

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

The Betrayal

"Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people."

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." Matt. 26:2-5; 14-16.

Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him!

The traitor *par excellence*!

The son of perdition!

A unique but unenviable position is reserved for him on the pages of history. All the gospel narratives give their attention to Judas and his foul conspiracy with the chief priests, the apostle John giving special attention to the details of his dismissal at the time of the last supper in the upper room and to the arrest of the Savior by the band of men headed by Judas. And all four gospel narratives fail not to inscribe him on the pages of sacred history as the Betrayer. Alone he stands in his life: the betrayer, the son of perdition he is. And alone he stands in his death: filled with ungodly remorse he hangs himself, becomes a suicide. He has no place among his fellow sinners. And he cannot live even with himself. He goes down into perdition!

Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him

Infamous traitor!

Unenviable reputation!

* * * *

It is Wednesday of the last week of the Savior's earthly sojourn. A week literally filled with tremendous events and important discourses it has been thus far. The hour, the central hour of all history, is drawing near. And all things

must be accomplished before the death-knell strikes. Sunday's prophecy-fulfilling and prophetic royal entry had marked the beginning of that historic week, and likewise had been the first in a series of events that served to heat the envy and hatred of the chief priests and scribes and pharisees to that white hot fury that moved them to concentrate all their efforts on removing the righteous Servant of Jehovah from the scene. Monday had witnessed the second cleansing of the temple as well as a final manifestation of Jesus' glory in the healing of the blind and lame that came to the Savior in the temple. And the day had reached its climax when from the mouths of babes praise had spontaneously issued forth to Zion's Royal Priest. And this spontaneous testimony of the truth over against the blindness of the hateful and envious leaders of the people, who, being doubly condemned because they neither heeded the testimony of these children nor saw the hand of God in it, are filled with chagrin and frustration. Tuesday is the day of the Savior's last public appearance before He appears publicly on the cross. All His time He devotes to teaching the multitudes with that same unimpeachable authority which earlier had demanded the attention of those who heard Him and which now, as before, foiled every attempt of the enemies to contradict Him and catch Him in His words. Parable after pointed parable He had spoken, always exposing the hypocrisy and vile corruption of those Israelites who were not Israelites. All day long He had instructed the throngs which were already at Jerusalem for the feast days.

And now it is Wednesday. More and more the shadow of the hour beclouds Jesus' soul. "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified," He announces. Alone He is with His disciples, resting for the events to come, probably at the Mount of Olives, near the town of Bethany. His soul is filled with the thoughts of His impending suffering. And this time He tells them very definitely that after two days He would be betrayed and delivered up to the cross.

But there is another meeting being held, probably informally, at the same time. As though the Savior's announcement to His disciples had called them to assemble, we read, "Then assembled together the chief priests, and

the scribes, and the elders of the people unto the palace of the high priest who was called Caiaphas . . ." Long have they hated Him and plotted to destroy Him. But the events of this week have filled them with rage and frustration. They can wait no longer. The time is long overdue that they must take some definite steps to kill Jesus. And of course it must be done with "subtilty," for there are the multitudes to be reckoned with. It must not be done on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

And to this hate-inspired gathering of the leaders of Israel one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Jesus, betook himself sometime during that Wednesday. He knows where to go, for it is public knowledge that the chief priests and elders seek revenge on Jesus. And besides, had not the Master Himself told the twelve more than once who would put Him to death? And so, slipping away from that quiet and restful scene at the Mount of Olives on some pretext or other, Judas goes to that wicked conclave in the high priest's palace. Notice, it is not they who make overtures to him, but on his own initiative, without any prior knowledge on their part that Judas was coming, the traitor offers his services to the enemies of Jesus.

Indeed, he is a traitor at heart, the son of perdition, who sells himself to the devil, and of whom the devil takes complete control!

Judas Iscariot . . . dastardly coward . . . sneaking conspirator . . . vile plotter!

The plot is formed. The foul bargain is consummated. All concerned acting in mutual suspicion and stealth they finally agree on terms. Judas is to deliver Jesus into their hands. It is not his part to kill the Master, but to be the informer. He must watch for an opportune time, a time when Jesus can be secretly taken and put out of the way, — for the leaders fear the multitudes. Are they not real leaders? And the masters in Israel agree to pay him for his dirty work thirty pieces of silver. What the equivalent of those thirty pieces of silver would be in our money is of no importance. The point is that it was the price of a common slave. For the price of a common slave the disciple betrays his Master. The Lord of glory is valued by His own familiar friend at the price of a menial slave.

* * * *

Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him . . .

How is it possible? How is it to be explained, not merely from a psychological point of view, but spiritually? How could it ever come about that one of the twelve, the inner circle of the disciples, who walked with Him for three years, heard His wonderful words of life, witnessed all His mighty works, yea, himself had been sent preaching the kingdom and had also performed miracles, even to the casting out of devils, who ate bread with Him, the righteous One, who was once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come — how is it spiritually possible that such an one should now "lift up his heel against" the Savior?

Ah, you say, Judas was evil from the very beginning. He had a devil. He was a thief, a covetous man. All that he was, he was at heart from the very beginning of his discipleship. And he played the part of the hypocrite. He was with the twelve, but he was not really of them. To be sure, that is all true. Judas never changed essentially. He had all things common with the eleven, except the one thing that was needful: he had no grace!

But even then, how is he to be explained as the betrayer? For three years he was with Jesus and the disciples. For three years he acted the part of a disciple. For three years he had not betrayed the Master. And now he suddenly becomes a traitor, reveals himself as the son of perdition. What happened in his soul?

The explanation of the betrayer involves several factors. And it was not a single event, but rather a chain of events which cooperated in bringing Judas to the point of betrayal. A hardening process took place, as it always takes place in the hearts and minds of those who are in contact with the gospel, but receive no grace. Judas is no spiritual accident. Nor is he to be explained by any Arminian conception of grace. Nor is it enough to say that he hardened his own heart under the preaching of Jesus. But by means of the same gospel of the kingdom through which the eleven were saved and converted, Judas Iscariot was sovereignly hardened. That had to be. For the going of the Son of Man, and therefore all that was connected with His going, was divinely determined. Woe indeed unto that man by whom He was betrayed. Better it had been, if he had never been born!

But also this hardening of Judas, and the revelation of him as the son of perdition takes place mediately.

In the first place, there is the significant notice of Scripture that Judas carried the bag, was the treasurer of the disciples, and was a thief. This surely does not mean that this thievery was known to the disciples at that time, for it is inconceivable that they would tolerate such a thief in their fellowship. But this notice is inserted in the gospel narratives at the time when they were penned. The point is, however, that this one element portrays to us a cardinal aspect of Judas' spiritual makeup. He was a thief. He was moved by covetousness. He loved money.

Secondly like the other disciples, Judas looked upon Christ from a purely earthly viewpoint, a "Jewish" viewpoint. He expected an earthly Messianic kingdom, with earthly power, and earthly honor, and earthly wealth. And as a disciple of Jesus, the traitor undoubtedly looked forward to a preferred place in that earthly kingdom of Christ. However, there was a very fundamental difference between Judas and the eleven on this score. The other disciples merely had a wrong *conception* of the Christ, a conception from which they would be converted and delivered in due time by the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the case of the eleven, that earthly hope of the Messiah could be taken away as it finally was and they had lost nothing essentially, even though at the time of the crucifixion they imagined that everything

was lost. In other words, the eleven were regenerated men of God. But with Judas Iscariot this wordly hope of the Messianic kingdom was a spiritual, ethical matter. It was with him not merely a wrong conception, but a matter of the moral, spiritual state of his heart. If that carnal hope of the Christ was taken away from him, he lost everything that could possibly bind him to Christ.

Gradually he was deprived of that hope. At Capernaum, immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, when the Savior made it plain that He came as the meat and drink of life eternal, and that the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes was only a sign of a greater spiritual reality, a big step in the disillusionment of Judas Iscariot undoubtedly took place. He began to realize that his place was with the offended multitudes, that walked no more with Jesus. And significant is Jesus' own notice at this juncture: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" As time went on, Judas' carnal hope became dimmer, and the the sin of the betrayal grew in him. At the occasion of Jesus' anointing with a view to His burial, shortly before the betrayal, the reality of things becomes clearer to Judas. And finally when Jesus announces that in two days he would be betrayed and delivered, the evil plot takes definite shape in the heart of the traitor. He decides to get the most he can out of his collapsed hopes: thirty pieces of silver!

* * * *

Judas Iscariot! The son of perdition!

As close as possible to the Savior, and yet as far away from Him as it is possible to go! The type of the sinner in the best possible circumstances, but without grace! The revelation of the fact that the natural man, given every conceivable religious advantage, and given the opportunity to lay hands on God, will betray Him, sell Him as a slave! His heart is the devil's. His aim is the world. He knows no repentance. His end is destruction!

Would you boast over against Judas? Would you shun him as an outcast? Are you horrified at his dastardly deed, in self-righteous hypocrisy?

Remember! Judas was of us, and out of our race. He represents us at our very best. Sinners all are we, betrayers of the living God. And the sin of Judas is but the ultimate end of sin, of all sin, of the sin in paradise, of your sin and my sin.

Would you boast? Then boast in the power of the cross! For any difference between us, as the sons of God, and Judas, as the son of perdition, is to be ascribed only to that cross: the cross of the Son of God!

His be all the praise!

H.C.H.



The Hope Protestant Reformed School Society is in need of a fourth teacher for the 1944-'45 school year. Please write Mr. John Kalsbeek, 4132 Hall St., S. W., R. 5, Grand Rapids, Mich. or call AR 6-7586 to arrange for an interview.

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EDITORIALS

To the Rev. P. De Boer

I am sincerely sorry that to you, Rev. De Boer, belongs the sad distinction of being the author of the dirtiest and most lying *Reformed* (Deformed) *Guardian* that has yet appeared.

Sorry I am, not for myself, for those that know me, whether friend or foe, know that you are lying, though it is conceivable that some of those that hate me for the truth's sake will rejoice in what you wrote. The testimony of my almost forty years of the ministry of the gospel is sufficient witness against you.

But sorry I am for you, for, although I always considered you somewhat wavering, I nevertheless always esteemed you as a brother in Christ, and, what is more, as a brother that understood and loved the Protestant Reformed truth.

Sorry I am because I can do this no more.

I could almost wish that the reason why this filthy production flowed from your pen must be sought in the fact that you were ignorant of the facts.

If this is not the explanation the matter is much more serious.

For, in that case, the cause is spiritual-ethical. This means that you wrote this filthy pamphlet as you were moved by the wickedness of your old nature. It means that, before you grabbed your pen to write this dirty piece, you did not pray the Lord to keep you from the evil way and to move and enlighten you by His Spirit. You did not pray at all. You could not have prayed. And it is not possible for you to pray now. It means that you were motivated by wicked hatred against me, a brother that never did you anything but good. Above all, it means that you are the cause that the name of our God is blasphemed and that you deliberately attempted to harm the cause of the Protestant Reformed truth.

That is why I am sincerely sorry for you, Rev. De Boer. I pray for you even as the Lord enjoins us to pray for those that persecute us and spitefully use us.

I pray that the Lord may soon bring you to repentance and that you will publicly confess your evil doings.

No desire I have to reply to your filthy pamphlet in detail.

Nor is this necessary, for I understand that Edgerton, your own former congregation, are so provoked that they intend to issue another pamphlet to expose all your wicked lies.

I advise you to read it.

H.H.

Rev. James Howerzyl Misunderstands

Today, February 27, the undersigned received a letter from Rev. J. Howerzyl, pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church at Oskaloosa, Iowa, that became schismatic by recognizing the Rev. De Wolf and other schismatics, in which he states that he believes that I do not present the matter of our telephone conversation entirely correctly in my "editorial" captioned "What Rev. Hofman Did Not Write." Said article appears in the February 15 issue of the Standard Bearer.

The paragraphs to which Rev. Howerzyl has reference read in full as follows:

"When I read brother Hofman's editorial concerning the matter that he calls an episode that is enlightening and informative, I felt very much aggrieved. I searched my own conscience whether matters were actually as Rev. Hofman states them. He suggests that I gave Rev. James Howerzyl the 'run-around.' Now I don't know whether Rev. Howerzyl, with whom I had the reported telephone conversation, told brother Walter that I had done this. I really cannot believe that he would say such a thing of me, or that he could truthfully characterize my dealings as such. Fact is that Rev. Howerzyl alleged not to understand the import of the night-letter telegram. I thought that he did not understand its implication in that I had not sent the former letter to him but to Rev. John D. de Jong in Hull, Iowa. And therefore I asked him what was not clear. I thought that only for such a reason the telegram letter was not clear to him. This telegram letter reads as follows: '*Kindly be advised that the letter in regard to the Deputies of Synod was sent by the undersigned merely on the strength of the former Status Quo. Be further advised that Classis East will, no doubt, not recognize you should you appear. Kindly inform all whom it may concern.*'"

"This telegram Rev. Howerzyl alleged not to understand. He wanted to know whether they were invited or not, whether he should come or not. I repeatedly told him that Classis had taken no decision, and that should he come I was certain Classis would not acknowledge him. And that it would hardly do for me to say come, and then, when he came, to say: well, you are not welcome, we cannot acknowledge you. I told him then and there, because he wanted to know: must I come or not? I then said: you are not invited. That I would submit my answer to Classis and take the consequences. Remember that Rev. Howerzyl could still yet have appeared and he too could have taken the consequences. I did not give him the word of Classis. I did not give him the 'run-around.' He could take my word for what it was worth. *But none of the Examiners had the courage of their convictions, that the former Status quo stood, to appear at that meeting on the strength of the earlier communication. Had Classis taken the stand that I had done wrong I would have submitted to their judgment.* The trouble was: the die

was cast, the Rubicon had been crossed. And this had not been done by Classis East but by Classis West."

The Rev. Howerzyl writes me that he takes exception to especially the sentence underlined in the above paragraphs. He reflects on this because I mentioned his name in my reply to Rev. Hofman. Whether he agrees with the rest of the Editorial he does not state. It may be too much to believe that silence in this matter is assent.

We let the Rev. Howerzyl speak. Writes he "Now it seems to me that this paragraph, especially the sentence which I have underlined, still presents your mistaken idea which was really the subject of our telephone conversation at that time. As I understood you at that time, and as this paragraph indicates also, you took the position that whenever the examiners hear of a meeting at which an examination or something of that nature is to be conducted, the deputies for examination determine and decide to come to such a meeting. I, on the other hand, and with me the other deputies for examination who were involved in this fiasco, take the position that the deputies appear and function at the meeting of another Classis only when *officially summoned*. They do not question that summons, nor I might add the cancellation of such summons. It is not a question whether they wish to appear or not; when summoned they must appear or their alternatives. So also when such summons is withdrawn they have no reason, no right, no business (to appear G.L.) because they have no summons to appear at such a Classical meeting. So I maintain that when you as Stated Clerk of Classis East informed us that we were not to appear at the meeting the matter was settled as far as we were concerned. And that was why, as you expressed, I repeatedly put the "categorical" question: are we summoned? And that was also why, as you will remember from our telephone conversation, my final summary to you of the matter was: Then I am to understand that, we as deputies, are officially notified that we are not to appear at the meeting." To this was correct and that you were withdrawing the notice to appear.

"In the light of this you will also see that you misrepresent the matter when you say that it was a matter of courage of conviction, or rather lack of such courage of conviction in the status quo that kept the deputies at home. We were simply informed the notification to be present was withdrawn, and I ask in all sincerity what else could we do but stay home in the light of such notice.

"Will you please place this correction in an early issue of the Standard Bearer?"

"Thank you."

Thus far the Rev. James Howerzyl.

I call the readers attention to the following:

1. That they should not lose sight of the important fact that in the editorial of February 15, I was not refuting Rev. J. Howerzyl. However I did mention Rev. J. Howerzyl,

but I did this only in passing. That I mentioned Rev. J. Howerzyl is the responsibility of Rev. Hofman. And, incidentally, as soon as he will comply to my earnest pleadings with him, I shall be most grateful to our Covenant God. I was and am still only interested in the peace of Jerusalem that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

2. That I would have the readers notice that Rev. James Howerzyl is silent on whether I gave Him the "run-around." He has the graciousness to show that I had honest motivation, although he avers that I am in error. I do not "quite represent the matter correctly." It is true, he complains that I have misrepresented the committee by saying "that it was a matter of lack of courage of conviction." Should I have misrepresented these brethren to the public, I shall in this article make honorable rectifications. In the meantime I shall conclude that "brother Walter" is the author of the characterization "run-around."

3. That I let the *discerning* (!) reader judge of the following matters:

a. Whether there was anything obscure and dark in the night-letter I sent to Rev. Howerzyl when considered in the light of the far-reaching breach of good order Classis West had perpetrated just some five weeks before. And again: whether there was anything dark and obscure in this letter when viewed in the light of the flagrant trampling underfoot of all good order on the part of the Revs. De Wolf, Kok, Blankespoor and Knott and others. Just two weeks prior to this letter. Was this telegram hard to understand for Rev. Howerzyl? He is a man of, at least, average intelligence isn't he?

b. Whether it is really true, that the Delegates Ad Examina Synodi come to another Classis merely on the strength of a notification of a Stated Clerk, a notification that has validity and strength simply because *he makes it*? Does a Stated Clerk *summon* a Committee Ad Examina to come? They are not Deputies of a Stated Clerk; they are the Deputies of *Synod*! Are they not chosen by Synod and thus receive a mandate according to the Act of Agreement as based on Article 4 of the Church Order? And has this Act of Agreement not more validity than a capricious act of a Stated Clerk?

c. Whether there is not a marked difference between an official summons and a notification? The former smacks of a Papal bull, doesn't it? The latter is the dutiful execution of what is good and accepted order in the Church, is it not?

d. Whether the Stated Clerk in the following letter, sent to Rev. John D. de Jong, *summoned* this Committee called Deputies Ad Examina Synodi to come, or whether he simply *informed* them that such a meeting would be held, on the strength of the Act of Agreement and Article 4 of the Church Order. This letter reads: "*I herewith wish to inform you that there will be a special meeting of Classis East on Wednesday, October 21 at 9 A.M. in the Hope Prot-*

estant Reformed Church. The purpose of this meeting is in view of the examination of Candidate-elect George Lanting. This is upon the request of the Consistory of Grand Haven. If I am not mistaken you, (Rev. De Jong) Rev. Van Weelden and Rev. De Boer are the Deputies Ad Examina Synodi primi. As I have it the Revs. Howerzyl, Hofman and Gritters are the secundi. Will you kindly make arrangements for that occasion?" Did the undersigned "summon" this Committe or simply "inform them?" He did not assume bishopric powers, did he?

e. Whether on the basic of the above considerations it is not crystal clear that the Stated Clerk simply gave his own version in the latter missive, a version which Rev. Howerzyl could with great confidence have questioned on the basis on the Act of Agreement and Article 4 of the Church Order, as well as on the basis of twenty five years of precedent.

d. Whether it is not very evident that Rev. Howerzyl is attempting to press the Stated Clerk so that it may appear as if he were in default in representing Classis East officially, (which he did not do for he told Rev. Howerzyl he was not speaking for Classis) and thus put Classis East in default?

e. Whether the Stated Clerk has not ample grounds to maintain that Rev. Howerzyl could have had the courage of his convictions to come on the strength of the "former Status Quo," and therefore errs when he *insists* that the undersigned misrepresented him in said editorial in the Standard Bearer?

f. Whether it is not correct on the part of the undersigned to write: the Rev. J. Howerzyl evidently did not understand Church Political procedures to the extend that he prevented others from laying the ground work for the entire situation between "Classis West" and Classis East; wherefore he really involved himself in a fiasco," that is, in a complete and humiliating failure to work the work of the Lord in decency and good order!

G.L.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in regular Spring session Wednesday morning, April 7, 1954 at 9 o'clock, in the Grand Haven Protestant Reformed Church, at Grand Haven, Michigan.

Will the delegates of the various Consistories kindly regard this notice as a personal reminder?

Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk.

MY GOD, MY GOD, I CRY TO THEE

My God, My God I cry to Thee;
O why hast Thou forsaken Me?
Afar from Me, Thou dost not heed,
Though day and night for help I plead.

But Thou art holy in Thy ways,
Enthroned upon Thy people's praise;
Our fathers put their trust in Thee,
Believed, and Thou didst set them free.

They cried, and, trusting in Thy Name,
Were saved, and were not put to shame;
But in the dust My honor lies,
While all reproach and all despise.

My words a cause for scorn they make,
The lip they curl, the head they shake,
And, mocking, bid Me trust the Lord
Till He salvation shall afford.

My trust on Thee I learned to rest
When I was on My mother's breast;
From birth Thou art My God alone,
Thy care My life has ever known.

O let Thy strength and presence cheer,
For trouble and distress are near;
Be Thou not far away from Me,
I have no source of help but Thee.

Unnumbered foes would do Me wrong,
They press about Me, fierce and strong,
Like beasts of prey their rage they vent,
My courage fails, My strength is spent.

Down unto death Thou ledest Me,
Consumed by thirst and agony;
With cruel hate and anger fierce
My helpless hands and feet they pierce.

While on My wasted form they stare,
The garments torn from Me they share,
My shame and sorrow heeding not,
And for My robe they cast the lot.

O Lord, afar no longer stay;
O Thou My Helper, haste I pray;
From death and evil set Me free;
I live, for Thou didst answer Me.

I live and will declare Thy fame
Where brethren gather in Thy Name;
Where all Thy faithful people meet,
I will Thy worthy praise repeat.

Psalms 22

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 40

Chapter 3

Love of the Neighbor's Person (cont'd)

By the power of that love we walk in the light. In that light we have fellowship not only with God, but also with one another, I John 1:5-7: "This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And again, I John 2:9-11: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." And again, I John 3:11-15: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." And again, I John 4:7,8: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knowethnot God; for God is love." It is clear from these passages that when the love of God in us becomes love of one another, it is still the love of God and still the bond of perfectness. We love one another not according to the flesh, but by the Spirit of Christ, as children of the Most High, reflecting His perfection. Therefore the world does not know us, but we know one another. And therefore does this love of the brethren as the bond of perfectness only manifest itself as we walk in the light of God and keep His commandments. For this same reason, both the love of God to us and our love of God is still imperfectly experienced, and also the love of the brethren is not perfect as long as we are in the body of this death. When all the darkness of sin shall have disappeared and we shall be presented without spot and blemish before God and the Father, we shall know even as we are known. Then the love of God shall be perfected in us and

through us, and in the light we shall forever walk in love, in the love of God and in the love of one another.

The question arises, however, how can this be applied to the love of the neighbor in general? Scripture speaks of the love of the brethren. And the brethren, to be sure, are not all men, are not even all our neighbors, but only those that are children of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no common fatherhood of God; neither is there a common brotherhood of man.

If love is the bond of fellowship, operating in the sphere of the light and of perfection, it is evident that there cannot be such love or fellowship between the ungodly; nor can there be fellowship or love between the ungodly and the godly. This is evident in itself. But it is also definitely expressed in Scripture in II Cor. 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

What then? Is there perhaps another love, a love of the neighbor that has nothing to do with the love of God? Is there, perhaps, a fellowship of common grace, according to which we may have communion with the ungodly while yet we separate from him as far as the spiritual, ethical sphere of love is concerned? My answer is that there is no such thing in Scripture. And besides, it would be a very dangerous standpoint to take. Scripture knows of only one love, and that is the love of God in Himself, to His people, and, as the fruit of that love of God to us, the love of God to Him and to one another. There is no fellowship in darkness. We either hate or love. And if the sixth commandment, conceived as the law of liberty for the people of God, demands that we love the neighbor as ourselves, it can only mean that we love the neighbor in general, even if he is ungodly and even if he is our enemy, with that same love of God to us and in us that is manifested in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It will be evident, however, that this love cannot assume the form of fellowship with one another. There is no fellowship of light with darkness, of believers and unbelievers, of righteousness with unrighteousness, of Christ with Belial. That the love of the neighbor in general cannot take on the form of fellowship between the godly and the ungodly is not the fault of the former, but only of the latter. He does not and cannot and will not walk in the sphere of perfection and of the light. He loves the darkness rather than the light. It

is for that reason that the believer can have no fellowship of love with the unbeliever.

Secondly, however, it is also evident that, negatively, the believer in Christ never reveals himself as a murderer of the neighbor in any sense of the word, but that the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord that is poured forth in his heart motivates him to preserve the neighbor for God's sake in his position and relation as neighbor to himself. In this he reveals the love of God that is in his heart to him. He does not destroy him, but as much as in him lies helps him and preserves him in his position as neighbor. When he is in trouble, he helps him. When he is hungry, he feeds him. When he is sick, he visits him. In one word, he acts according to the admonition of the apostle Paul in Gal. 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." In all this he reveals the love of the neighbor for God's sake. And therefore he manifests the love of God, to glorify his Father which is in heaven.

But this is not all. When the apostle says in Gal. 6:10 that we must do good to all men, this certainly also implies that we reveal the love of God to them in that we bring to them the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, rebuke them as they walk in ways of sin and iniquity, speak to them of the righteousness of God and repentance, and testify to them of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, manifested on the accursed tree of Golgotha. This certainly is included in the good which, according to the apostle Paul in Gal. 6:10, we must do to all men according as we have opportunity. To love the neighbor as ourselves for God's sake, even the ungodly neighbor, does not mean that we play with him and talk nice to him and call him our brother and condone his sin, but that we manifest the love of God to him by walking in the light. This is according to the admonition of the apostle Paul in Eph. 5:5-13: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Love of the neighbor, therefore, implies that before him we walk in the light of God's precepts and rebuke him as he walks in darkness.

This is closely connected with the love of the neighbor as our enemy. That we must love even our enemies is ev-

ident from the Word of God throughout. Thus, in the epistle to the Romans, 12:19-21, we read: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." And the injunction of the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:43-48, is well-known: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That this cannot mean that we must love the enemies of God as such is also evident from all Scripture. We hate them with a perfect hatred, with the hatred of the love of God. But even in this hatred, we do not destroy them and kill them or harm them in their position as neighbors to us. Rather do we recognize them as neighbors, whom God has placed in this particular position on our path. Even when they persecute us and curse us, we will do them good, bless them, and pray for them. But as has been said before, this does not mean that we embrace them in fellowship of love: for that is impossible. Nor does it mean that we condone their iniquity and their hatred of God, but that we bless them and do good to them by rebuking their sin and their walk in darkness, by condemning even their sin of persecuting us and cursing us, and by testifying to them of the gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus we will certainly show forth the love of God to us as manifested in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: for He loved us with an eternal love, even when we stood in the position of enemies over against Him. Thus we shall be children of our Father in heaven, and be perfect, even as He is perfect.

Thus it will be evident that it is only by grace that we can even begin to keep this sixth commandment. By nature we indeed mean to destroy the living God, and by that same nature we mean to destroy the neighbor. But by the power of the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, we shall have a small beginning of the new obedience, according to which we love God and love one another and love the neighbor as ourselves for God's sake, even when he stands as enemy over against us and means to destroy us. And it is by that same grace that we fight the good fight also against our own old murderous nature, put off the old man, and put on the new man, and walk in the midst of a world of darkness antithetically, as children of light.

LORD'S DAY XLI

Q. 108. What doth the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That all uncleanness is accursed of God: and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in single life.

Q. 109. Doth God forbid in this commandment, only adultery, and such like gross sins?

A. Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, he commands us to preserve them pure and holy: therefore he forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.

CHAPTER 1

The Covenant of Marriage

We must constantly bear in mind, and especially with a view to this seventh commandment, that we are not discussing the law of God as a basis for the life of society in general or for the improvement of the world, but as a rule of gratitude and as a guide for the expression and manifestation of the life of the redeemed child of God in this world. We must also remember that we can never divorce the precepts of the second table of the law from the first. The love of God is the main principle of the whole law, even of the second table, so that we must indeed love the neighbor as ourselves, but this love is only possible from the principle of the love of God and for His sake. Hence, we may safely say that in every precept of the Decalogue we have a revelation of God, and that too, in relation to His people. Thus in the first commandment God is revealed to us as the one Lord: there is no god beside Him. Hence, in its negative or prohibitive form the first commandment tells us that we shall have no other gods before Him. In the second commandment God is revealed to us as infinite in glory, and therefore it is impossible to make any representations of Him, whether in wood or stone, or in our mind, apart from His revelation. In the third commandment God reveals Himself as the Holy One, and therefore His name is holy, apart from any other name, and we shall never lift up that name into vanity. The fourth commandment reveals God to us as the God of eternal rest, Who from everlasting to everlasting rejoices in His own covenant life. Into that rest He receives His covenant people. And of that eternal rest the weekly sabbath is a reflection. In the fifth commandment God becomes revealed to us as sovereign over all, and His sovereignty we must respect even when it is realized through and reflected in man. The sixth commandment reveals more particularly that God is love, and as the Triune God lives an eternal love-life in Himself. Hence, it is our calling to love the person of the neighbor in relation to ourselves, and even to love our own person only for God's sake. And now, in the seventh commandment God reveals Himself as faithful, as the One Who never breaks His covenant. And therefore His people must be faithful in respect to that most beautiful reflection of the covenant relation that is called marriage.

It cannot escape our attention that the Heidelberg Cat-

echism in this forty-first Lord's Day does in its explanation of the seventh commandment, not proceed from the idea of marriage at all, but rather from that of chastity. In fact, in all our Reformed confessions,—I mean now particularly the Three Forms of Unity,—one looks in vain for a discussion of the marriage bond. Nowhere is there any article in our confessions delineating the truth concerning the marriage relation and concerning the problems that are intimately connected with that relation, such as the question of Biblical or unbiblical divorce, and the question of the marriage of divorced parties, whether guilty or innocent. There is indeed a discussion of the marriage relation in some of the other confessions. Thus, in Chapter 29 of the Second Helvetic Confession we read as follows: "Such as have the gift of chastity given unto them from above, so that they can with the heart or whole mind be pure and continent, and not be grievously burned with lust, let them serve the Lord in that calling, as long as they shall feel themselves endued with that heavenly gift; and let them not lift up themselves above others, but let them serve the Lord daily in simplicity and humility. For such are more apt for attending to heavenly things than they who are distracted with the private affairs of a family. But if, again, the gift be taken away, and they feel a continual burning, let them call to mind the words of the apostle, 'It is better to marry than to burn.' (I Cor. 7:9).

"For wedlock (which is the medicine of incontinency, and continency itself) was ordained by the Lord God Himself, who blessed it most bountifully, and willed man and woman to cleave one to the other inseparably, and to live together in great concord (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 14: 5,6). Whereupon we know the apostle said, 'Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.' (Heb. 13:4). And again, 'If a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.' (I Cor. 7:28). We therefore condemn polygamy, and those who condemn second marriages. We teach that marriage ought to be contracted lawfully, in the fear of the Lord, and not against the laws which forbid certain degrees to join in matrimony, lest the marriages should be incestuous. Let marriages be made with consent of the parents, or such as are instead of parents; and for that end especially for which the Lord ordained marriages. And let them be confirmed publicly in the church, with prayer and blessing. Moreover, let them be kept holy, with peace, faithfulness, dutifulness, love, and purity of the persons coupled together. Therefore let them take heed of brawlings, debates, lusts, and adulteries. Let lawful judgments and holy judges be established in the church, who may maintain marriages, and may repress all dishonesty and shamefulness, and before whom controversies in matrimony may be decided and ended."

We may note here, by the way, that according to this article marriage seems to be especially instituted for those that do not have the gift of continency. And besides, it is at least suggestive of the Roman Catholic conception that a single life lived in continency is holier than a life in wed-

lock. This same idea is also suggested in our Marriage Form, that is, in the part which is usually omitted, where we read: "For, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband; insomuch that all, who are come to their years, and have not the gift of continence, are bound by the command of God, to enter into the marriage state, with knowledge and consent of parents, or guardians and friends; so that the temple of God, which is our body, may not be defiled; for, whosoever defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy." With this we cannot possibly agree. For although it may be admitted that the marriage relation is helpful to avoid fornication, yet marriage is not instituted for sin's sake, but in the state of righteousness.

Also the Westminster Confession has a rather elaborate chapter (XXIV) on marriage and divorce, as follows: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

"Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

"It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And, therefore, such as profess the true Reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.

"Marriage ought not to be within the degree of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together, as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in his blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than her own. (For this last statement there is, of course, no Scriptural injunction whatsoever, H.H.)

"Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve the contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. (Also with this we cannot possibly agree on the basis of Scripture, as we hope to set forth in a different connection, H.H.)

"Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage; wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it, not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case."

However, in our own Three Forms of Unity one looks in vain for any fundamental principles determining the marriage relation. And what is more, in our Reformed churches there seems to be no unanimity of opinion regarding this very serious problem. Some seem to be of the conviction that the only ground for divorce is adultery. Others, however, are of the opinion that there are other grounds upon which divorces may be granted. Some take the position that a legal divorce is a real dissolution of marriage. And of course, if this is true, the divorced parties, or at least one of them, may remarry. Again, some limit the right to marry again after a divorce to the innocent party only, while others wish to concede that right to both parties, whether guilty or innocent. There are, however, also those who maintain that neither the guilty nor the innocent party may remarry, because divorce does not mean a dissolution of the marriage bond, but simply a separation of married people, whether for life or for a time. In the light of this lack of unanimity, and also in the light of the fact that in modern times the church becomes more and more lax, under the influence of the philosophy of the world and under the influence also of the lack of restraint in the laws of our land, we may probably say that it is not only quite impossible to establish some ecclesiastical rules concerning marriage at the present time, but that it is not even desirable.

At any rate, the Heidelberg Catechism in this connection does not touch upon this question at all. In treating the seventh commandment it avoids the marriage question and also the question concerning divorce, and rather discusses this commandment from the viewpoint of the basic principle of chastity.

It must be admitted that on the face of it the Catechism is correct in assuming this standpoint. For the seventh commandment literally does not forbid to break the marriage tie, but simply enjoins, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." You may know that there is a considerable difference between the translation of this commandment in the Holland and the English. The Holland translates: "Gij zult niet echtbreken," which means, "Thou shalt not break the marriage tie." But the English translates, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," which translation is undoubtedly correct, according to the original Hebrew, but which does not at all correspond to the Dutch, "Gij zult niet echtbreken," but rather to the Holland, "Gij zult geen overspel doen." Adultery is like the Dutch *overspel*. In the Word of God there is also another term for adultery, not only in the English but also in the Hebrew. It is the term that in English is translated "fornication." The terms are very closely related. Nevertheless, there is also a difference in meaning. Adultery is simply the violation of the sacred and exclusive relationship of man and wife by illegal intercourse either of the former or of the latter with another party; while fornication is usually employed to denote the sin of sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons.

H. H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

The Lord's marvelous work. Chapter XXIX:13-24

Under the constraint of the reformation of Judah's God-fearing kings — Hezekiah and Josiah — the apostates were honoring God with an outward service but their hearts were far removed from Him. Their fear of God was superstition and not the true religion. For it was founded on the precepts of men and did not rest upon the Word of God (vs. 13). Therefore the Lord will perform a marvelous work in their midst, a wonder of grace. He will cause to perish the wisdom of their wisemen, who seek to hide their evil counsel from the Lord and in secret attempt to realize it. "Who sees us and who knows us," they say (vss. 14, 15).

They were the counselors that surrounded Hezekiah. Making flesh their arm, they were secretly promoting a covenant with Egypt as a means of deliverance from the Assyrian world-power.

Their turning of things upside down, i.e., their imagining that the Lord is ignorant of their doing, shall be esteemed as the potter's clay, meaning that their behaviour toward the Lord is that of a thing formed of clay that, supposing this were possible, denies its maker and accuses him of being without understanding. And clay they are. And the Lord is the potter. And that is their sin (vs. 16).

Within a short time Lebanon shall be turned into Carmal, and Carmal shall be esteemed as a forest (vs. 17).

This verse has been variously explained. If Lebanon, a lofty mountain wooded with cedars, is meant to be taken as a wilderness, nature in the raw, and if this mountain, as so taken, symbolizes the elect apart from grace, and if Carmal, a cultivated and fruitful region, designates the Spirit-filled church, then what we have here is the promise of the gathering of the church from the four corners of the earth in the Gospel period, and her exaltation with Christ. In the imagery of the text, the wilderness shall be changed into a fertile field, and the latter in turn shall be esteemed as a forest of stately trees. This interpretation is in full harmony with the sequel.

For the prophet goes on to say that the deaf shall hear the words of the book, the prophecies of the Lord in that day, that the blind shall see out of their darkness and that the meek and the poor among men, such as put their confidence in the Lord, shall rejoice exceedingly in the Holy One (vss. 18,19).

But as this can only be made to come to pass through the destruction of the enemies of God's people, the prophet also announces that the terrible one, the scorner and all such as are wakeful with regard to mischief, always, watching for it, shall be brought to nought, consumed, cut off (vs. 20).

The prophet describes the behaviour of such men. They wrest a man's word, lay a trap for him that reproveth in the

gate, the preacher of righteousness, and by their deceit mislead the just (vs. 21). Therefore the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, has this to say regarding the house of Jacob. Jacob shall not be ashamed but his confidence in the Lord shall be fully vindicated. For when in his midst he sees his children, the work of the Lord's hand, they shall sanctify the Holy One and fear Israel's God. And the erring ones in spirit shall know understanding and the murmurers shall learn doctrine (vss. 22-24).

The Third Woe. Chapter XXX

The Full Exposure and Denunciation of the Doing of the Apostates that consisted in their seeking help from Egypt. Chapter XXX:1-14.

The apostates, as appears from these verses, are past deliberating on the idea of an alliance with Egypt. A decision has been reached, and the plan is now being carried out. Again introducing the Lord as the speaker, the prophet directs another (the third) woe against this people. He characterizes them as rebellious children. In taking counsel together, the Lord is not in all their thoughts. They make an alliance, but not of the Spirit; the conception has originated with them, that they may add sin to sin (vs. 1).

In a word, their rebellion is willed of God in that it is in His heart to destroy them.

And so, without inquiring of the Lord and despite the fact that the venture is forbidden, they go down into Egypt with a view to inclining Pharaoh by their gifts to protect Israel with his strength in order that they may put their confidence in Egypt's shadow (vs. 2). Therefore Pharaoh's strength shall be their shame and their trust in the shadow of Egypt their confusion (vs. 3). But they might want to change the prophet's threatenings into his disgrace by denying that any such league was being negotiated or had ever been contemplated. To shame them into keeping silence, the prophet discloses that their envoys have been at Zoan and have come to Hanes, that, in a word, they have already arrived in Egypt and accordingly must have already been on the way for weeks and perhaps months as sent and commissioned by the apostates (vs. 4). And therefore the prophet repeats his doleful prediction: when eventually it will have appeared that Pharaoh can be of no real help or profit to them but only a disgrace they will be ashamed of Egypt (vs. 5).

The prophet's public disclosures of their secret doings must have amazed as well as sorely provoked them. Especially his proclamation of things about which they themselves as yet could have no knowledge such as the arrival of the envoys in Egypt and their precise movements in this land. That all is known to the prophet can have but one explanation: the Lord has told him all including the total of their deliberations that had been carried on behind the closed doors of their private chambers. Their whole plan, at which at first he had only hinted, but now fully exposed, was known to him long before its execution.

In his vision the prophet beholds the embassy on its way. Though Egypt is a land of trouble and anguish, the home of the young and the old lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, the envoys do not allow themselves to be restrained by these perils. On the contrary, they pursue their way undaunted, their camels and asses carrying the rich gifts by which they think to purchase Pharaoh's assistance. But they come to a people whose help shall not profit them (vs. 6). Egypt's help will be vapor and vanity. Therefore the Lord cried to His people that they are strong when they exercise quiet confidence in Him as believing that He will save them in His way (vs. 7).

Literally: "Therefore have I cried concerning this, strong are they, sitting still." The text is difficult here. If the antecedent of the demonstrative "this" is Egypt and not Israel, and if the Hebrew word translated *strong* never has this meaning but always signifies *proud, insolent, boasting, rage*, then we must read here: insolent, proud, boasting are the Egyptians, sitting still, inactive. Such being their character, they are unreliable, untrustworthy, a disgrace.

The prophet is mandated to inscribe this particular vision on a tablet that it may be preserved for all the time to come and forever and ever as a witness against the apostates, meaning that their iniquities will never be blotted out in His sight (vs. 8). For they are a rebellious people (in the sense of reprobated), a living race that will not hear the law of the Lord (vs. 9). This they show by demanding of the prophets that they shut their eyes to the Lord's visions and speak to them not the truth but things agreeable though they be deceits (vs. 10), and further that the prophets turn aside out of the right way and remove from before their eyes the Holy One of Israel (vs. 11).

Seeing that they trust in oppression at home and perverseness, i.e., a perverse alliance with heathen people and lean thereon, this their iniquity shall be to them as a rend in a wall high and bulging and that at any moment may crash (vss. 12, 13). And the Lord shall break it with the breaking of a potter's vessel, meaning that He shall reduce it to fragments so completely that there shall not be found among the ruins a sherd large enough to take fire from the hearth or to draw water out of the pit (vs. 14).

This is a prediction of how through the wickedness of the Jews, Israel's typical commonwealth will be destroyed beyond repair; it will be made to pass away permanently. For it was but a shadow.

Israel's strength. Chapter XXX:15-19.

Israel shall be saved in returning to the Lord and in His rest; Israel's strength consists in quietness and in the exercise of confidence in the Lord and not in forbidden military and political measures. But Israel refuses to follow this right way of deliverance. They put their trust in Egypt's horses. They said, No; for we will hasten upon horses, ride upon the swift. But instead they shall flee and be pursued by the swift (vss. 15,16).

The use of Egypt's horses in battle was forbidden in Israel's law, Deut. XVII:16.

In great numbers the Israelites shall flee from an insignificant number of enemies. Their whole army will be reduced to a remnant so small as to be comparable to a pole on the top of a mountain — perhaps a pine bereft of branches — and a banner on a hill (vs. 17).

Such will be the miserable condition of Israel because they declined to give attention to the Lord's warnings. But He will have compassion on His people, the Israel according to the election of grace, however ill-deserving also this remnant. The Lord waiteth to be gracious unto them. For that very purpose will He (the Christ) be exalted to the cross and lastly to the highest heavens that He may have mercy upon them. For the Lord is a God of judgment, meaning that He redeems Zion with judgment and her converts with righteousness (Isa. 1:28). And therefore: Blessed are all they that wait upon Him (vs. 18). For Zion at Jerusalem shall be their dwelling-place. And they shall no more weep. And He will be exceedingly gracious unto them at their cry, answering them instantly, when He hears it (vs. 19).

This prophecy was progressively fulfilled. We discern the following stages: 1. The turning of Judah's captivity. 2. Christ, crucified and resurrected, exalted into the highest heavens with His people. 3. The appearance of Christ in glory with His people.

G.M.O.

I WAITED FOR THE LORD MOST HIGH

I waited for the Lord Most High,
And He inclined to hear my cry;
He took me from destruction's pit
And from the miry clay;
Upon a rock He set my feet,
And stedfast made my way.

A new and joyful song of praise
He taught my thankful heart to raise;
And many, seeing me restored,
Shall fear the Lord and trust;
And blest are they that trust the Lord,
The humble and the just.

O Lord my God, how manifold
Thy wondrous works which I behold
And all Thy loving, gracious thought
Thou hast bestowed on man;
To count Thy mercies I have sought,
But boundless is their span.

Not sacrifice delights the Lord,
But he who hears and keeps His Word;
Thou gavest me to hear Thy will,
Thy law is in my heart;
I come the Scripture to fulfil,
Glad tidings to impart.

Psalm 40

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of John 10:17, 18

For the next few issues of the Standard Bearer we will write on such Scripture passages that speak rather directly of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. This will give us a little change in menu and will at once afford a wonderful opportunity to write on the matters of Scripture which may be considered the very heart of the Gospel in Jesus Christ. For what else is there to preach but Jesus Christ and Him crucified?

The passage to which we would call attention in this essay reads as follows: *"Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*

When Jesus speaks these words He is in Jerusalem, the city that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent to them. At this very moment there was a decision in effect, that if any man would confess that Jesus is the Christ, such a one would be cast forth from the Synagogue. And, wonderful to relate, Jesus performs such a miracle and sign upon one that is born blind, that this one believes, confesses Him to be the Christ, and is forthwith cast out of the communion of Israel! But the Lord knows which are His own sheep and He calls them by name and they follow Him. He preaches to these the glad-tidings of the Kingdom. For when the blind receive their sight and the lepers are cleansed and the lame walk and the deaf hear and the dead are raised to life, then it is with the intent that this should stir up in us that faith which looks unto Him who will give His life for us that we may live and have life more abundantly.

Such concern the evil "shepherds" do not have for the sheep. They do not seek the well-being of the sheep, but they come to destroy the flock. The flock is there for these "shepherds," which at bottom are nothing else but thieves and robbers. They do not enter in through the door of God's appointment, but they are self-appointed usurpers of the things in Israel for their own imaginary personal interest. They cannot and may not and will not bring about the salvation of the sheep.

On this background we see the real Shepherd. He is the Messiah, the anointed One of God. He is the good Shepherd that giveth His life for the sheep. Unto this he has been commissioned and He faithfully fulfils this commandment. And in so doing He merits the Father's love, receives the Divine Sanction.

Of this receiving of the Father's sanction, that is, the Father's final and authoritative confirmation, Jesus speaks in our text. He fully merits the Father's love.

Let us notice what this implies a little more in detail and take notice of the several elements in the text.

In the first place we should notice that Jesus' dying is very unique. It is indeed the only death of its kind. It has absolutely no equal. For this death of the good Shepherd is such that it is wholly a free act of His will and mind. Life was not taken from Him. His dying was wholly act, a free-will sacrifice. And the sacrifice which He brings is His own "soul."

What is the implication of "soul" here in Jesus mouth?

The term soul is the translation of the greek "psuche." We see this greek root in our english term *Psychology*, *psycho-analysis*, *psychiatry* and other similar combinations. The term is not wholly strange to us. In Holy Writ the term allows for more than one meaning and viewpoint. Sometimes it refers especially to the physical soul of man, his bodily soul as this is seated in the blood. It then indicates that man is a living-soul. However, the term may also refer to the spiritual soul, and then it is almost synonymous with "spirit." It is then the conscious life of our spirit as we live in relationship to God and all things. And it is, in our opinion, in the "soul" that man is especially distinguished from the angels, who are ministering spirits. Jesus has a human soul. He had human sorrows and human joys and had a human body, but most emphatically had a human soul, was like unto us in all things, sin excepted. He not only had a human body but most emphatically had a human soul, a human mind and will and all human affections. Wherefore He could say: my "soul" is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death!

This "soul" this entire human life in relation to God and all creatures Jesus lays down, he simply *gave it*. It was in no sense of the word taken from Him. He gives his life in *view of taking it again*. Thus He tells us in the text. Says He: I lay down my life that I might take it again! And this "take it again" does not simply mean that Jesus will die to simply return again into our midst as a "living-soul" but it means, as is evident from the text and all of Scripture, that He will take His life again as the resurrection life in eternal glory. The Son of Man must suffer and thus enter into His glory, the glory of grace in all the saints.

The uniqueness of this dying is exactly that it is a *dying to live*. It is to bring forth life out of death, and honor out of shame, power out of weakness and incorruptibleness and immortality out of corruption and death.

How is this unique suffering to be explained? What is its secret? What is the Mystery of godliness here that is great?

We answer: the Mystery of this unique dying is in the fact that the good Shepherd has the power to lay down His life and has also the power to take it again. None of the evil shepherds can match this power, can they? Is He not the Lord of glory?

What is this "power" of the Christ?

To understand this matter we must bear in mind that Christ is here speaking as the Son of God in the flesh. He

is here not speaking as the Son in the inter-Trinitarian life in relationship simply to the first person in the Trinity, but He is speaking as the good Shepherd, the Servant of the Lord. As the Servant of Jehovah He is empowered to this work.

This implies, first of all, that he has received the *rightful commission* to perform this task of dying in order to live. Thus says Jesus: This commandment (commission) have I received of my Father. And no one else has ever or shall ever receive such a commission. To have such a rightful commission is very important. It is important even in civil life. Should anyone put on a policeman's uniform without being officially commissioned he would soon find out that he is judged an imposter without power. For the power and the strength of soul is with those who are in the right. The wrong are never strong. This is also true of office-bearers. Not might makes right, but right makes might. This is clearly evidenced when Moses prays that his name may be blotted out of the book of life for Israel's sake. The Lord does not hear that prayer. For Moses is not appointed to be a Mediator who will give his "life" a ransom for many. This is a task assigned to a greater than Moses, to one who is the "builder of the house." This latter is Christ's commission. Through Him grace and truth must become a reality. This is the great commission of Christ.

Secondly, this implies that Christ also had the necessary strength and energy to perform this task. This also belongs with the power, the exousia! He had the power of mind and will, the strength of soul. It is the strength of soul which is strong enough to be sorrowful even unto the death of the accursed tree! For this good shepherd has all the qualifications too. He received the Spirit without measure. Great gifts of wisdom, meekness, love and justice were imparted to Him. He alone has more of this in His human soul than all the prophets which were before Him. The stature of all the prophets together does not measure up to Him. Theologians called these gifts the Communication Charismatum. Then too there was the great qualification of this good Shepherd in that it was the Person of the Son, who suffers in the Human soul. So really was the person of Son united that often the human Christ is called the Son of God. Theologians called this Communicatio idiomatum. Finally there was also the aid of the Divine nature of Christ supporting the Human nature, so that both natures united in the person of the Son work together for the bringing of the perfect sacrifice. This has been denominated Communicatio Apotelesmatum.

Such is the power of Christ.

For this reason he has the "power" to lay down His life in order that He might take it again.

And when He takes this life again He does not simply take this life as an individual, but he takes this life as the Shepherd of the Sheep. This "taking again" of His "life" refers to the resurrection from the dead, to His glorious

ascension on high at God's right hand, and to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and to the gathering of the saints into the final glory of the New Jerusalem.

And for being a faithful Servant, Builder of the House of God, becoming the Chief Corner-Stone of it, He is the object of the Father's love. Says Jesus: Because of this the Father *loves* me. This love of the Father is the satisfaction of the Father with the work and labors of the soul of the Mediator, Shepherd of the sheep. He merits the sanction of the Father. For the Father loves the Sheep with an everlasting love. And He wills to manifest this love unto us in His Son, who, although He is the Son, must nevertheless learn obedience from what He suffers. And in so doing He merits the Father's sanction.

For this son was made from a woman and made *under the law!*

That He is under the law implies that he is under the rule: *the man that doeth the same shall live thereby!* Galatians 3:12. And, again, we read in Galatians 3:13, "*Cursed is everyone that remaineth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to perform it.*" Under this law Christ is born. Here He is loved by God *upon condition* of obedience. Here is the *pre-requisite* unto life. It is obedience unto the death, the death of the Cross. And Christ lays the foundation under His own feet. He fulfils all righteousness, that is, the righteous demand of the law! Rom. 8:3, 4. And that which is so often erroneously presented as being applicable to the believers is here of full force to Christ. Sanctions of the law? Indeed, but only to Christ in His mediatorial labors. The obligation of perfect obedience to law is placed upon His mighty shoulders. He takes up the sins of the world and carries them away. And in this He does prudently. He receives the approval of God each step of the way. The Father loves Him.

How concisely Jesus speaks. He does not work with duplicity. That is the field of the lie and of the Liar from the beginning. But He who is the way, the truth and life speaks the truth without duplicity and ambiguity. It is exactly as he states it. He is loved because He is obedient. From the viewpoint of Christ's labors salvation is a matter of merit. Christ earns it.

This is a beacon light in darkness. We need not suffer doctrinal ship-wreck because the Scriptures are not clear and concise. We can interpret the less clear passages in the light of the more clear passages. And such a clear passage we have here. He is the offense of the Cross, yet it is the Wisdom of God. The Shepherd gives His life for the sheep and for this the Father loves Him. Christ finds the ground, the *basis* and not merely the *evidence* of the Father's love for Him in His works!

His work is the Solid Rock; all other ground is sinking sand!

G.L.

(to be continued)

IN HIS FEAR

Walking in Error

(3)

As we suggested last time, we had intended to consider at this point the act of schism perpetrated by Rev. De Wolf and his elders. That was, indeed, our intention.

However, recent events have induced us to take up another matter in this present writing, which we had originally intended to treat later.

The recent events to which we refer are the sending of a communication to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in session March 10-18 in the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church, by the former Classis West, and the sending of a communication by a group of men from former Classis West to the eight members from Classis East who were delegated to the 1953 Synod, and who did gather in Synodical session in Fourth Church to continue the work that could not be finished last June.

In the latter communication we find these lines:

"Nevertheless, we believe that the Word of God calls us to seek the unity of the Church of Christ; and, conscious of this calling we wish to put forth every effort, also in this peculiar situation in which we find ourselves, to prevent further separation of God's people. The means for seeking this unity is not to compromise the Word of God and the Church's confession, nor to avoid discussion, but it is precisely to give testimony to one another of our faith and convictions in our problems and difficulties. Even though you have separated yourselves from the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches we still wish to give you our testimony.

"We earnestly desire that you return from this, your way of error, and seek with us the unity of the Church of Christ. We declare, moreover, that we stand ready to discuss in the proper way any and all difficulties which you may have and to receive any such discussion or testimony that you may direct to us."

The other communication has in it these words:

"We would urge you, brethren, to desist from your way of separatistic activity to return from it, and we would urge you instead to keep the way open for discussion and fellowship and final disposition of difficulties in the way of Scripture and the Church Order."

Now, we would have you understand that both these documents, by the very signatures on them, were plainly sent by men from the former Classis West. We like, therefore, to ask them by means of this article whether they really want a reconciliation, whether they have now assumed a *different* attitude and whether they are ready to acknowledge that *THEY* are the ones who will have to desist from their separatistic ways. Are they, we cannot help but ask, sincere in that they want discussion and fellowship with

US? Would they not rather *continue* to ignore us?, that is, our argumentation and proof?

You see, the consistory of the undersigned sent a letter to all the ministers of former Classis West and to the clerks in those of their churches which had no ministers at that time. OUR attitude was exactly what they express *now* in their communications. We wanted them to reconsider their evil work of September 1953. We were concerned with the peace of Jerusalem. We wrote them on September 29 the letter that appears below. But at that time the overwhelming majority, including those men who signed the two documents above mentioned, reacted quite differently from the sentiment expressed in these documents. Here is the letter, which the undersigned's consistory gave him permission to publish at this time:

Grand Rapids, Mich.
September 29, '53

Dear Brother,

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church herewith pleads with you to let us call your attention to the following matters:

1. That we cannot understand the action of Classis West in recognizing the suspended and deposed office bearers of First Church of Grand Rapids as anything else than denominational schism and hierarchy. Our grounds for stating this are the following:

a. First Church of Grand Rapids and Classis East are not under the jurisdiction of Classis West. Hence Classis West certainly might not decide between two factions of one congregation in Classis East.

b. Classis West therefore has violated art. 31 and art. 84 of the Church Order in making decisions concerning a matter that **has not been finished** in another Classis.

c. Classis West's letter to Classis East and sent to our Consistory reveals that Classis West did not understand the facts in the case sufficiently to be qualified to take a decision in the matter. Let us explain.

(1) Classis West speaks of and pleads with Classis East to "reopen" a case which Classis East has never closed. Classis East (and all its congregations) is waiting for its committee to report in October and plans to do more with the case at that time.

(2) Classis West suggest that the proper way to treat matters which cannot be finished in a minor assembly is that they be sent to the Synod. But Classis West, another **minor** assembly has already taken the case and finished it for all the churches in Classis West BEFORE the minor assembly where the case is being treated can even **continue** with the case. In this Classis West assumed the place of the Synod and passed judgment on a matter outside of its jurisdiction. The only way Classis West could deal with the case is through its delegates to Synod, if the case should come there.

2. That even if Classis West did have the right to treat the case—which we emphatically deny above—the grounds which Classis West presents for its decision are both unfair and absolutely worthless as grounds for the decision taken. Note the following:

a. Classis West merely assumed that these 11 men were legal consistory members and did not even try to prove this contention.

(1) She ignores the fact that these men by the unanimous vote of 11 to 0 were placed under discipline upon the advice of Classis East which knew that half of the consistory members might be involved. This motion was taken on June 1. And to be required to apologize implies sin and also implies that they were placed under discipline.

(2) She ignores the fact that after being placed under discipline they were again demanded by the majority vote of 12 to 11 (which actually is 12 to 0, since these men under discipline might not vote in a case in which they were personally involved) to apologize according to Classical decision on June 22, and that they **refused** to do this.

(3) She gave no proof from Scripture or the Church Order that such men under discipline need be notified of the meeting

wherein the formal step will be taken to do the only possible thing in the matter, namely, as advised by Classis and already adopted on June 1, to suspend and depose. Classis West did not prove that consistory members under discipline are "legal consistory members" who have a right to be at the meeting that decides whether to continue with discipline, or not, and to what degree. Consider that the decision to suspend and depose could have been made that very evening of June 22 and the Consistory would have been entirely in its rights had it that night **excused** from the meeting those who refused to abide by the Consistory's decision of June 1 and by the advice of the Classis, and then in their absence taken the vote to suspend and depose. All our consistories excuse from the meeting those under discipline after the necessary information has been obtained from them.

b. It is extremely unjust and unfair to call a **group**, that follows the advice of Classis, guilty of separatistic and schismatic action because **one** man of the group walks out of the meeting, and THEN recognize a group which as a group in its entirety refuses to abide by the decisions of the Classis. Besides, Classis West listened to two factions which were personally involved and did not wait for witnesses, when she knew that there were witnesses, the committee of Classis East, who were there and were not personally involved in the case.

c. It is, likewise, unfair and unjust to call a group that follows the advice of Classis schismatic—you say failed to follow the church political order of appeal, but that is schism—when it must meet separately because the group that refuses to abide by the advice of Classis refuses them the use of the building and wrote them that they would keep the property until it could be disposed of in a proper way. Brethren, you have encouraged this group of men in their refusal to abide by the decisions of their Classis. What an impossible situation we have that one Classis encourages a group in a sister Classis to walk in defiance of its Classis. We judge no motives, but we like to have you see what you have in your work of September done in our Classis.

3. Therefore we urge you as pastor and/or clerk to bring this matter **immediately** to the attention of your consistory, to urge the brethren to notify the Classical Committee of Classis West that you desire another session of Classis as soon as possible to reconsider this matter and to undo the evil. Receiving response in favour of such a meeting from a majority of the churches, the committee in conjunction with the Stated Clerk can call such a meeting and the peace and unity for which you plead in your letter to Classis East can with God's blessing be realized.

Fraternally yours the Consistory
of the Hope Prot. Ref'd Church
w.s. John A. Heys, Pres.
w.s. M. Veenstra, Clerk.

In response to the ten letters we sent out, we received recognition of this brotherly concern for the peace and unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, from only two consistories. We can only wonder what happened to the other eight. No, we did receive word from a minister in one of the other eight congregations. And that answer, perhaps, explains the unbrotherly as well as *schismatic* silence of the others. Who committed schism and is guilty of separatistic activity? Our consistory, one of the true Protestant Reformed Churches, sought out these erring brethren, but they would not even recognize our missive!

As we wrote above, we received word from one minister who wrote us that HE WOULD NOT EVEN SHOW IT TO HIS CONSISTORY. His loop hole was that we sent it to him rather than to his consistory, and it would be useless anyway to call their attention to these things in our letter. HE WAS AFRAID TO HAVE THEM SEE THE TRUTH or even TO HEAR THE OTHER SIDE! We can prove that! But our purpose, as the very letter shows, in sending these missives to clerks and ministers was because we thought the matter so urgent that we did not want

unopened letters to wait for consistory meetings to be held at their regular time, perhaps as much as a month later. For the peace and good of the church, we wanted Classis West to reconsider before more evil was done.

Would anyone deny us the right to wonder as to whether the other seven consistories ever saw this document? They did not even give us the courtesy of acknowledging our communication. Well may those in these congregations, who are still enough Protestant Reformed to read the Standard Bearer, ask their consistories whether they ever saw this document and why they did not act upon it. Well may those office bearers in the former Classis West ask their minister why he did not present this for their consideration.

Who is guilty of separatistic and schismatic action? Which ministers and consistories separated themselves from whom?

Even then, if at this late moment they do see the error of their ways, we will be thankful to God. But let them, then, answer our consistory and show us that our stand is contrary to Scripture and the Church Order. Let them meet our arguments. *These* are the things we will have to discuss.

We did not separate ourselves from them but sought them; and for their good and the good of our churches we called their attention to their error that they might flee from it. They should have sought us, and if they are convinced that our consistory is in error, they surely should have answered us and pointed this out to us. Not even the two consistories that did answer us entered into the arguments we presented.

Let *these* men keep open the way for discussion and fellowship! Or rather, let them open the way after they have closed it. Classis West in Sept. 1953 should have kept the way open by not meddling in the affair, so that it could come to Synod.

And let them condemn all these tirades and slander on the personality of one man in the Protestant Reformed movement. We will never meet to discuss such things. They only turn attention away from the real issue. We are the Church of God, and we will discuss Church matters, the truth and proper church order.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy with our Pastor, H. Hoeksema, in the loss of his sister,

MRS. J. VELDMAN

May the bereaved experience the comfort of our covenant God in His promise of eternal life.

Rev. C. Hanko, President.
J.M. Faber, Clerk.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

(Continued)

Continuing with our quotation from Cyprian, who contended, as did Tertullian, that the baptism by heretics was not valid, we quote the following: "But again some of our colleagues would rather give honour to heretics than agree with us; and while by the assertion of one baptism they are unwilling to baptize those that come, they thus either themselves make two baptisms in saying that there is a baptism among heretics; or certainly, which is a matter of more importance, they strive to set before and prefer the sordid and profane washing of heretics to the true and only and legitimate baptism of the Catholic Church, not considering that it is written, "He who is baptized by one dead, what availeth his washing?" Now it is manifest that they who are not in the Church of Christ are reckoned among the dead; and another cannot be made alive by him who himself is not alive since there is one Church which, having attained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever and quickens the people of God But if he who comes from the heretics has not previously been baptized in the Church (Cyprian concedes the possibility of people who had been baptized in the Church, joined heretics, and later return to the Church — H.V.), but comes as a stranger and entirely profane, he must be baptized, that he may become a sheep, because in the holy Church is the one water which makes sheep. And therefore because there can be nothing common to falsehood and truth, to darkness and light, to death and immortality, to Antichrist and Christ, we ought by all means to maintain the unity of the Catholic Church, and not to give way to the enemies of faith and truth in any respect." — end of quote. This quotation speaks for itself. We may again notice the importance which Cyprian ascribes to the sacrament of Baptism. He argues that the baptism unto life, which occurs with the sacrament of Baptism, cannot be administered by heretics who have not the light and life but are in the midst of death.

We may conclude, therefore, that many of the early Church Fathers (and these also include Clement of Alexandria) contended that the baptism of heretics was not valid and should therefore not be recognized. It is certain that Tertullian and Cyprian were of this opinion.

However, the Roman Church considered any baptism valid as long as it was properly administered. We have already noted that Clement of Alexandria recognized only that baptism as valid which was administered in the Catholic Church (not, we understand, to be confused with the Roman Catholic Church — H.V.). In approximately the year, 235, the Phrygian synods of Iconium and Synnada pronounced

the baptism of heretics invalid. A synod held at Carthage, North Africa, about the year 200, under a certain Agrippinus, had used similar language. Cyprian, we know adopted the custom of the Asiatic and African Churches and insisted that heretics should be rebaptized, although according to him this was not a repetition of the act of baptism, but the true baptism. According to him the baptism of heretics was no baptism and whoever, therefore, had been baptized by them had not actually been baptized. Rome, however, recognized the baptism of heretics. When we speak of Rome in this connection we refer, let us understand, to the Church at Rome. This must not be confused with the Roman Catholic Church of today.

Stephen was the bishop of the church at Rome during the years, 253-257. It was the Roman practice to recognize the baptism of heretics as valid and merely to demand the laying on of hands as significant of repentance (with indirect reference to Acts 8:17). The Eastern Church, and especially Cyprian, strongly opposed this practice of Rome, and the councils of Carthage (255, 256) again sanctioned the opposite view (opposing Rome). A synodical letter informed Stephen of this action, and a heated epistolary controversy was opened between him and Cyprian. Stephen finally broke off communion with the African Church. Tradition relates that Stephen suffered a martyr's death because he refused to sacrifice to the heathen gods. He maintained to the end that the baptism as administered by heretics was valid. The view that such baptism is valid if properly administered is still in effect today.

This question which concerns the validity of baptism as administered in other churches is an interesting question. The view which is generally accepted today is that all baptisms are valid which are administered "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." One can readily understand why the early Church insisted on this baptism formula. There are reasons to believe that the sacrament of baptism was administered in the early period of the Church simply "in the Name of Jesus." I believe we may definitely assert that Matt. 28:19 must not be understood as a baptism formula, as if Jesus meant to say that these words must be *spoken* at the administration of baptism. The words of Matt. 28:19 do not express the *form* for the administration of baptism, but its essential significance. To be baptized into (not: "in," or "in the name of, upon the authority of") the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost refers to the essential significance of Baptism. True baptism (whereof the baptism with water is merely a sign or symbol) is a being baptized into the fellowship of the living God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Name, Father, refers, then, to the Triune God. The Name, Son, refers to our Lord Jesus Christ through Whom this fellowship with the living God was accomplished by His death and resurrection and ascension. The Name, Holy Ghost, refers to the living God as He, through the Spirit, realizes this fellowship of God's people with God

through Jesus Christ by the work of His irresistible grace. And our actual baptism into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost signifies that we are actually inducted into this fellowship. Of this spiritual reality the sacrament of Baptism is a sign, a symbol. Because of the heresies which developed in the early Christian Church the baptism formula: "I baptize thee into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," was adopted as determining the validity of a baptism. Regardless of a church's interpretation of the baptism formula, the fact remains that the sacrament was at least administered properly; the form was administered according to the true Scriptural significance of the sacrament and its actual meaning. And all such baptisms have been held valid by the Church even until now.

The objections raised by heretics to any form of baptism.

In the first place, they objected that it was below the dignity of the Divine to be represented by anything earthly. Water baptism is, of course, an earthly sign. The same, we understand, applies to Holy Communion. Water, bread, and wine are earthly elements which feature these sacraments. Also today one encounters this derogatory criticism of the sacrament of baptism. Current opponents of this Scriptural injunction speak of the Spirit and Water Baptism and deride the latter. What must we say of this objection? In the first place, it can hardly be denied that the Lord Jesus Christ, when speaking of Himself, often avails Himself of earthly figures. He is the Sun of Righteousness, the Door, the Bread that came down from heaven, the Water of Life, the Scepter and Star out of Judah, the Lion of Judah's tribe, etc. Secondly, we must surely not be wiser than the Lord. To declare that it is below the dignity of the Divine to be represented by earthly figures does not recognize the fact that it pleased the Lord, because of the infirmities of our flesh and that we may more fully understand the promise of the gospel, to represent His salvation in Christ Jesus by earthly figures which are adapted to our eyes, ears, taste, etc. These figures, whereof the Scriptures speak so abundantly and which constitute the elements in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, do not lower the dignity of the Lord. God does not become bread and wine and water, etc., because He simply uses these figures of Himself. These figures have been instituted by the Lord because of our infirmities, so that we may the more clearly understand the wonderful and Divinely exalted character of the amazing work of salvation of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. To deny these earthly elements with the "pious" observation that they lower the dignity of the Lord is conceit; thereby one simply elevates himself above the Lord and makes himself wiser than God.

Secondly, the objection was voiced against any form of baptism that Abraham was justified by faith only. One can hardly deny this assertion as such. It is certainly Scriptural and true that the Father of believers was justified by faith only. To substantiate this from Holy Writ is hardly neces-

sary at this time or at any other time. In fact we hasten to add that, according to Rom. 4:11, he was justified before he received the sign of circumcision that he might be the father of all them that believe although they be not circumcised. Permit us to quote this wonderful passage at this time: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believed, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Besides, according to Rom. 4:16, Abraham was justified by faith unconditionally. Permit us also to quote this remarkable passage: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." This verse should be of considerable significance to us in our present controversy in connection with "conditions." What will the "condition enthusiasts" do with this particular Word of the Lord? Is faith a condition? Was Abraham justified by faith in order that it might be "conditional?" The Father of believers was justified by faith in order that it might be by grace. This means that, being justified by faith, we are justified by grace. And this surely implies that this faith is a gift of God. And this is not all. Mind you, we are justified by faith, as a gift of grace, in order that the promise may be sure. What a tremendous statement we have here! And then the attempt is made in Concordia to show from the Scriptures and the Confessions that the statement of the Rev. De Wolf, namely: "God promises every one of you that, if you believe, you will be saved," is sound (it might be a good thing if these so-called proofs from the Scriptures were accompanied by some explanation and interpretation)! But in Rom. 4:16 we are informed that we are justified by faith in order that the promise may be sure. The promise would not be sure if faith were a condition. To object that Rom. 4:16 merely wishes to to emphasize the phrase: "to all the seed," does not give due consideration to the fact that we read that the promise might be *sure* to all the seed. Replying to this objection we nevertheless wish to emphasize that this particular of Holy Writ certainly emphasizes the unconditionality of faith and the sovereignly particular and unconditional character of the promise. Mind you, this is not an isolated passage of the Scriptures. This deals with the tremendous question why the Lord justifies *by faith*. And the answer is: in order that it may be by grace and this in order that the promise may be sure to all the seed. That is, God justifies by faith, His own gift of faith, because He does "not care to take any chances as far as the promise is concerned. He wants the promise to be sure, never in doubt, and therefore justifies by faith, which is never a condition unto salvation, but purely and exclusively the gift of God.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 7 (continued)

In the first place, we must give our attention to the proposition that election is “out of mere grace.” The term *grace* has several connotations in Holy Scripture, all of which are rooted in the idea of grace as an attribute of God Himself. God, as the God of all infinite perfections, is in Himself gracious, that is, beautiful pleasant. As such, His grace means that He delights in Himself also, and is filled with favor toward Himself as the Triune God. He is graciously inclined toward Himself. When, therefore, the God of all grace reveals Himself to the creature, His grace is manifest as an attitude of graciousness or pleasantness, a gracious disposition of God to His creature. And when the objects of that grace of God are in themselves poor and damnable sinners, who have forfeited every claim to the favor of God, then that grace of God is emphatically revealed as *undeserved* or *forfeited* favor. It is this connotation of the term *grace* that most generally lives in the mind and heart of the believer. Essentially, of course, it is the same as the second connotation given above. Grace is always undeserved, free, in character. It has its basis only in God. Always it is sovereign and free. But when the object of this grace is in himself a sinner, who has wholly forfeited God’s kindness and favor, and is worthy of wrath and condemnation, this freedom and sovereignty of God’s grace stands out in bold relief. It is in this sense that the *Canons* undoubtedly use the term *grace* here. And the fathers add the word “mere,” only, purely (in the Dutch, the well-known expression “*louter uit genade*.”) Abstractly considered, it is sufficient simply to say that God elects out of grace, as opposed to debt or obligation. To speak of an admixture of grace and works is a contradiction in terms. If anything is out of works, or according to work, it is not out of grace, or according to grace; and if it is out of grace, it cannot be out of works. You cannot say that it is partly grace and partly works. Grace and works are mutually exclusive. Actually, however, it is very important that the term *mere*, or *only*, be added in this connection, just as it is of the utmost importance that the term *total* be paired with the term *depravity*. And the reason is historical: just as heretics always like to mimic the language of Scripture and the language of orthodoxy, so the Arminians, especially when pressed, would freely speak of grace, while in actual fact they believed in works and taught an impossible admixture of grace and works. Confer, for example, the first part of Article IV of the Remonstrance. Hence, it became neces-

sary for our fathers especially to stress the fact that salvation is all grace, only grace, “*uit louter genade*.”

Even the above expression, however, in the mind of the fathers was not sufficient. They deemed it necessary to add the expression: “according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will.” This precludes any attempt on the part of the Arminian to teach that election is out of grace, but that God shows His grace to those whom He had foreseen as believing and obeying. The expression “according to the good pleasure of his will” is a Scriptural one, as appears from the proof-texts at the end of this article. It implies that election takes place according to the delight of God. God’s good pleasure is His eternal counsel as it is the object of and has its source in His own divine delight. If you ask the question: why did God choose the elect, according to what standard, what “yard-stick?” the answer is simply: because God pleased to choose them, delighted in those whom He chose. When you go a step farther, and ask the question: why did God please to choose them? the answer is: Keep silence! God’s good pleasure is free, sovereign! Behind that good pleasure of God you cannot go. Again, it is to be noticed that in a sense the term *sovereign* is redundant when applied to the good pleasure of God’s will. Nor do the Scriptures employ the term: they simply speak of the “good pleasure of his will.” Abstractly considered, it is not necessary to add the term *sovereign*, for God is the sovereign God, and it is impossible that His good pleasure would not be sovereign. Actually however, it becomes necessary, once more because of the practice of heretics to mimic the language of Scripture, to add this qualification. And then the term means that God has the basis and the reason for His good pleasure not in the objects of that good pleasure, but only in Himself. His good pleasure is absolutely independent, free. It is neither occasioned by, nor caused by, nor activated by the creature or anything in the creature. The relation is exactly the reverse: in God’s counsel the elect creature is the fruit of God’s good pleasure, not the occasion or reason for it.

But still the fathers thought it necessary more carefully to circumscribe this election, which is out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will. And so they emphasize that “this elect number” is “by nature neither better nor more deserving than others.” In this light it is utterly impossible that God chose some *because* of a distinction between men, and the truth is emphasized that God *makes* the distinction Himself, and for reasons in Himself. It is at this point especially that the infralapsarian position of the *Canons* becomes evident once again. For from the language of this article it is clear that when the fathers speak of the fact that this elect number is neither better nor more deserving than others, they have in mind *created and fallen men* as they exist in the counsel of God. For this elect number are with the others “involved in one common misery.” And besides, God chose “from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction.” This

of course, is not to be understood in the historical and temporal sense, for the article is not dealing with the work of God in time, but with the eternal and unchangeable purpose of God. In other words, as far as the logical order of God's eternal decrees is concerned, this article definitely places the decree of creation and the decree of the fall before the decree of election. And thus, within the scope of the eternal decrees, God elects out of a fallen race. It is in this way that the *Canons* emphasize once more the absolute sovereignty of divine election. The reasoning here is that if God elects out of the whole human race, and if all the members of that race are fallen into sin and destruction and therefore alike involved in one common misery, then election cannot be in any way due to the fact that the elect persons are by nature better or more deserving than the reprobate.

Now it must be granted that God's elect will certainly forever confess that it is out of mere grace that they were chosen, and that they in themselves were certainly neither better nor more deserving than the reprobate, and that therefore they have nothing to boast of in themselves over against the non-elect. But it certainly is not true that this is the special prerogative of the infralapsarian to make this confession. And it cannot at all be urged as a plausible objection against supralapsarianism that just because he views the decrees in such a way that election is logically prior to creation and the fall (God elects *creabile* ("creatable") and *labile* (fallible) creatures, he cannot maintain the undeserving character of the elect persons. For in the first place, the question in this connection is not whether all creatures are equally involved in misery, but simply equal in their status before God, whether fallen or fallible. It is the simple equality of state and condition which determines that the reason for election cannot lie in the fact that one is more deserving than another. In the second place we must remember that essentially the fact that a man is fallen does not change the quality of God's grace whatsoever: grace is always undeserved. But in the third place, it must be noticed that the *supra* view exactly puts any difference between men, as far as being more worthy and more deserving are concerned, beyond the range of possibility. For certainly creatures that are not even created cannot possess any worthiness of being elected. And so it may well be maintained that the position of the supralapsarian is if anything stronger on this point than that of the infralapsarian.

However, once more without discussing in further detail the merits of *supra* over against *infra* at this stage, it is well to remember that it was never the intention of the fathers at Dordrecht, nor the understanding of the signatories of the *Canons*, that the pronouncements of the Great Synod confessionally outlawed supralapsarianism, even though the *Canons* are beyond question *infra*. In that connection I can scarcely understand, nor agree with Ds. T. Bos in his „De Dordtsche Leerregelen,” page 34, 35, who seems to insist that infralapsarianism is binding in the Reformed churches. He writes as follows: „Hierin lag reeds genoegzaam opge-

sloten, dat de voorwerpen der verkiezing als *niet* zalig als *onzalig* gedacht werden, want wie zalig is behoeft niet tot de zaligheid uitverkoren te worden. Maar hierin ligt dan ook reeds duidelijk opgesloten, dat de verkiezing niet geschied is met het oog op menschen, die nog geschapen moesten worden, en gedacht werden als te kunnen vallen, maar met het oog op menschen, die gedacht werden, reeds geschapen te zijn en gevallen ook. Heel deze paragraaf, gelijk ook onze Belijdenis, volgt de Infralapsarische voorstelling, gelijk uit het vervolg nog duidelijker zal blijken, en het is plichtmatig, als Gereformeerden, die voorstelling in prediking en onderwijs te volgen, gelijk dan ook onze Generale Synode te Utrecht in hare conclusien op de leergeschillen uitgesproken heeft.” If it were at all true that the Synod of Dordt was convened in order to settle a controversy between *supra* and *infra*, then the last sentence of the above quotation would be true, and it would be obligatory to maintain strictly the *infra* view. However, such was not the case. *Supra* and *infra* were united against a common foe, Arminianism; and together they maintained positively the absolute sovereignty of divine predestination. It is only in this light that you can understand that more than one supralapsarian signed the *Canons* as a delegate to the Synod. In fact, the fathers refused to entertain a proposal at the Synod to condemn some of the strong utterances of certain supralapsarian theologians. Hence, while I may maintain the *supra* view and consider it to be higher and more correct than the *infra* view, the infralapsarian cannot exclude me on the basis of the confessions, nor am I obligated to bring a gravamen against the *Canons*. Nor is it either advisable or obligatory for the churches at this stage of affairs to attempt to resolve the question. Freedom must be allowed with respect to this question within the scope of the Reformed confessions. About this, when the *Canons* are viewed historically, there can be no question.

H.C.H.



Attention Consistories:

The new treasurer of Synod is Mr. Arthur H. Haan, 3240 Breton Road, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The new Stated Clerk of Synod is: Rev. G. Lubbers, 1304 Maude Ave., N. E., Grand Rapids 5, Michigan.

G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Synod.



TRIO

Second Protestant Reformed Church:

Rev. John Heys

Rev. G. Vandenberg

Rev. R. Veldman.

DECENCY and ORDER

Supporting the Ministry

(Continued)

Although the eleventh article of our church order literally speaks only of supporting the ministers of the Word, it goes without saying that implicit in this is the obligation of every member of the church to support, according to their ability, the church or cause of Christ in the world in all her needs. This duty is rather clearly defined in the thirty-eighth Lord's Day of the Heidelberg Catechism. In discussing the requirement of the fourth commandment of the law this thought provoking answer is given:

"First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me, and thus begin in this life the eternal sabbath."

From this answer it is evident that supporting the cause of God is more than contributing materially to the church. It includes this, to be sure, but there is also a spiritual side evidenced in faithful church attendance and a godly life. These two are so related that laxity in regard to one of them becomes evident in neglecting the other. Sometimes it is said that, "Contributing to God's Kingdom is a thermometer by which one's spiritual life may be measured." There is, no doubt, some truth in this saying although it is not all truth. In Luke 21:1-4 the Lord teaches us that the two mites of the widow cast into the treasury of the temple measured a far greater spirituality than the abundance cast in by the rich. It is better, therefore, that we say the spirit and manner of contributing to the Kingdom of God is a proper thermometer of our spiritual life rather than the amount of giving. They who are truly spiritual will not cling to the material things and if they are rich they will give much and if they are poor their giving will be according to their ability.

The true member of the church regards this duty as a privilege rather than a burden. It is part of the easy yoke which Christ exhorts his disciples to take upon themselves. Easy it is even as the burden of christian service is light, not according to the flesh, but always in the strength of that grace wherein we stand. Then the contributing to the support of the services of the church becomes the response of a conscious sense of spiritual obligation and its performance is constrained by the love of the King and His Zion. To contribute otherwise makes our offering abominable in God's sight and our giving is then devoid of blessing and joy. Remember, "God loveth a cheerful giver." Let us never forget this so that we may do all things without murmurings.

Sometimes, however, objections are raised to the methods used by the church to obtain funds necessary for her support. It used to be (and perhaps still is in some places) a custom of the churches to rent the pews similar to the practice of charging admission to the games in our modern sport world. Much can be said in disfavor of this practice. It certainly is not as much as suggested in the Word of God. In actual practice it separated the rich from the poor which is altogether contrary to the Lord's admonition found in James 2:1-5 — "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; Are ye not then partial in yourselves and become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"

Other churches frequently resort to money raising schemes such as bazaars, sales, auctions, socials and what not. The rightness or wrongness of these things has often been the subject of debate in the church. Some, who evidently have a Romish idea of the sanctity of the church building, consider any activity in the church which is not *directly* spiritual as wrong. It is wrong to drink a cup of coffee and eat a piece of cake in the church. It is wrong to serve dinners as we do at our Classical and Synodical meetings. All socials are contraband. We wonder how these people are able to partake of the sacraments unless their conception of them is also the Romish notion of transubstantiation. Have they never heard that "eating and drinking is also to be done to the glory of God?" (I Cor. 10:31) Then there are others who are obviously more interested in a social or an auction sale than they are in the Men's or Ladies' Societies. They rather eat and drink than be busy in the Word. Both of these extremities in our opinion are sinful.

As to our view of this question we may briefly state the following: (1) We claim that whenever any of these methods are used as means to *raise the budget* of the church they are wrong and ought to be banned. Supporting the church must be by voluntary alms and under the constraint of the love of Christ's cause. If the church must resort to other means to *raise her budget* there is a sign of carnality and spiritual lethargy. The love of Christ has waxed cold. (2) We further claim that any form of "auctioneering" in the church is wrong. Our reason for this contention is that it, too, makes separation between rich and poor in the congregation which is in violation of the passage of God's Word afore cited. Frequently, under the enthusiastic pressure of the auctioneer (who means well) the cause of Christ is used to soar the price of items far above their actual value and beyond the reach of the poor or those with moderate income. This is a

double evil which consistories ought to stop. (3) We can see no wrong in socials in the church. We do not believe it wrong for the Marys and Marthas and Lydias of the church to busy themselves in making various useful items and selling them to the members of the church and turning over the proceeds either to charity or some improvements in the church which lie outside the usual budget. With such practices we not only can concur but would also encourage them. Our young people, for example, would spend their time and efforts much more profitably along these lines working for their Federation and Beacon Lights than, as we hear of some, by loitering in the bowling alleys and roller rinks and ball parks.

Sometimes the question is raised as to whether or not it is proper for the church to obtain her support by what is commonly called "the budget system." Space does not permit us to enter into a detailed discussion of this subject here nor is that necessary. The arguments pro and con which have been advanced in regard to this matter would more than fill our space in any single issue of the Standard Bearer. However, we would note that decency and order in the church certainly requires some form of budget system. Any well ordered home operates on some kind of budget. No government — city, state or national — could operate without one. And in so far as the church also has a material side while she is still in the world and must reckon with financial receipts and expenditures she must budget. The church must be informed as to what the estimated expenses are going to be over a given period and in the light of this each family must prepare in as far as possible to carry its part of the obligation. Thus far objections are usually not raised. Most people can understand the reasonableness and necessity of budgeting in general. The criticism, however, arises against the practice of some church using the envelope system by which the deaconate tabulates what is contributed by each member. This system, it is said, is using coercion to make each member comply with a certain budget standard and this is in conflict with the principles of love and ability. Granting that this question is debatable, we, nevertheless, must point out that the church may and should know who contributes faithfully and who does not and with regard to the latter she must know the reasons for neglect and if these are not valid she must admonish the negligent to fulfill the obligations laid upon them by Christ. There are some churches where the envelope system is not needed. There are others where it is not wanted. This, in the last analysis, is to be left to the discretion of the individual consistories. Each must know what is the best method to use in their own circumstances.

In concluding this matter we would also mention that those responsible for making the budget must do so with greatest care and sound reason. We refer now especially to Synodical budgets. The congregational budgets are in the last analysis approved by the individual churches but synodical budgets, approved and adopted by synod, do not come

under the scrutiny of each church. The figures are announced and each church is expected to pay its portion. Frequently synods, burdened with much other work, do not devote sufficient time and study to the matter of budgets which results in careless spending. This is not conducive to good order. We believe it would be a good policy to have a standing committee of lay business men who throughout the year would take into study and consideration all matters relating to finances and report each year to the Synod with sound recommendations. To mention just a few items that might be taken under advisement by such a committee we might cite mission expenses, support of needy churches, travel expenses and others. Also in regard to these matters the inviolable rule of Scripture applies: "Let all things be done decently and in good order." G.v.d.B.

ALL AROUND US

Reply to Rev. Hofman and Mr. Byker.

The editor of Concordia devoted the greater portion of his editorial space in the March 11th issue to ridicule the article of the undersigned written in the February 15th issue of the Standard Bearer relative to "Not Hoeksema, But Kok Changed." In fact, along with another article written by Mr. Gary Byker of Hudsonville, Concordia takes great pleasure in playing up what it considers the mental and moral weaknesses of the undersigned supposedly reflected in the article referred to. We surmise that when the editor received the article of Mr. Byker he thought it was pretty good and since he needed material for an editorial he took the hint from Byker and developed it a little farther.

The undersigned is accused of foolishly rushing into print without having first clearly understood the implications of what Dr. Daane wrote. The undersigned said that "Rev. Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head," but he really did not know what he was talking about. If Rev. Schipper had the intellectual capacity of more than a fifth grader, he would not have written as he did.

It is rather revealing, when these men of the opposition write, how they like to talk about mentalities. When they do not know what to say in answer to Rev. Hoeksema, they say he is a man broken in mind and body. And when they write about a younger man and less experienced, they say he doesn't have the mentality of a fifth grader. It may be that my mental capacity is not what it ought to be, but I do know that my heart is right, and I am wondering if these men of the opposition can say the same thing. I do believe that I know a little bit of our Protestant Reformed doctrine, and by the grace of God I have no intention of forsaking it as those of the opposition have done.

It seems to me, brethren, that it is the height of folly to waste your time writing lengthy articles in criticism of one who is so mentally deficient. And it is a serious reflection on the ability of the editor of Concordia that he allows his

paper to utilize so much space to answer such "foolishness." Personally I think my critics were not a little irked by what I wrote, and this is their way of retaliating. This is plain from the following which Rev. Hofman wrote: "Rev. Schipper would have done his readers a greater service if he had criticized Dr. Daane's writing rather than to use it to reflect upon Rev. Kok and attempt to support Rev. Hoeksema."

My critics should have noted the first two paragraphs of my article, then they would have understood why I did not comment on Dr. Daane's criticism of our Protestant Reformed position, and also why I used Daane's article to reflect on the position of Rev. Kok. In the first paragraph I told my readers that it was too early to criticize Dr. Daane since he was not yet finished with his criticism of our doctrine. We would wait, therefore, with our criticism. In the second paragraph I informed our readers that we were only quoting that part of Daane's article that had to do with Rev. Kok. And this we did, I believe in its entirety, commenting in conclusion that not Hoeksema but Kok changed according to Daane and with this we agreed. We said, and we would say it again, Daane hit the nail squarely on the head.

What we will have to say about Daane's understanding of Protestant Reformed theology and ethics will appear in another article. But this much is clear to this writer that in the article on which I already commented Daane has seen clearly what Kok and now I add also Hofman and Byker, do not see, or do not want to see. What is that? Simply this: If you embrace a conditional theology, you are consistent when you also embrace the First Point of 1924.

Almost one-half of the editorial is introduction. But by way of introduction Rev. Hofman writes: "It is quite evident, for example, that Dr. Daane either does not understand the basic and essential difference between the Protestant Reformed and Christian Ref. position, or else he deliberately minimizes this difference. In the very opening sentence of his article he writes: 'The first of the Three Points of 1924 teaches that the preaching of the gospel is an offer of salvation to every individual addressed by the gospel.' Now if that were all that the First Point taught, or if that were even the assent and thrust of the First Point, it could not have been the occasion of division in 1924. That does not state the basic thrust of the First Point nor does it point up the essential objection and discrepancy. The heart of the matter is that the First Point calls this offer *grace*. Dr. Daane misses the point here."

Further Hofman writes: "The same is true when Dr. Daane writes: 'Rev. Kok should either repudiate conditions and make common cause with Hoeksema, or he ought to allow the leaven of conditions to lead him to accept the Christian Reformed conception of the gospel as an offer to any who hear the gospel, and return to the Christian Reformed Church.' Again if that were all there were to it, perhaps, Dr. Daane would be right and one should return. Or rather, if that were the only point of difference, the

split in 1924 would never have occurred on that issue. Once again, Dr. Daane here minimizes the difference and misses the point. 'Het puntje van het eerste punt' concerns the 'gunstige gezindheid' which Dr. Daane fails to mention here again.

"And finally, to quote no more, Dr. Daane bases all this on an assumption which he does not prove, when he writes: 'He (Kok) denies common grace but he holds to a conception of conditional gospel-address which bespeaks an offer of the gospel to all who hear, and *therefore of a grace which is common*.' (Italics mine. W.H.) Now, in the first place, I doubt whether Kok would agree to have his position circumscribed as 'an offer of the gospel to all who hear,' but that again misses the essential point of difference and debate between us and the Christian Reformed Church. And the basic weakness of that statement by Dr. Daane is the conclusion which we underscored above: 'And therefore of a grace that is common.' That certainly is not the only and necessary conclusion, even to the premise of Dr. Daane. It is simply an unproven assumption with which one can certainly disagree; nor does it necessarily follow from the foregoing.

"So much by way of introduction. Rev. Kok will, undoubtedly, answer Dr. Daane himself. It seems, however, that in his eagerness to find support the Rev. Schipper did not see these very obvious discrepancies. Perhaps Rev. Schipper has never really understood this very basic and essential point. For Rev. Schipper has only high regard for Dr. Daane as a critic and judge of what is Protestant Reformed so that Schipper can boast: 'Rev. Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head.' Dr. Daane, according to Schipper, knows what is what and can correctly evaluate and characterize Rev. Kok's position."

Now it seems to me that not Daane but Hofman has missed the point. Does Rev. Hofman actually think that Dr. Daane is that ignorant that he does not know what is the basic thrust of the First Point? Or is Rev. Hofman just prating? Hofman knows better for he himself quotes Daane as saying: "He (Kok) denies common grace, but he holds to a conception of conditional gospel-address which bespeaks an offer of the gospel to all who hear, and *therefore of a grace which is common*." Proof enough that Daane knows full well what the thrust of the First Point is. But Daane isn't talking about this. He is simply talking about the address-ability of the gospel. He is talking about the similarity of conditional theology and the doctrine of the offer of salvation in the preaching of the gospel. I say, therefore that when Daane writes: "He (Kok) denies common grace, but he holds to a conception of conditional gospel-address which bespeaks an offer of the gospel to all who hear, and therefore of a grace which is common," he has hit the nail squarely on the head. Hofman, and those who agree with him, may not like this charge. They may try to camouflage the business by informing the public that they do not believe in common grace and that they are Protestant Reformed,

but if they are honest and consistent they will submit to Daane's criticism. Rev. Kok and his followers have sustained the two statements of Rev. De Wolf. The first of these is: "God promises every one of you that if you believe you will be saved." They have been told more than once that to say this is worse than the First Point of 1924. The Christian Reformed Churches say: "God offers salvation to all on condition that they believe." Those who have left the Protestant Reformed Churches say: "God promises salvation to all on condition that they believe." Even one with the mentality of a fifth grader can see that that is worse. But the point of Dr. Daane is that those who maintain such gospel-address, if they are consistent, should return to the Christian Reformed Churches, or repudiate their stand on conditions. With this I agree. And this is all I meant by Daane's hitting the nail on the head. Rev. Hofman wants his readers and Rev. Schipper to understand that because Dr. Daane does not understand our Protestant Reformed position re the Three Points nor the condition-controversy which has made separation among us, he is unable to see this point and to give any judgment respecting Rev. Kok et al. This does not sink in with me. Rev. Hofman has more to say, but this next time.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The News Item From Lynden

I would like to answer the news item that appeared in the "Concordia" of Feb. 25, 1954 concerning the history of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church. There are several references of events that happened in Lynden that are not true, but are lies. To keep things straight, I am writing this article.

First, the news item claims that the old Lynden consistory announced her stand concerning the deposition of Rev. De Wolf and his elders, after long and prayerful consideration. This I deny. The whole history of the Lynden Church proves it. This history shows that the consistory was never in sympathy with Rev. Hoeksema's side of the issue, but always favored the ministers who now maintain a conditional theology, and also uphold the heresy of De Wolf. This history is a part of the labors of Rev. A. Cammenga, whose views in the question of conditions to salvation were opposed to those of Rev. Hoeksema and Ophoff and the historical view of our churches. When the majority of the congregation wanted the consistory to put Rev. H. Veldman on trio, the consistory refused claiming that Rev. Veldman was a "Kerkverwoester" a church destroyer. The consistory knew that putting Rev. Veldman on trio might lead to his getting the call. Then there would be no conditional preaching. Rev. H. C. Hoeksema was not accept-

able because he was "Eenkantig" one sided, although the opposition halfheartedly admitted he had good sermons. But they said "We have to do something too."

In view of this history, it is plain that the writer of Lynden's news item was trying to cover up that history with the pious talk of a long and prayerful consideration. Is it any wonder then that the old Lynden Consistory could go only one way? That way was of the recognition of the theology of the two statements even when those statements were condemned by De Wolf's consistory in accord with the advice of Classis East.

The next item I want to deny as a lie, is the charge that Lynden's faithful Protestant Reformed people were instructed from a certain "headquarters" that we must refrain from attending our church. This charge is a lie. I repeat, because our faithful Lynden Protestant Reformed people never received any instructions from any headquarters either before that Saturday of which the Concordia's article speaks, or at any other time. Rev. Howerzyl was well informed that Rev. H. C. Hoeksema was asked to come to Lynden by the faithful group, therefore he should not be slandered as the organizer of the faithful Lynden group. We did not meet under the old Lynden consistory on the following Lord's Day after the consistory announced its stand to uphold De Wolf's heresy. We could not meet and uphold his condemned heresy.

Another item in the same article declares that the faithful Lynden Protestant Reformed people are victims of a persistent propaganda, and do not know where they are going. This charge again is a lie. We are not victims at all of any persistent propaganda that is supposed to be designed to hurt us spiritually, but we are recipients of God's grace, whereby He gives us His Church, the spiritual wisdom and insight, to see the way of His cause and His truth. In this cause we must stand. This is our privilege. And our calling.

H. Van Der Veen, Jr.

IN FULL ASSURANCE OF THY GRACE

In full assurance of Thy grace
To Thee my prayers ascend;
In Thy abounding love and truth,
O God, salvation send.

They gave me bitter gall for food,
And taunting words they spake;
They gave me vinegar to drink,
My burning thirst to slake

Their peace and plenty be their snare,
In blindness let them grope;
Thy indignation on them pour,
And desolate their hope.

Psalm 69:1, 7, 8