men. Further, this Redeemer would come as a King to sit upon David's throne forever. Not upon the throne of an earthly Jerusalem, but upon Heaven's throne in glory. This promise, of the sending of a Redeemer-King, God would finally make a reality.

Consequently, the Saviour's birth was the beginning of the making of God's promise a reality. Jesus came as the Son of David, in the highest sense, and clothed with Heaven's royalty. In the coming of Christ, God's great faithfulness to His promise finally...
came to pass. Never did He allow His promise to fail to materialize. With joy, we can sing, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," to celebrate God's remembrance.

Further, the birth of Christ was a revelation of the hidden dignity of the divine, His - Jesus' - supreme power and Godhead was hidden to view by His humiliation.

Just think of it. Jesus was born a King in a stable in Bethlehem! From all eternity He was anointed to be Israel's King, and the King of all nations of the earth. He was the King clothed with all the authority of Heaven and of earth. Yet He came as a helpless and innocent Babe. What a coming for such a King. Who would have thought that such would ever come to pass?

But wait. His glory lay hidden. The Redeemer-King has come. But He has come in humiliation. Not in outward splendor, and with regal pomp: but in deepest humility, and in profound obedience.

To see this, requires spiritual eyes. To believe this, requires humble hearts. Such eyes and hearts had Joseph and Mary, by grace; and the shepherds, and the wise men from the East. Old Simeon, too. Such was the case then; it is true now. To see this is the greatest profit for your soul. How can we understand? Only believe. God's grace is sufficient.

Rev. James A. McCollam

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

The history of the church during nearly the entire 4th century A.D. is chiefly a history of the Arian controversy. And, if it may be said at all that the controversy was settled in those two generations, it was followed by a series of controversies essentially connected with it, which for centuries tore the Church and, since the Church and Empire were so interrelated, also succeeded very well in shaking up the Empire.

The heresy began about 311 A.D. in Alexandria where Arius was a deacon. Arius believed that there was a time when the absolute God dwelt alone. Because it was the will of God that the world should be created, he first made Christ, an intermediate agent in all the subsequent work of creation. Christ, then, was before all other creatures but since he was himself created he could not be the eternal Son of God. Arius admitted that Christ was perfectly holy but not because of absolute unchangeableness, but because of the perfect use he made of his own free will. On the ground of his foreseen perseverance, then, he is called the "Son of God." It is not a real but a moral sonship which belongs to him. In other words, we may say that, though the personality of the Holy Spirit was not under immediate discussion, Arianism denied the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity.

The theological argument for Arianism can be very briefly stated. Arius set out from the idea that God is absolute and therefore one, so that everything else that exists must fall into the category of the created. To say that the Son is not created but is God, is a departure from monotheism; for as far as Arius was concerned, anyone who spoke of a plurality of persons in one God was talking in circles.

Arius, persisting in his doctrine, was condemned by his bishop and excommunicated by a synod. But the church hadn't seen the last of Arius. He immediately began to propagate his opinions and was accepted by many as orthodox. The controversy attracted attention and began to disturb the Church far and wide. Constantine, on becoming emperor, summoned a general council of bishops of the whole church to settle the matter once and for all. It met at Nicaea in June, 325, and consisted of about three hundred bishops.

One writer insists that the fathers came to Nicaea to fight for fighting's sake. "The
joy was great, all chance of peace was over, war was declared, the quarrel was found and the contending parties fought in the dark about terms which no one understood." But however that may be, the assembled clergy stopped their cars in righteous horror at Arios' plain statement of his teaching. One of the chief opponents of Arios was Athanasius, the archdeacon of Alexandria. He would always sum up all his objections to the Arian doctrine with the argument that the whole substance of Christianity would be utterly meaningless if he who is supposed to be our Redeemer were not absolute God but only a creature among creatures. The result of the council was that all but about twenty of the three hundred bishops signed the famous Nicene Creed which expressed the co-equal Deity of Christ both as to his essence and eternity.

But the decree of the council failed to terminate the strife. Arianism continued to spread. Its influence at court even brought about the banishment of Athanasius and many other leading Catholic bishops. When Constantine died the empire was divided into East and West, the Church into Catholic and Arian. In the East, the Catholics were a despised and persecuted minority. The Western part of the empire was predominantly orthodox. But when the Eastern and Western empires were united under Constantius, the Arian persecution swept the Western world also for seven years. The orthodox bishops, in being forced to admit the Arians to communion, were told that they were not admitting that the doctrine of Arios was right and that the doctrine of Athenasius was wrong, but only that the Arian doctrine did not disqualify its holder for recognition as a member of the Catholic Church. Those who refused to do so were exiled.

Arianism seemed to be triumphant and its victory sealed by the acceptance of the Creed of Rimini, 359 A.D. A council of the whole church was called together by emperor Constantius. The Western bishops met at Rimini, the Eastern at Nicea. The Western bishops signed an ambiguous creed in ignorance of the meaning put upon it by its authors; the Eastern bishops were fast-talked into signing the same formula; and the next time it blinked, “the whole world groaned and was astonished to find itself Arian,” says St. Jerome. Many bishops, however, as soon as they understood the meaning put upon the words they had accepted, repudiated the new creed.

But the Arian triumph was only temporary, for in 361 emperor Constantius died and under Julian all the exiles were recalled and the orthodox bishops returned to their offices.

One cause of the temporary Arian success had been that it was careful to do as little violence as possible to the general belief of the people. Until it had gained the victory, the difference between itself and the Catholic faith was made to look as small as possible. This was especially true of the Semi-Arians who amounted to nothing more than a compromise between the Arians and the orthodox Christians. They used language both in formal creeds and in popular sermons which could be interpreted in two ways and would naturally be taken by orthodox minds in an orthodox sense. (A clever tactic still in use today!)

Thus many pious souls could hear the sermons and recite the creed of the Arian Church and not even detect the heresy—"the ears of the people, uninjured by the subtle heresy, were purer than the lips of the preacher." This being so, was the matter worth all the widespread strife started by the "heresy hunters"? But the question at issue really was—Who was Jesus of Nazareth? The answer of the Catholics was that he was true and coeternal God. The answer of the Arians, no matter how high they might place him, amounted to this, that he was a creature. If the Catholics were right, it was a sin not to worship him; if the Arians were right, to worship him would be nothing short of idolatry. If Jesus mu-
be brought down to the Arian level of a mere creature, the whole Christian scheme of atonement would be upset since, as our Heidelberg Catechism puts it, "no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it."

So it is exactly because Jesus of Nazareth is God, as the Nicene Creed insists, that we can confess with the Catechism that our only comfort in life and death is that "I am not my own but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with his precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins..."

Don Doezeema

PENCILS AND CHALK

(Continued from page 12)

composition, color, etc., may be pointed out. That, too, will be of interest to him because he himself has worked with these principles and has experienced creating works of his own. As the pupils grow in their knowledge of the fundamentals of art, they will attempt to analyze some of the paintings on their own.

This understanding—love of perfection and beauty in creative art and appreciation of art—is one more step in the way of a child's education, whose goal is the shaping of a God-seeing, God-knowing individual.

A. Bordan

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