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RECENT EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

There has always been trouble in the Middle (Near) East, which began with Gen. 3:12, and which will continue to the end of time (Rev. 16:12.) Dispensationalists have usually connected this perpetual ill with their theory that God's promise of the land to Abraham has never been completely fulfilled; i.e., the Jews have never taken possession of the full extent of the land promised them. But it is enough for us to read, "And the Lord gave unto Israel all of the land which He gave unto their fathers: and they possessed it and dwelt therein" (Josh. 21:43). In fact, as to this particular promise, "there failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass" (21:45). Even in the latter days of David and Solomon, the promise was fully realized in the complete possession of the land. "Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Phillistines, and unto the border of Egypt" (1 Ki. 4:21). Nevertheless, because the Dispensationalist fails or refuses to see this and so looks for a future return of the Jews to "their land," he believes that the Jews alone have the right to possess Palestine over against all the Arab peoples. This means that, according to the text last quoted, the Jews have Divine right to Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordania, Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. We do not believe the Jews have this right any more than the American Indians would have the right to claim the territory of the U.S. We base this on the fact that the promise is spiritual and the land is typical, God interpreting His own promise to mean a better country, a heavenly (Heb. 11:16).

In the last generation, Near East unrest in part has been due to the fact that the Jews have gone back to Palestine by the hundreds of thousands, while at the same time a nearly equal amount of Arabs have been entering that country. And they have the sympathy and power of the United Arab Nations behind them. More up-to-date developments occurred when Gen. Nasser of Egypt, who has an intense hatred of Israel,
made ostensible agreements with Czechoslovakia to obtain heavy weapons and jet planes. Actually this agreement was with Russia. Nasser was on his way to building a new Arab empire! Israel immediately appealed to the U.S. for arms supply, but the U.S. refused in order to keep out of an arms race in the Middle East. Then followed Nasser’s closing of the Suez Canal in spite against the U.S. when our government withdrew an offer of aid to the Aswan dam project on the Nile River. Later, rumblings in Lebanon (former Phoenicia) necessitated the sending of U.S. troops there. All this has been eclipsed by a shooting war in the Far East — clashes between Nationalist and Communist Chinese involving the islands of Formosa, Quemoy and Matsu. Russia therefore seems the real threat behind the powers of not only the Middle East, and the Far East, but also of Europe, and so in every part of the world.

Now the Bible speaks of the nations of the world under the term “Gog and Magog.” Comparing Gen. 10 with Ezek. 38 and 39 we find that these nations are not Semitic (Arabic), but Japhetic, and are allied with peoples of northern and central Babylonia. Dispensationalists claim that “all agree” that primary reference is to the northern (38:15) European powers “headed up by Russia.” However, all do not agree, as the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown commentary on the Bible does not necessarily support this, and Lowth thinks there is reference to the Turks. Thomas Scott says, “It is not indeed agreed what people or transactions are here predicted.” In fact, extreme literalism is in Ezekiel forced to place this destruction of Gog and Magog (38-39) before the millennium (40-48), but in the Revelation must place it after the millennium. According to Ezekiel, Gog is the ruler of a territory called Magog, while in the millennium passage (Rev. 20:8), both Gog and Magog are nations. That they are heathen nations is clear from Genesis 10. Since the Gog-and-Magog nations are in the four quarters (corners, AV) of the earth, they are, then, distant from the center (Israel) of the earth, and are expressive of a worldwide attack upon the people of God. By the time these words are published, the center of news attraction probably will not be the Middle East (events occur so quickly, and sin develops so fast), but some other part of the globe. But that the stage is being set for this final Gog-and-Magog attack is apparent in all current events at almost any given time. For in the vast hordes of the more distinctively heathen nations, there is a trend toward independent, autonomous government. Colonialism is on the way out. This indicates that the heathen nations formerly little known in the history of the world are being aroused, and are assuming unheard-of power and influence in the world. This is true not only of the Middle East, but of the East Indies, India, Tibet, Thailand, Africa. The ten commandments are not more gods but Me, Before no idol bow the knee, Take not the name of God in vain, Nor dare the Sabbath-day profane, Give both thy parents honor due Take heed that thou no murder do, Abstain from words and deeds unclean; Nor steal, though thou be poor and mean; Nor make a wilful lie, nor love it, What is thy neighbor’s dare not covet.
Strange language? Perhaps it is if you are not acquainted with the Latin language, yet I am sure that the well known abbreviation A.D. rings a bell in your mind. Whatever the case may be, the meaning is by far the most important, and to see the true meaning and understand the significance of this phrase for our lives is our purpose at this time.

A.D. 1959 is upon us. Before us lies the vast span of one more year. To the youth it seems a long time, to the aged but a moment. 1958 has forever passed into eternity. The battle has been fought, the race has been run for the year 1958. Never an we return and correct or erase what we have done. The deeds have been recorded in the Book of Life by the Heavenly Scribe. There the record is permanent and will once again be revealed in the day of days.

Anno Domini 1959, what a joy and assurance to our weary souls to know that 1959 is a year of our Lord. Without that truth we would tremble as the whole world is doing today. Look about you and what do you see? Wars threaten, peoples can't live together without hatred, economic distress prevails, corrupt governments rule, and social evils stir the hearts of men. Oh, we need not go so far from ourselves. Look at that terrible sinful nature we have. How we love to sin against the holy, living God. Doesn't that cause you to fear? Can you face 1959 in your own strength? Do you have the ability to please the just God in 1959?

No, we say, a hundred times no, for 1959 is Anno Domini, a year of our Lord. The year is in the control and power of our Lord. Who is that Lord? Listen, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father," Phil. 2:9-11. Jesus Christ is Lord, Lord also of 1959. He it is that was sent of the Father to die for "all that the Father hath given to me," and in dying He also arose from the dead unto eternal glory to rule as the bridegroom, as head, as the firstborn of many brethren in that final kingdom of glory, and that to the glory of the triune God.

All time, including 1959, is a year closer to The Anno Domini, when Jesus Christ shall return. Thus every year brings us closer to that time, and for that reason it is a year of our Lord. This has great significance for the Church of Jesus Christ. Nearer to the end means nearer to the time of the great persecution, the anti-christ, and the mark of the beast. We are constantly nearer to the day that, "except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," Matt. 24:22. Young people, are you ready for that day? 1959 may be the final year of your pilgrimage through "the valley of the shadow of death." Do you fear evil? Do you think you will be able to fight the wiles of the devil?

He that thinketh he standeth beware lest he fall. Rather let us with united voice
declare, 1959 is the year of our Lord. He is our strength. What power have we frail creatures of the dust compared to all the ingenuity of Satan? We have none, for we by nature are in league with him. We don't even care to fight him. It is much easier for us, and far more advantageous to our earthly existence to be friends with the devil as he comes to us through our friends, our associates, our pleasures, even our religious life. Our strength can never overcome him, but our Lord's can. Our Lord is exalted and in that position He sees us here below. He doesn't leave us, no, but contrariwise, he dwells in us with His Spirit. Thus is He Lord also of our life. He is Lord in us by power, for what power can be compared to the power of Pentecost? Hence our strength is our Lord who rules in us. In that strength we can say no to the devil when he tempts us and tries to allure us into the pleasure of the world. In the power of our Lord we shall endure till the end. We shall stand even if it means to be carried away and cast into prison, to be beaten, to fight in battle, be killed for Christ's sake, to go hungry because we refuse to recognize the mark of the beast, or to flee for our life in the caves of the earth.

Anno Domini 1959. That is our comfort. Even if 1959 brings all the gates of hell on earth to destroy the church, the Lord is our strength, we shall persevere in Him. Through trial and persecution He shall lead us, as our exalted head, on our earthly sojourn and in the life hereafter join us with Himself to live in the house of many mansions.

J.K.

None so proud as he that is proud of his humility!
Two issues ago in the Beacon Lights we introduced the subject of a Protestant Reformed World and Life View. Since this article appeared some time ago, it will be well briefly to review the points that were made. The subject itself deals with the true character of the world about us, its history and culture, its aim and goals, its life and manifestation of ethical life in all that it does. The subject has to do with the place of believers as the body of Christ in this world and their attitude that they take over against God's creation and the use which is made of it by men throughout the ages of time. A view of the world and life which is a view that must have the spiritual perspective of the Scriptures is the content of any discussion of this subject.

That this is a subject of some importance no one will deny. After all, we are living here below even though we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are called to live our life in this world even though when we depart this life to join the church above, we will have no need to seek answers to these things, for there will be no more need of an answer then. Yet we are called to live this life in such a way that we reflect in all that we do that we are children of the Lord our God through Jesus Christ, and that we are members of His covenant marching in the army and under the banners of our Lord and Savior. Besides, there are many answers which are given to this question, and some claim to stand in the tradition of the Calvinistic Reformation when they give their answers. And yet what they say we cannot possibly agree to for we have examined Scripture and found that they have not found their answers there, but rather in their own heads. But it is for these reasons that it is so vitally important also to emphasize that the Word of God alone is a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our pathway; that only there can we discover what is our calling. If we examine the world about us from our point of view; if we take a view of ourselves even and men in general apart from the Scriptures; if we examine what the world produces in art, literature, music, science and philosophy; we will undoubtedly come to far different conclusions than the Word of God. We need to know what God says about all these things, for He alone knows their true character. And before this we must bow, humbly and without reservation. It is therefore also true that we can only learn from the Word of God what must be our attitude over against all these things, and how we must serve our God in the world in which we live.

Before we enter into a positive discussion of these matters, we do well to take a brief glance at some of the answers that have been given and try to understand their fundamental errors.

We can perhaps best start as far away from home as possible. It is rather characteristic of most of the civilized world of today that they have adopted some form of evolutionism to explain the existence of things, their origin and final goal. I do not intend to describe in a detailed way the ideas of evolutionism. That is another subject fit undoubtedly to be treated at another time. Yet there are a few points which are made by them all which have relevance for the subject we are discussing. Evolutionism flies under the flag of atheism shouting as its motto and battle cry "Every day we are becoming better and better." It
is a fundamental principle with people who hold to this view that lower forms of life developed in the course of eons of time into higher forms of life. Somewhere along the line in some yet mysterious way, life was introduced into dead and inorganic material, probably by some chemical reactions of complicated molecules of matter. Yet all development is progress. In a lengthy and agonizing progress of development, it is always the best products which can survive and pass on their traits to their progeny, for they are best adapted to live in their environment, and the fittest to continue in the endless struggle for survival. Whether this process will ever come to an end is a matter of some debate perhaps, but it will certainly not come to an end until the perfect man is produced, able to overcome the limitations of his life as he now lives it. He will surmount the barriers of sickness and death as well as time and space and realize a utopia far beyond the wildest dreams of mankind. We are marching on the ladder upward to more perfect times, better ways of life, happier days, and our progress is inevitably forward. If man, in his foolishness, does not destroy himself, then these days will as inevitably appear as the sun inevitably rises each morning in the east. Man will become as God, sovereign of the universe, ruler over the creation in which he finds himself, all wise and powerful by the effort of his own strength and the glorious result of his own intelligence.

With this fundamental view of man and the world and life, it is not difficult to answer the question. What must be the attitude of mankind towards the world about him? The process which will lead to perfection will continue, and the less man tries to interfere in that process the better it will be for generations to come. God is not; man is good and is an absolute monarch; he determines what is right and what is wrong; he will and must contribute in his own way to the development of the species of which he is a part. But the product of the perfect man will inevitably come. Let him contribute as best he can to the heritage of science and culture, for although he die, in some way he will leave his contributions for posterity, and will in this way have devoted his efforts in the eternal struggle toward man's ultimate goal. The best thing right now is to see to it that man does not destroy himself so that the process will have to start again from scratch.

This, in our day, is given a coloring of religion. While, on the one hand, it is but natural that such men would deny the basic doctrines of Scripture such as the infallible inspiration of God's Word, the virgin birth of Christ, the resurrection from the dead, they nevertheless speak rather piously of a spirit of Christianity, a divine providence, a beneficent God and a brotherhood of all men necessitating the good life. I am always rather struck with the fact that many magazines today can in one issue so completely mix a firm dedication to evolutionistic principles with a variety of religious subjects and the need for a revival of Christianity.

But this answer indeed is conceived in the wicked and depraved heart of man and born in the godless intercourse of a sin steeped world. Man climbs God's throne and the lie of Paradise "Ye shall he as God" comes to full expression in man's life. Departing from Scripture and denying the final and ultimate authority of the Word of God, man invents his own lies and seeks in them the answer to all things which face him as he faces the things of creation.

We need not concern ourselves unduly with this perhaps, except to note its danger. This view is gaining in influence throughout all of the civilized world, and will become before too long the predominant view of men. But if we sacrifice the principle of the authority of Scripture on the altar of science as those do who teach and believe this view as well as the so-called period theory, and prostitute this great reformation principle in the service of the powers of (Continued on page 18)
The above caption contains two English words that are very important when applied to the Word of God!

Webster defines precious as something of great price or value; highly esteemed or loved; dear! The same dictionary gives the meaning of scarce as “deficient in quantity or number compared with the demand; not abundant; hard to find; uncommon; rare.” These meanings we want to apply strictly to our attitude toward the Word of God in this article!

Is it precious or scarce?

Is it a thing of great price, highly esteemed and loved or is it a thing hard to find, uncommon, and rare in our lives? Such is the question we are confronted with at the beginning of the year 1959 and its answer will determine how much truth or error prevails in our lives!

The Word of God itself speaks of this in I Samuel 3:1 where strikingly we find the word precious used in the sense of scarce. We read there: And the Word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. It was during the days of the judges in Israel that these words were recorded. Israel had apostatized from the ways of Jehovah, their God. They were at the time governed by the weak Eli who was for all practical purposes judge in Israel only in name. The priesthood had also become corrupted as was evident from the conduct and service of Hophni and Phineas, the two sons of the aged judge. There were no prophets whose testimony could be heard from Dan to Beersheba. God was silent. He refused to reveal Himself either directly or through the medium of visions, etc. The Word of God was scarce, a thing hard to find, rare. And the effect of all this was evident in the corruptions that filled the land. There was no preciousness of the Word manifest! Evil was apparently tolerated without punishment. Truth and righteousness were disregarded and even despised. The law of Jehovah, with its demands and threats, was not highly esteemed and there was obviously little or no desire to keep it. The people lived in gross error!

Today, it cannot be said that the Word of God is scarce in the sense that it is unavailable, difficult to find or obtain, rare! There is no book as common as the Bible. Millions of copies are run off the printing presses each year. In every book store in the land they can be obtained at practically any price one is willing to pay. Copies are found in every home and they are freely distributed in public places. There is no scarcity here!

However, in the sense of finding the Word of God in the true sense of the word, —the Word of God as God Himself speaks it and through which speech He reveals Himself as He is so that the recipients of that revelation are brought to a saving knowledge of Him through Jesus Christ, the Word of life, and a walk that corresponds to that knowledge — is something else again. In this sense of the word, it may be questioned whether there ever was an age in which the Word of God was more scarce than it is now. One can spin the dial of the radio to any number of stations.
that will herald the vain and corrupt philosophies of men concerning that Word. You can subscribe to countless religious magazines and invest thousands in books that are written on religious themes but in them the Word of God can scarcely be found. You can travel throughout the land and in vain look for a church or churches where the menu is the pure Word of God! Many pulpits are given to entertainment; others to social, political and economic discussions involving the problems of mankind but in vain do you look for those who faithfully proclaim the way of salvation.

The Word of God is scarce in our day!

This in turn is inseparably related to the fact that it has lost its preciousness. It is no longer highly esteemed and loved. It is rather taken for granted. Let us not be oblivious of the fact that we are living in a materialistic age and that this spirit of materialism has made deep inroads into the sphere of the church and to a very large extent crowded out the Word of God. The latter is being replaced and substituted by other things.

Then, too, there is a certain standard of the Joneses with which all must keep pace today. Inflation has placed a high cost upon the necessities as well as the luxuries of life. There are so many things to be had to make life comfortable and pleasant in our day — new houses, automobiles, televisions, hi-fi’s, radios, refrigerators, freezers, automatic dryers, dish-washers, organs, pianos — are but a few of the many things that must be had today. These things are precious so that men will labor untiringly, day and night if need be, to keep pace with those that have!

And the Word of God?

For it there is so little time. No time for societies! No time for personal study and meditation! No time for family devotion! These things must be left to the clergy in monastic seclusion! There is time only to reap the material things that are so precious to the carnal flesh and to indulge in pleasures so that in our materialistic age the bowling league is more prominent than the societies of the church and the scores of the games are better known than the dates and times of the Word and the professional players more familiar to children and adults than the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

A sad commentary indeed!

Yes, but we do not exaggerate. The Word of God is fulfilled before our very eyes. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof . . . .” (II Tim. 3:2-5).

From such turn away . . . !

If we neglect the Word of God and place before it the things of our present age, it is true that the Word of God is scarce and that very truth is our error!

If we seek the things below, these things are precious to us and that too is living in error; in a false sense of values, and with a distorted world and life view!

If the Word of God is not scarce but precious, we will seek it and utilize our opportunities in the midst of the church to the utmost advantage so that we may increase in the knowledge of the truth which teaches us that: denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)

And that is the only way to attain a Happy New Year!

G. Vanden Berg
This term weight may not sound as if it is a very scientific term as we are acquainted with it in our every day use of the term. We buy our food in many cases by the pound, we gauge the growth of our children from their infancy by their weight, the farmer measures many of his crops by the tons he produces, and we ourselves are usually quite conscious of our own weight; whether normal, over, or under. Weight is such a familiar and common measurement that we often use it with little thought of what it actually implies or what our measurements of weight are based on. When conversing about weight or our weight we fail to realize that we are actually working with an important scientific principle. This of course does not detract from its usefulness to us in our daily life, but I think it would be interesting to look into the matter.

In a scientific sense we must be very definite about what we mean when we talk about weight. Essentially weight is the amount of force with which gravity pulls us or any object to the surface of the earth. Therefore scientists do not like to use the word weight because of its vague and uncertain meaning. The scientists would rather speak of the weight as the force of gravity which it really is and not something that is contained in the object itself. Weight is not a quality that is inherent in an object of itself, but in the terms of the scientists it is a force acting on it; which is variable, so that it can not be said that a certain object weighs the same at all times. As the force of gravity changes, the weight of the object changes, even giving the possibility of a condition called weightlessness; which is a state in which an object weighs nothing.

The quality of this object whereby it is said to contain a certain amount of matter is called its mass, not is weight; this mass of a given object does not change but remains the same unless the object is changed in some manner.

To give an illustration of this fact suppose you were to stand on your household scale to determine your weight. Note what your weight is, and now we will imagine a trip up into space with you standing on that scale. As you rise above the surface of the earth you will notice that the indicator of the scale is showing a slightly different amount, a lesser amount. At first the indicator will decrease very little because you are still near the earth. As you rise higher and higher the indicator keeps showing a smaller and smaller weight. If you could imagine such a trip so that you actually went up into the vast space around our planet, a space trip, you would reach a point where the scale would show zero. You would actually weigh nothing. You ask, how is this possible, I have not changed during this trip so I must really weigh the same now as when I left, but the scale says something different. Actually you know that the amount of matter that is contained in your body has not changed so that you do not become nothing as the scale indicates that your weight is nothing. This amount of matter of which you are composed is constant and in scientific terms is called your mass or how much of you there is; this is constant. Unfortunately we use the same units to measure both mass and weight so we are confused as to what we mean when we give a certain figure for a certain object.
Now that we see that weight of an object is not a constant thing but changes as its position changes in regard to the earth and is really a measurement of gravitational force on the object, not of something in the object itself, some questions will naturally arise. Does the person living in a high altitude, say Denver, actually get a different amount when he buys a pound of butter than I do when I buy that pound of butter in Grand Rapids? If the scales are not corrected for the higher or lower altitude, or distance from the center of the earth, the man in Denver would get a different amount, more in fact, than I would. For all practical purposes the difference is very little but there is a difference. In practice this problem is overcome in a number of ways. First, scales can be set for a certain locality so that they register "correct" weights. Another way is to use a different type of scale. A spring scale which measures weight by the distance an object can stretch the spring is a common scale but one that really measures gravitational force and not the mass of the object. This type of scale is subject to change as the scale is moved from place to place. We do have a type of scale that is free from this defect, it is called a balance scale. On this scale the weight of an object is balanced by an equal weight in or on the scale. When the scale is in balance we check the weight of the balance which is equal to the weight of the object being weighed. No matter where this scale is taken, once in balance it will stay in balance if the object stays the same. As the gravitational force on the object being weighed changes the same change takes place on the balance in the scale. In accurate work this is the only scale that can be used since it is the only one giving true results. It really gives not weight but the mass of the object which is constant.

This phenomenon called weight has many practical uses. The most important is that it keeps us firmly planted on the surface of the earth. Although it may be granted that to the rocket launchers of today this is more of a hindrance, without this force or weight of an object things would not stay in place readily and would all have to be fastened to prevent movement. Such a thing as water flowing downhill is an example of the force of gravity or weight causing it to move so that this movement can be harnessed to give us water power. Our every day activities are based on this characteristic of nature, weight. It has some seeming inconveniences also. We must be careful how we place objects lest they crush something under them or they fall from the place we put them because of this force that always pulls them toward the earth. When climbing we must be very careful lest we fall back to the earth with a force great enough to do us harm. In our work this thing called weight makes us weary because we must oppose it in all work and at all times in our labors. All these things serve to impress upon our minds that we in this physical sense are part of the earth and we can not escape it; our weight constantly pulls us toward it.

The cause of our weight, gravity, is not understood except as to what it can do. Man today has learned how to measure it, how it works in our solar system, how to make use of it to serve his aims, but he has not learned what it really is. This is the goal which many scientists seek, the discovery of the true nature of weight. Their object is of course to find a way to prevent its influence so that man can travel away from the earth with great freedom. The tremendous energy that is needed to break away from this force that holds us on the earth can be seen in the recent attempts to send rockets to the moon. Some eighty tons of fuel and machinery are needed to make a few pounds break away from the earth. These few attempts have not been successful and those rockets have fallen back to the earth. Whether man will ever be successful in this attempt to escape 

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III. The Journey to Jerusalem, 20:1-21:16 (continued)
D. From Miletus to Tyre, 21:1-6
1. Trace Paul's journey from Miletus to Tyre, vss. 1-3.
   a. Did Paul travel in a small ship that hugged the coast, or did he travel in a large merchant vessel?
   b. Which churches did Paul not visit on his return trip this time? Why? For example, why did he not even go to Antioch?
2. Whom did Paul meet at Tyre?
   a. Was Paul known to them? If so, how? Was the church at Tyre evangelized by Paul?
   b. Was the bond between them and Paul very close?
   c. What testimony did they give Paul?
      1) Is this the same as what Paul mentions in 20:23?
      2) Does this mean that the Spirit forbade Paul to go to Jerusalem?
      3) If this is true, was Paul disobedient in this instance?
   d. What was the attitude of these disciples at Paul's departure?
      1) What does it indicate that they accompanied him out of the city?
      2) Is there any significance in the mention of "wives and children"?
      3) Why did they kneel down and pray? What do you suppose they prayed?
         Does this incident reveal anything concerning the level of the spiritual life of the disciples at this time? Can we learn from this?
   e. How did Paul journey from Tyre?
E. From Tyre to Jerusalem, 21:7-16.
1. How long did Paul stop at Ptolemais?
   a. Why did he stay a week at Tyre and only a day here?
   b. Was Ptolemais a place where Paul had labored earlier?
   c. How then were they acquainted with Paul and he with them?
   d. What does it mean that he "saluted" the brethren?
2. Where did Paul next stop? vss. 8-14.
   a. In whose house were they guests here?
      1) Which Philip was this? Why is he called the evangelist? Who are "the seven" mentioned here?
      2) Where is Philip last mentioned in the narrative? What evidently took place since he was last mentioned?
   b. What peculiar blessing of Philip's family is mentioned?
      1) Is there any indication that his daughters were prophetesses, or did they simply occasionally prophesy?
2) Is there any connection between their prophesying and their being virgins? Why is it mentioned that they were virgins?
3) Can you connect this instance with the prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost?
4) Can this example be used in support of the idea that women may hold office in the church?
c. How long did Paul stay here? Why?
d. The coming of Agabus:
1) Who was Agabus? Where did he come from? Is he mentioned elsewhere in Acts?
2) What did Agabus prophesy? What important fact is assumed in this prophecy, which sheds light on the whole question whether Paul did right in going to Jerusalem?
3) What effect did this prophecy have on those who heard it? Who are now added to those who seek to dissuade Paul?
4) Why does the Holy Ghost give this same testimony so often? For whose benefit is this?
5) What effect does this all have on Paul?
   a) Is he indifferent?
   b) Is he at all dissuaded?
   c) Did the disciples make it difficult for Paul?
   d) To Paul, what is evidently involved in his going or not going to Jerusalem? Why and in what way is the “name of the Lord Jesus” involved?
   e) Whose attitude is to be preferred, that of Paul or that of those who dissuade him?
6) Were the disciples reconciled to the idea of Paul’s going on to Jerusalem? On what basis? Does this mean merely that they would leave the outcome to the Lord, or that they realized what the will of the Lord in this case would surely involve and were submissive to it?

3. How must Paul’s insisting on going to Jerusalem be viewed? Was it not rash and foolhardy in the face of the plain warnings of the Holy Ghost?
a. How is it to be viewed in the light of Paul’s God-given duty?
b. How is it to be viewed with respect to the disciples at the various places where Paul stopped?
c. How is it to be viewed with respect to God’s purpose:
   1) with the Jews at Jerusalem?
   2) with the churches and the saints?
   3) with the relationship between the Gentile churches and the Jerusalem church?
   4) with His servant Paul, both in the present and the future?

4. How did they travel to Jerusalem from Caesarea?
a. Who made the trip?
b. Who is especially mentioned?
   1) Why this special mention? Is there a marginal, or substitute reading here which possibly explains the mention of Mnason better?
   2) Why is it mentioned that he is an “old disciple”?

IV. At Jerusalem, 21:17 to 23:30.
A. The Capture of Paul.
1. His meeting with the brethren, 21:17-25.
   a. How was Paul received by the Jerusalem church?
      1) Who are meant by “the brethren”? 17
      2) Why did they receive him “gladly”?
   b. What did Paul do the day after his arrival?
      1) What James is this?
      2) Who else were present?
      3) What was the purpose of this meeting?
   c. What did Paul do at this meeting?
      1) What is meant by “declared particularly”?
      2) On what was the emphasis in this report?
      3) What was the reaction of those who heard Paul?
      4) What reservations and misgivings did they have, however?
         a) What was Paul’s reputation among the believing Jews at Jerusalem?
         b) Was this true? Where did this idea come from?
      5) What did they propose that Paul should do?
         a) Was this proper for Paul? Explain.
         b) Was Paul agreeable? Why?
         c) Was this a wise course? Was it not a catering to a false report?
            Was this a bit of politics? Was it diplomacy?
         d) Was this course of action in conflict with the decision of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15?

2. The Capture, 26-40.
   a. What was Paul in the process of doing? What exactly was this purification?
   b. Who became the provocateurs? Where were they from? Why were they here?
      1) Were these of the believing Jews mentioned in vs. 20?
      2) What had these men evidently been doing?
      3) What was their charge against Paul?
         a) Was there any truth to this charge?
         b) Had Paul ever taught what they accused him of teaching, either to Jew or Gentile?
         c) Had Paul ever deliberately provoked the Jews? What was always his desire and his aim? What was his method? What was his motive?
         d) On what mistaken bit of evidence was part of their charge based?
            Was this merely an honest mistake?
   c. What was the effect of this provocation?
      1) What effect did it have on the “whole city”?
         a) What did they do with Paul?
         b) Why were the doors shut forthwith?
         c) What were they in process of doing with Paul?
      2) Who interfered?
         a) Why did he stop the mob? Was it from a concern for Paul?
         b) What was done with Paul? What was the result of his being taken prisoner from the point of view of God’s purpose?
         c) By this time what characterized the mob? Proof?
         d) Who did the chief captain take Paul to be? To whom is he referring?
         e) How does Paul identify himself? Why?
         f) What does he give Paul permission to do? Why?
         g) How does Paul obtain a hearing from the mob? H.C.H.
"Why do we have to read poetry?" "I hate to study poetry." This is the refrain heard so often from the lips of school children, especially those in the junior high grades.

What is the matter with these children? Possibly the difficulty lies in the poetry rather than the children. Still another possibility exists—maybe the teaching method is ineffective. Undoubtedly it is a combination of all these factors.

Yet, simply because children don't like poetry, the teaching of it should not be abandoned. Poetry affords many definite values to those who truly learn to appreciate it. Perhaps through the understanding of these values, parents and teachers can help acquaint the child with various poems and thus help him to appreciate poetry.

Little children seem to love poetry. Some of the first words they learn to say well be the lines of nursery rhymes. They seem to respond naturally and instinctively to enjoy poetry. Nursery rhymes deal with experiences with which the child is familiar, animals which he likes, and funny situations which appeal to the child's sense of humor.

The ability to create great works of literature is a gift of God, and these products of this ability are His gifts to us. God gave us these gifts because He wanted us to enjoy them and better serve Him through the use of them. How can we appreciate His gifts if every word is read only because it is assigned and every minute's reading is sheer drudgery? It is therefore the duty of the parent and teacher to help the child to make the proper use of these gifts.

There is a wealth of poetry available to the interested reader. Any subject he is studying can be enriched by the reading of poetry dealing with the subject. For the student of American history there are the narrative poems like "Paul Revere" and "Barbara Fritchie." To the elementary teacher who is discussing the changing seasons there is nothing more effective to introduce the Autumn season than the opening lines of George Cooper's "Come Little Leaves":

"Come little leaves' said the wind one day,  
'Come over the meadow with me and play;  
Put on your dresses of red and gold,  
For summer is gone and the days grow cold.'

Some of the Christian's greatest spiritual experiences have been described by poet. The Psalms of David are just such poems where the child of God expresses his love for his Heavenly Father. Consider such verses as these:

Psalm 92 —
"It is good to sing Thy praises  
And to thank Thee, O Most High,  
Showing forth Thy lovingkindness  
When the morning lights the sky."

Psalm 25 —
"Lord, to me Thy ways make known,  
Guide in truth and teach Thou me;  
Thou my Saviour art alone,  
All the day I wait for Thee."

Or the comforting lines of Psalm 73 —
"In sweet communion, Lord, with Thee  
I constantly abide;  
My hand Thou holdest in Thy own  
To keep me near Thy side."

(Continued on page 18)
What do you know about the high cost of petting? Petting is more than a pleasurable pastime, more than an exhilarating expression of affection. It is more than a physical act, too, for it affects every dimension of personality. Petting, like all sexual experiences, penetrates to the very depths of a person's being, and for that reason it can lead to sublime heights of joy as a function within marriage, or drag one down to depths of impurity and misery when practiced outside the commitment of marriage. Petting is a process of physical and emotional involvement, sexually exciting and stimulating. It is physical contact for pleasure as an end in itself, two persons enjoying themselves by means of each other, and with no permanent and responsible relationship to which they are committed. It is exploitation of another's body for selfish sexual gratification. We are to love persons and use things, but one who pets uses a person for the love of a thing. Petting is playing at love in such a way as tends to make the more genuine expressions seem dull and unsatisfying. It is an attempt to find in sex what sex cannot give.

PETTING VERSUS LOVE

Young people first encounter the appeal of petting in an hour of highly-charged romantic emotion when it is most difficult to evaluate let alone resist. Being alone together in an automobile is conducive to romantic attachment, but this is not a privilege. Rather, it is a responsibility which severely challenges one's personal integrity and self-discipline. How easy it is to rationalize petting as a necessary support for a romantic relationship! This is not love but merely an overpowering emotional attachment with a sexual involvement.

Petting is not sexual satisfaction, but stimulation only. As such, it brings about tension and disappointment. Something unique and precious to one's personal dignity is given to another with full expectation that something just as precious and lasting will result. But one sadly discovers that he has given himself for a momentary pleasure. There remains but a feeling of frustration, disappointment, loss of self-respect, and guilt. Something less than personal love and mutual care has been fulfilled. The deepest yearnings of personality have been sidetracked by the more intense and immediate pleasure of the moment.

As stimulation, petting demands an ever-increasing intensity. The point of containment is moved further and farther, the demands becoming more difficult to resist as the progression goes on. Knowing what is beyond makes it hard to be satisfied with less. It is virtually impossible to return to an earlier, less-intense stage; to do so, multiplies frustration. Even to decide to do so in an hour when there is neither emotional intoxication nor sexual arousal is quite different from maintaining that decision under such pressure.

WILL PETTING LEAD TO A BREAK-UP?

For reassurance of a rather empty rela-
tionship, and to "prop up" their disappointment in the failure of close physical contact to bring about a true sense of intimate sharing, a couple may be led to pet with even greater frequency and intensity. But, the tension created by such habituated petting is often sufficient to break up the friendship altogether! Keyed up under the emotional strain, a couple will tend to quarrel over inconsequentials, and to get on each other's nerves. Dislike for the frustration and emotional conflict is directed as resentment against the other person, as though he were the cause of the disappointment. Loss of self-respect also transfers itself to loss of respect for the other one. A crisis invariably arises, usually ending in a break-up.

A girl who pets to be popular is popular only because she pets. She is not sought after for her personal qualities nor liked for herself, but only because she is a more or less convenient means to an end. Petting frequently becomes a consolation prize for one's deficiencies in personal attraction, or a way of holding a date when other ways fail. But only bitter heartache is ahead for the girl who depends for her dating popularity upon sex and her willingness to indulge a fellow's desire to pet. And how shallow is her thinking if she regards petting as the necessary price for an evening out, a reciprocation for the money a fellow has spent upon her!

**THE PRICE YOU PAY**

Promiscuous petting can only cheapen what God intends as holy and beautiful in its place. It may come to stand for all there is in the sexual relationship of marriage, removing the proper expectations. To make such intimacy a shopworn thing before marriage is to take the edge away, and to leave a sense that more was lost than gained. One will have forfeited the joy of having saved something very precious for its proper time.

A couple habituated to petting no longer anticipates dates with enjoyment as before. Thinking only of what they will do when they are alone, they are bored with the other activities of the evening, preoccupied with the petting which alone seems important. An evening supposedly devoted to wholesome fun is turned into one of tension, boredom, and inner conflict. Each senses that sex life has become a problem affecting the normal pursuits of life. The very tone of the relationship deteriorates for they can only enjoy their least common denominator—their bodies. Every date becomes merely another occasion for the old routine.

**THE FATE OF AN UNPLANNED DATE**

Petting often occurs as the result of an unplanned date, when two become bored with nothing to do. Petting is the easiest and most pleasurable way to relieve boredom. It requires no intelligence, and is no challenge to personality. But what starts as an innocent game soon becomes a compulsive habit when passions are aroused.

Jesus said that lusting begins with looking. But one can look with his eyes or with his imagination. Petting gives the imagination an opportunity to look and lust through the sense of touch. Thus, petting has the same moral quality of an act of sexual intercourse! Petting is sufficient to violate another's bodily sanctity and personal integrity. One who pets must not only answer for the stimulation of lust in one's own life, but for the unknown degree of lust, self-contempt, guilt and spiritual defeat brought about in the partner to the petting.

**HOLINESS AND HAPPINESS**

Chastity rests upon an acknowledgment of the sanctity of sex. For the Christian, the body is a sacred trust and sex a gift of God. Chastity is sexual life ordered according to God's purposes, not man's desires. When sex expresses love given by God to partners in married oneness, it is chaste; when sex is an end in itself, indulged outside of marriage, it is not chaste. The perversion of God's purpose—more so than the act itself

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Our Missionary Calling

There are almost as many criticisms of the Protestant Reformed Churches as there are different denominations, but the universal complaint is that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not believe in missionary work. The claim is made that Protestant Reformed doctrine is incompatible with obedience to the various missionary commands in Scripture. Evidently, such accusers have foreign missionary work in mind when they make this accusation for the Protestant Reformed Churches do have their own home missionary and their own home missionary program. The accusation which we are really faced with, then, is that we do not believe in foreign missionary work.

Rev. C. Hanko presented a Protestant Reformed view of missionary endeavor in a speech to the young people at the Spring Fass Meeting. A summary of that speech follows:

True missionary work is preaching. Most radio sermons today are about the gospel but are not the gospel and thus not preaching in the true sense. That which must be preached is the gospel: Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. As alterations in the portrait of one's mother violently change the true portrait so also alterations in the preaching of Jesus affect the true preaching. Representing Jesus as a beggar is not preaching the true Jesus.

The purpose of mission work is to gather God's church unto the day of Christ. The purpose of most mission work is to achieve the kingdom of God on earth and to reform the world politically and culturally. The field of missionary work is the whole world. We should not, however, race to the ends of the earth — we must spread out from home, keeping the home strong. The Protestant Reformed churches have a start in foreign mission work in the Virgin Islands. God gathers his church from the ends of the earth, preserves it against anti-christ unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This then is a summary of the Protestant Reformed view of missionary endeavor. And a strikingly unique view it is. The contemporary religious world, almost without exception, is carrying on a vast so-called missionary program in which all manner of Biblical distortions and downright heresies are not only permitted, but also advocated for the purpose of "evangelizing" more and more "souls". The Jesus of love and patience begs and pleads that everyone please relent and accept Him as their own personal Savior. He desperately desires that every single individual be saved. This diabolical Arminian doctrine has so pervaded the modern church world that one does not even hesitate to say that such "missionary work" is not missionary work at all, but instead false doctrine.

However, this rank heresy is not what troubles our churches. As is customary, the clever inroads which such heresy has made in our own Reformed back yard is that which has the greatest capability of affecting us. The apparent advantages of "lowering denominational barriers" and of recognizing and preaching general offers and promises of salvation in order to "gain more souls for Christ" can be very influential. Especially the youth of the Protestant Reformed Churches must be on guard. Such doctrines seem to advance the position that Arminianism is necessary to convert a person but after he is saved, Reformed preaching is again necessary. This is extreme inconsistency at the very least.

What then are the conclusions of the matter, also in connection with the original accusation that the Protestant Reformed
Churches do not believe in foreign missionary work?

The Protestant Reformed Churches certainly must and certainly do believe in missionary work, also in foreign missionary work. The missionary commands in Scripture are very clear and very numerous, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations...” says Christ in Matthew 28:19. And in this connection, perhaps, the Protestant Reformed Churches have been too slow in involving themselves in sending missionaries to foreign lands.

Nevertheless, we may never compromise our doctrinal standard nor weaken our position at home by “lowering the denominational barriers”. The missionary gospel must be the same as the gospel preached in church on Sunday. There is but one gospel and that is Jesus Christ. The truth of God’s word as found in the Protestant Reformed Churches can never be incompatible with true missionary work. Because of their possession of the truth, the Protestant Reformed Churches have a special privilege, but also high obligation to carry on missionary work to the best of their ability both at home and abroad.

DAVID ENGELENSMA

NATURE STUDY
(Continued from page 10)

the force of gravity is difficult to determine and certainly that man himself will travel away from this planet is still far in the future if at all.

We can see in our weight or in the force of gravity that God has so ordained that this earth is the place of man and has so ordered the workings of this planet so that we are firmly held here. The question as to the right or wrong of an attempt to leave this earth for space travel I shall leave to others to discuss.

J.B.

CHRISTIAN LIVING
(Continued from page 6)

science, we have lost the basis for our defense and have already stepped with one foot from the camp of the faithful into the army of the enemy. We have lost the only foundation on which we can stand to take a proper view of this world and its life as children of God.

H. Hanko

PENCILS AND CHALK
(Continued from page 14)

We all love these beautiful words of the Psalms. And why do we love them? It is partly because we are familiar with these “Poems” and have learned to love and understand them. Teaching which helps children to appreciate and understand poetry at their own level will result in children who love God’s gift of the art of poetry.

Thelma Pastoor

HIGH COST OF PETTING
(Continued from page 16)

— is what makes all sexual intimacy outside of marriage unchaste and immoral. Thus chastity is far more than self-control; it is the earnest serving of a positive, divine purpose. A chaste person is not concerned with how far he can go with safety and self-respect, but rather, how completely he can serve the purpose of God.

So, sex is a sacred power to be directed by God. Christian young people should pray as did Jeremy Taylor: “Let my body be servant of my spirit, and both body and spirit servants of Jesus.” When this is honestly prayed, petting will not find a place in a young person’s life.
"A flower unblown; a book unread;
A tree with fruit unharvested;
A landscape whose wide border lies
In silent shade 'neath silent skies;
A wondrous fountain yet unsealed;
A casket with its gifts concealed; —
This is the Year that for you waits
Beyond tomorrow's mystic gates."
— H. N. Powers

Christmas and New Year's Day really belong together. It is phenomenal that they are actually a week apart. Christmas prepares Christians to enter another New Year.

The Creston Y. P's Society met with 1st Church Senior Society December 16, for their annual party. Some of the young people went caroling before party time.

The Beacon Lights' Christmas Hymnsing was held at 1st Church, Dec. 21. The bulletin announcement read: "Wanted, people of any age who are looking for an uplifting and inspiring way to spend a Sunday evening, who enjoy singing Psalters and carols...." So I went. It was very worthwhile. Harry Langerak acted as chairman, Chuck Westra directed, Jim Jonker and Mary Pastor accompanied, and we sang! The special numbers by Don Knoper and Mr. and Mrs. C. Jonker were beautiful.

The Hope School gave its Christmas program in 1st Church, December 18, on the theme: "The Lord is my Shepherd." The student chalk artists drew pictures while others narrated and sang songs to make the theme live in the hearts of the audience.

And the Hope Choral Society is presenting its Christmas program Sunday evening, December 28, at Hope Church. The collection will be for the Prot. Ref. School of Edgerton, Minnesota.

WE HAVE THIS TO TELL ABOUT OUR SERVICEMEN

Donald Ezinga, from 1st Church, was inducted into the air force a few weeks ago. He is at present stationed at the air force base in Texas.

John Bult, also from 1st Church, was able to worship in his own church, Sunday, December 21 and also on Christmas Day. He was home on a two week furlough from his air force base in Nebraska.

Lambert Schut, from Hudsonville Church, left for France last month with the army. He had to leave his wife at home.

James Lanning, from Hope Church, has been in the Marines since April, 1955. Since June 1957 he has been stationed in San Diego, California where he works in the Legal Office of the Second Recruit Training Battalion. Sgt. Lanning writes that his duties include: "taking recruits before the Battalion Commander for disciplinary action, turning out a proper record of trial of courts-martial, investigating the circumstances surrounding injuries received by recruits, and trying to assist those persons who have a legal problem of one kind or another." Jim and his wife have become members of the Redlands Church while being stationed in Calif. They hope to be back in Michigan next April or May with six month old Terri Lynn.
I imagine there were many other programs given in our churches and schools that were meant to inspire the people of God. Think of the aggregate of words spoken and sung, and sermons preached, and letters written to bring us the glad tidings of Christmas and to prepare us to start the New Year with God.

“A man’s heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.”

— Proverbs

Sometime ago the deacons at 1st Church sent boxes of clothing to Hungary. In gratitude for these gifts, Rev. Dobos writes:

“After the parcels were received, we have a special evening that we come together. We make it a special Thanksgiving evening when the Lord is acknowledged in those gifts.” and “As I was baptizing a little baby today, I was remembering the dear and kind people of your congregation because the baby was dressed in these clothes which your people have sent us. Your gifts meant so much for so many families.”

... Blessed be the tie that binds!

Rev. Lubbers, our missionary, is at present working in California. He spent a few days with the Lannings in San Diego and has been preaching in Redlands.

CONVENTION PATRONS!

Recently the Young People’s Society of Oak Lawn sent a letter to all our churches. In some of our churches this letter has been distributed while in others as of this date it has not. The letter deals with the matter of “Convention Patrons”!

Since the intent of this letter has apparently been misunderstood or it is at least misconstrued by some, we take this opportunity to clarify it. It has been reported to us that the reaction of some who received this letter has been: “If Oak Lawn wants the convention, why don’t they raise the money themselves? Why do they have to beg in all our churches?”

Now we want to assure all those who receive these letters of the following:

First, Oak Lawn has no intention of financing the 1959 Young People’s Convention by themselves. The Convention costs are to be met primarily by “society assessments” and supplemented by other revenues. No host society in the past has assumed responsibility for all costs and Oak Lawn has no intention of doing so.

Secondly, Oak Lawn is not begging in our churches. In our letter we state: “We want to give every family in our denomination an opportunity to be a patron to the 1959 convention. This, of course, is not obligatory but entirely voluntary.” This certainly cannot be construed as “begging.”

Thirdly, our intention is motivated by the fact that to support any worthy cause is privilege. We consider it as such and we felt that in the past there have undoubtedly been several of our people who would liked to have been patrons to the Young People’s Convention but were never approached on the matter. Hence, we conceived of the idea of giving all our people the opportunity. If all our letters are distributed as we requested, there will be no family in our denomination who can say that they have not had the opportunity to be a patron to this convention. Nor can any family say that they were compelled to be. The list of patrons in the 1959 convention booklet will be as large as the number of our people interested in this cause. A ten cent contribution makes you as much a patron as a ten dollar contribution and it is entirely up to you — to be or not to be!

We are giving you the privilege! You are to make the decision!

And let no one say that this is “begging”!

Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Another year is dawning!
Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.