

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

"The Mother of us all — Jerusalem Above"

"But Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother." Galatians 4:26.

Jerusalem, the heavenly!

She is the city of the living God; most beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King . . .

Jehovah, our God, hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge; a refuge for the first-born congregation out of the dead through the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here under the shadow of His wings the congregation of just men made perfect find a refuge for their souls, a shelter in the time of storm. Securely the sons of God dwell as free men in the city of the Lord of Hosts . . .

The Kings of the earth were, indeed, assembled; they took counsel together against the Lord and His Anointed. Always such was the case, and always the Lord of Hosts had them in derision, declaring from the Decree: I have anointed my King in Zion, the hill of My holiness. But centrally the kings of the earth, the mighty amongst men, arose against the Lord of glory in Herod and Pilate and the rulers of the people. They nailed the Son of God, in our flesh, to the tree.

Seemingly they triumphed over Him there. They took Him down from the tree and laid him in the grave. And even then they gathered together against Him, saying let us break His bands asunder. They sealed the grave, put a watch of soldiers about it, thinking that they could have the victory over Him to whom all things were promised in the Scroll . . .

But He, who is anointed King in Zion, the city of God, triumphed gloriously. He arose from the grave with a mighty triumph o'er His foes. Powerfully He revealed Himself to be the Son of God, and as the King of righteousness, who loveth equity and hateth all unrighteousness, He ascended up on high at the right hand of the Divine Majesty in

heaven, subjecting all things under Him. And, being thus brought as the firstborn into the world, of Him it is said: Let all the angels of God worship Him!

Yea, as we have heard so have we seen in the city of our God, the dwelling-place of the Lord of Hosts. For it has been told us by God's apostles and evangelists, and by faith we see it that Jesus is, indeed, crowned with glory and honor. For it behooveth him by whom all things are, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the captain of our salvation through suffering . . .

And what marvelous reality of grace!

He is not ashamed to call us brethren . . .

Hear Him say: behold, I and the children which Thou hast given Me. Multitudes and multitudes of children in Me, the Seed, to Whom it was promised from days of old, even from ancient times!

Multitudes of children, even where least expected. But the children of desolate Israel, Zion above, are more than of her who hath an husband. Maher-shalal-hash-baz: a remnant shall return, according to the purpose of election.

Jerusalem the beautiful and heavenly city.

The beautiful city of God.

* * *

Jerusalem, the city of God!

The mother of the free-born sons, by the Word and Spirit, born of the Promise.

O, city of our God, unto whom all the nations flow, saying: come let us go up to Zion. In thee alone are all of our fountains. Thou art the city that hath twelve foundations upon which are written the names of the twelve Apostles, and which hath a Corner-Stone elect and precious of the Architect and Builder. On the pillars of justice thou art stayed. They, who dwell in thee, dwell securely from all their foes. Thy gates shall never be closed, the sun shall not set on thee, nor shalt thou ever be enveloped in the night. For the Lord, God almighty, Himself shall be the Sun unto thee . . .

Thou art the city fair, the city foursquare, having thy gates open to every direction on the compass of the earth's globe. From afar father Abraham saw thy towers in majes-

tic splendour, and he rejoiced at the consolation that thou art a fruitful mother, able to suck thy babes and to care for the multitude of thy children. He saw from afar that the children of the desolate are more than of her who hath an husband . . .

Did not Jehovah pass between the pieces of the sacrificed beasts? Was there not a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between the pieces? And did not Jehovah in Covenant mercy assure Abraham that this was His token to Abraham: thus shall thy seed be? And did not Abraham understand that the deliverance out of Egypt meant that the multitudes of the children, promised to Him in the Seed, would be delivered from all the guilt of sin and its corruption to be set with Christ in the heavens above?

Jerusalem, which is above, the Mother of US . . .

In thee we find refuge from the curse of the law and from the weak and beggarly principles of the world: the man that doeth the same shall live thereby! In thee we serve our God day and night in His temple in Spirit and in truth. In thee we need not keep days and months and seasons and years. Here are no anxious questions of a perplexed conscience.

O, city of the First-born among many brethren, all our fountains are in thee. For thou art the Mother of thy children. From out of thee the Holy Spirit was poured forth on Pentecost on the church, and the children are gathered in all nations! Thy children, born of the Promise, O Zion, must be gathered, beginning at Jerusalem, which "now" is, Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth . . .

Forsoothe, from out of thee the Spirit blows where it listeth; from thence is His sound heard as of a mighty rushing wind, and we hear this sound not knowing whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Yet, certain we are, that not one of the children born in Zion is born a slave-child. For Sarah, the mother of the free, can not deny her identity—even though Abraham in a moment of weakness thus instructs her to do! For Sarah, Jerusalem above, is exceeding fair, clothed with the Sun she is, and the moon is under her feet, and all the stars of heaven will bow to her!

Many are thy children, thou beautiful free-woman of Abraham. All that hear of it will laugh with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. Happy art thou . . .

Multitudes upon multitudes of children.

A full quiver wherewith to meet the enemy in the gate. The gates of hell shall never prevail against thee to subject thy children once more to slavery, who are free-born by the Word and Spirit. A sword shall not pierce thy soul, neither shalt thou weep and lament for thy children because they are not . . .

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!
All my fountains are in thee!

* * *

The joy of the whole earth!

Such is mount Zion, the mother of us all.

Come then, ye children of Zion, let not your joy of freedom be marred or wholly taken from you, by a little "leaven" that leaveneth the whole lump. Let not the enemies of Zion tempt you to be placed under a yoke of bondage which the Father of lights, the God from whom all blessings in Zion flow, does not place upon you. Delight then in the Lord in thy freedom, ye children from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Do not be placed under the heavy burden and the hard yoke of the keeping of days, months, seasons, and years. For these are beggarly principles which cannot enrich your life with the joys of Sarah, our mother, nor are they strong, able to save us from death to life, calling the things that are not as though they were.

Hearken unto me, then, ye children of Zion!

Stand in the freedom wherewith Christ has made you free. Enter into the reconciliation by faith, and appropriate by the Holy Spirit out of faith the riches of grace untold in Christ. Do not give out your money for that which satisfieth not, nor your money for that which is not bread. Without money and without price it is for us the children of Zion. Grace, freely given to all the sons by faith; yea, even the faith wherewith we appropriate is wrought in us by the Spirit, shedding God's love abroad in our hearts . . .

O, the refreshment and the power of these waters of grace that flow peacefully in Salem; they flow from the Throne of God and of the Lamb, and they become in us fountains of living waters springing up unto everlasting life. The sure mercies they are, affording us the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

Nay, O sons of the Mighty, do not hang your harp upon the willows and say: who will show us any good . . .

Arise, O Zion, put on thy strength, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; from hence-forth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcized and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit on thy throne, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion!

Walk about Zion, and go round about her, and number ye the towers thereof. And from these towers of Jehovah's strength look down and smile on all of Zion's children's foes.

O, city of Jehovah of Hosts . . .

The "Hosts" of the joyful, free-born children!

The joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion!

* * *

Blessed Sons of Zion!

Who in all the earth are like unto thee?

Who is like thee in thy beauty and strength; thy youth is constantly renewed and thy strength is constantly given thee like the eagles.

God shall establish thee forever!

Great and fierce are thy foes, and their cunning is cruel. Satan and all his hosts would rob thee of thy heritage, of the glory of God's grace in thee the saints. But be not dismayed. The mighty God of Jacob is our refuge. He will not allow any of His "little ones" to be given into the hand of the foe. The crushed reed he will not break and the smoking flax he will not quench . . .

Sons of Zion, born from the free-woman. Thy portion is to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The lines have fallen unto thee in pleasant places!

Sons of the mighty ye are! Opposed ye may be, but ye shall ne'er be overcome. Nay, but Sarah, Jerusalem, which is above, will surely cast out those, who are not her children, born of the Promise. It is the "logic" of God's elective love. Before this all flesh must bow, even the flesh of believing Abraham . . .

Jehovah, thy God, is with thee; the shout of the King is heard in thy midst!

Blessed sons!

G.L.

IN MEMORIAM

On December 23, 1954, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved daughter and sister

ELIZABETH (BETTY) DYKSTRA

at the age of 26 years.

Our loss is her gain. The words of Scripture are our comfort: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. 14:13.

Mr. and Mrs. John Dykstra, Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Christian Vander Stel
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Pluger
Mr. and Mrs. Boreas Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. John Dykstra, Jr.
Mr. Frank Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dykstra
Miss Ruth Dykstra
Miss Theressa Dykstra
Miss Shirley Dykstra
Miss Julia Dykstra

IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy with its members, Mr. and Mrs. John Dykstra, in the sudden loss of their sister,

BETTY DYKSTRA

through the cold hand of death.

May He Who is the resurrection and the life comfort them and cause them to experience His grace in this loss.

Rev. J. A. Heys, President

Mrs. A. Griffioen, Secretary

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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EDITORIALS

Repercussions

All our readers have, by this time, received and read the "Opinion" rendered in the case of the name and property of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, by the Superior Court of this city.

Personally, although naturally I am glad that the court rendered a decision in our favor, I was not surprised about it. The more I thought about the matter, the more, too, I heard, in court, the testimony of the opposition corrupting our Reformed Church Polity, which, evidently they never understood, and the more I heard, in court, the honorable judge Taylor insist repeatedly that his judgment had to be based on the eighty six articles of the Church Order, the more I became convinced that the court's decision had to be in our favor.

At the time of this writing I know not whether the opposition will appeal to the Supreme Court.

But if they do, I am convinced, too, that the opinion of judge Taylor will never be reversed.

It is very clear-cut, perfectly logical, and based throughout on the Church Order and many precedents.

The opposition appears to have based their hope for a decision in their favor chiefly, at first on article 7 of the Articles of Association which insist that the question concerning the property shall at all times be determined by a majority vote of the members of the congregation. This article was, in 1925, inserted by our consistory at the time to prevent a repetition of the history of the Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Church when comparatively few members obtained the property while the large majority were deprived of it.

But it soon became evident that this article would have no force in court whatsoever, for the judge ruled from the outset that the testimony concerning this article would be entered in only on a separate record.

In my testimony in court, I freely admitted the import and purpose of this article and the reason why it was inserted. Besides, several of the old consistory members testified to the same effect. But all this testimony was of no weight in court whatever.

The reason for this is evident.

First of all, this article 7 is in direct conflict with other articles of the same act of incorporation.

Article 4 states very definitely that "the members of said church or society shall worship and labor together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the "Protesting Christian Reformed Churches (Protestant Reformed Churches now) in the United States of America as from time to time authorized and declared by said churches."

And Article 6 definitely declares that this "church shall

be governed by the Eighty-Six Articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht."

This implies, of course, that those who violate either article 4 or article 6 of this act of incorporation have no right to the name, nor to the property of any of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And since, ultimately, not the individual consistory or congregation but the classis and synod decide, according to Church Order, whether anyone violates the Confession or (and) the Church Order; and since the defendants in this case violated both, Confession and Church Order; and since the court never enters into question as to who is right and who is wrong according to the Confession, but simply recognizes the decision of the broader assemblies, it was a foregone conclusion that the defendants in this case would lose, just as it is virtually certain that they must lose if they appeal to the Supreme Court.

Hence, in the light of articles 4 and 6 of the Articles of Association article 7 cannot possibly have any weight.

I have a suspicion that the opposition realized this very well. This may be the reason why they themselves never even attempted to apply article 7.

O, it is true, they always boasted that they had the majority. Perhaps, they have if by majority is simply meant that they have a larger number of members than the present First Protestant Reformed Church has, although even this boast has never been verified.

But what is meant by a majority in the sense of article 7 of the Articles of Association?

It is, evidently, half plus one of the legal members present at a legal congregational meeting.

But who could possibly call such a legal congregational meeting? Only the legal consistory who was declared and recognized to be such by classis. And what members could possibly vote at such a meeting? Evidently, only those that would recognize the legal consistory.

This the opposition could never do. Hence, they never even ascertained whether or not they had a legal majority.

No matter from what angle one looks at the entire case, the defendants had no ground to stand on.

And, as is evident from the "Opinion" of judge Taylor, those of their witnesses that tried to corrupt the Church Order and to leave the impression that we were really a group of independent churches, simply made matters worse for themselves. A man like Kok was a very poor witness for their side. Nor did he, even for moment, deceive the court.

It stands to reason that the case of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids will have its repercussions for virtually all of our churches.

The entire opposition, both in Classis East and Classis West, will lose the name and the property.

This is particularly true of Second Church in Grand Rapids, as well as of Fourth Church; and it applies equally

to the churches in Holland and Kalamazoo. Of course, Fourth as well as Creston in Grand Rapids, still are in possession of their property, but if before they most probably had in mind to cast out the present occupants, now they have lost all hope.

But the same applies to the churches in Classis West.

The faithful members of Pella, Hull, Edgerton, Manhattan, Redlands, and the other churches of Classis West can make the same claim.

In this connection, I wish to quote a strange item from the Bulletin of the apostate group in Redlands, Cal., that are still occupying the property. It reads as follows:

"Word was received Thursday of the court decision regarding the properties (not including the School) of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich. The judges (judge's, H.H.) ruling was directed against the Rev. H. De Wolf and his consistory, primarily because the judge ruled that seeing the Classis East (under which First Church resorts) has by majority vote upheld the minority of the congregation under Rev. Hoeksema, and seeing the Classis is a higher authoritative body than the consistory, therefore the properties go to those favored by the Classis. If the judges (judge's, H.H.) ruling in this would be correct, then according to the same standard of judgment our churches in Classis West are safe in keeping their properties, seeing our Classis West supports our churches by overwhelming majority vote. But we will await developments, assured of God's unfailing love and care over us. We cannot conceive of christians deliberately violating God's Word as we read it in I Corinthians 6:1-6. 'Rest in the Lord with quiet trust. Wait patiently for Him. Though wickedness triumphant seem. Let not thy faith grow dim.' Psalter 100, vs. 4."

We shall refrain from commenting on this whole item in Redland's bulletin.

If Vermeer writes that he cannot conceive of Christians going to a worldly court, we, on our part, assure him that we cannot conceive how a man like him, in the light of his entire history, can still write so piously about resting in the Lord with quiet trust. To me that is a complete mystery, so much so that I cannot believe it. The state of resting in the Lord with quiet trust is to be reached only in the way of confessing our sins and receiving forgiveness. Remember this, Vermeer!

As far as his reference to I Cor. 6:1-6 is concerned, I would like to remind him:

a. That the opposition forced us out of the buildings and changed the locks.

b. That they never made any attempt to settle the matter out of court. When they claim they did (as I understand they now do), they simply tell a downright lie. I challenge them to prove the contrary.

c. That we made them a definite offer to divide the value of the property half and half. But to this they never gave us an answer.

d. That the Church Order demands that the consistory protect the property rights of the congregation if necessary through the worldly court. Art. 28.

But I would call special attention to the clause in this bulletin that claims that "our churches in Classis West are safe in keeping their properties, seeing our Classis West supports our churches by overwhelming majority vote."

This, of course, is a very serious error.

Let me explain.

1. By the present court decision it is established that the only legal consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church is the one of which the Revs. C. Hanko and H. Hoeksema are presidents and of which, at present, Mr. John M. Faber is clerk. They have the only right to the name Protestant Reformed.

2. According to the same court decision, the action of Classis East by which they received the delegates sent by the legal consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church, and approved of the deposition of De Wolf and his elders, is also approved.

3. The former Classis West publicly disapproved of this action (which, by the way, was none of their business) and openly claimed that only the consistory of which De Wolf is president is the legal consistory. This was not only an act of schism, but also this act of Classis West is, by implication, condemned by the present court decision.

4. Several consistories of the former Classis West condemned this act of schism and reorganized the original Classis West. They notified the Synod (the only legal synod) of the Protestant Reformed Churches to this effect, the Synod set its stamp of approval on this action and received delegates from the true and only Classis West. All this is, by implication, included in the present court decision.

I maintain, therefore, that the former Classis West has no ground to stand on, and that the courts will have to favor those on our side that will claim the name and the property.

It is true that the case is not finished.

Not only must the question concerning the property of the individual congregations be settled, perhaps even in the supreme courts, but it is not impossible that our synod will have to file a suit in court for the possession of their archives and properties.

But, in principle, the whole case is settled by the decision of Judge Taylor.

H.H.

P. S. In the meantime, I learned that the opposition has appealed to the supreme court. This means that we will have to wait another year for the final outcome of the case.

H.H.

Announcement

Creston Consistory announces the following trio — Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, Rev. G. Vanden Berg.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 44

Chapter 1

The Perfection of the Law Preached (cont'd)

Thus the apostle writes in I Cor. 6:9, 10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor *covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." The same we read in Eph. 5:5: "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." And the apostle admonishes the church at Colosse: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and *covetousness*, which is idolatry." And the Lord tells Ezekiel that a covetous heart is the reason why the people of Israel indeed listen to the word of the prophet as if they long for the Word of the Lord, but nevertheless hypocritically refuse to do it: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and as they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Ezek. 33:31. To one whose heart is full of covetousness, so that the Word of the gospel cannot strike root in it, the Lord Jesus refers in the parable of the sower, Matt. 13:22: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Covetousness is the sin of being rich in the things of this world, and not rich toward God, Luke 12:15, 21: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth . . . So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Moreover, according to Scripture, covetousness leads to many other sins, and is a root of all evil. Tim. 6:10.

The sin of covetousness is the desire to possess anything apart from God, against His will; anything that He does not give me and that evidently He does not want me to have. Moreover, in close connection with this, the sin of covetousness implies the longing for mere material things, apart and divorced from things spiritual. It implies that we set our hearts not on the things of the kingdom of God, not on

heavenly things, on things that are above, but on earthly things, on things that are below, on the things of this world. The tenth commandment expresses this by forbidding to covet anything that is our neighbor's — his house, his wife, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or ass, or anything else. Of course, that sin of covetousness, of desiring to have that which is my neighbor's, is to long for something that is contrary to the will of God. If there is anything which is in the possession of my neighbor, — whether I have something similar or not, that does not make any difference, — and I set my heart upon it, I commit the sin against the tenth commandment. If my neighbor possesses a house, I shall not covet it, whether I too have a house, or a house similar to his, or not. If my neighbor has a wife, I shall not covet her, whether I am married or single. Principally the sin of covetousness has nothing to do with the extent of my own possessions. It is not true that the poor covets that which the rich man has. By nature the rich man is just as covetous as the poor man. You have a strong example of this in Ahab's coveting the vineyard of Naboth. The poor man probably covets small things, because he is poor. And the rich man covets big things, because he is rich. But both are covetous by nature. If the sin of covetousness could be rooted out of society, most of our economic problems would be solved. Covetousness is the root of all the sinful unrest in society. The same is true of international life and relationships: if the sin of covetousness were not so deeply rooted in the heart of the depraved man, most wars, if not all, would be eliminated. Take covetousness away, and there would be no reason for men to fly at one another's throats, and you could hardly conceive of the possibility of war. Covetousness, in Scripture, is a root of all evil, — of malice and envy and hatred and enmity against one another, of adultery and uncleanness and all kinds of corruption. The reference is to this when the tenth commandment comes to us with the injunction, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." Thou shalt not for a moment put an object that is in the possession of thy neighbor before thy mind, to set thy heart on it and long to possess it. Positively, this means, of course, that the tenth commandment enjoins us to be content with what we have. Christian contentment is perfect satisfaction with what one has, for the sake of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and that too, in the midst of a corrupt and covetous world. It means that we hear and heed the injunction of Scripture when it tells us: "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Ps. 37:1-5. And again: "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." It means that we listen to and heed the admonition of the Lord Jesus which is joined with the injunction that we cannot serve God and Mammon: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It is the state of which the apostle Paul speaks in Philippians 4:11-13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Moreover, contentment, in opposition to covetousness, is, as already evident from all the passages of Scripture we just quoted, the Christian virtue and attitude whereby one seeks the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth. It is the spiritual state of him who hears and obeys the admonition of the apostle Paul in Col. 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." This also is implied in the injunction of the tenth commandment. I shall never set my heart on anything as an object of my desire that is merely earthy, and that has no connection with the kingdom of God, or stands opposed to it. I shall never long for any object that is merely temporal, divorced from things eternal. I shall set my heart on heavenly things, and seek the things

of the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all other things shall be added unto me.

But even this is not the final and the deepest meaning of the tenth commandment according to the Heidelberg Catechism. The commandment in its deepest and real sense means, thus the Catechism instructs us, that we shall never think, conceive, or imagine, or desire anything in the smallest degree, that is contrary to any of the commandments of God. Or, as the Catechism has it literally: "That even the smallest inclination or thought, contrary to any of God's commandments, never rise in our hearts." And, on the other hand, thus the Catechism instructs us, the tenth commandment requires that in our deepest heart we always and constantly assume the attitude of hatred over against all sin, and that we have a heart full of delight in all righteousness. The condition of our heart must be such that we can say with the psalmist of Psalm 19, vs. 8: "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Or with the psalmist of Ps. 119: "O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." vs. 97. It must be such, at least, that even in our imperfect state we can utter the prayer: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Ps. 19:14.

The meaning is plain. As always is the Word of God, so also the Heidelberg Catechism proceeds from the correct conception that no deed or work of man is good unless it is good from top to bottom, or from its root to its fruit. And any work of man is good in the sight of God only when it is perfect all the way from the heart to its outward manifestation. Unless this is true, no work of man can possibly be called good. A mere outward show of goodness while the heart is full of corruption is abominable in the sight of God. Just as, when you see a tree, you behold only that part of it which is above the surface of the ground, yet that which you see is not the whole tree; often there is just as much below the surface of the ground as that which is above, and that which is below the surface belongs very essentially to the tree;—the same is true with any deed or act of man. We see only part of it. We perceive it in the words of his mouth, in the activity of his body, and perhaps in the expression of his face. All this appears only above the surface. But that which is below the surface of the appearance belongs to the work or act or deed of man before God just as well as that which is above the surface. Below the outward appearance is the mind, the thought, the conception, the imagination in which the deed is conceived. Besides, below the surface of the appearance of the deed there is the will, the desire, the emotions, the inclination, the purpose and the motive of the deed. And back of it all lies the deepest heart of man. The heart in the Scriptural sense of the word is the spiritual, ethical center and source and root of all the deeds of man: "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A

good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." Lu. 6:42-45. And again: "And he said, That which cometh out of the man defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mk. 7:20-23. There is, therefore, a veritable life of man below the surface which is in itself invisible, but which belongs to the life of man before God just as really as that which appears. God does not look only upon the outward act, but upon the inward life, upon the heart of man.

And when this tenth commandment comes with the requirement. "Thou shalt not covet," it simply, according to the interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism takes hold of that part of our life that lies below the surface. It points to our thinking, our willing, our desiring, our inclination. It points to our deepest heart and requires of us: "Thou shalt be perfect, be perfect even as the Lord your God is perfect." And so the Heidelberg Catechism is undoubtedly correct in its interpretation. The tenth commandment covers really the whole of the law, in all its separate commandments. And it goes into our deepest heart. We shall not desire any other god, but love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. We shall not conceive or think or will or desire anything against any of the commandments of God. But we shall have our delight in the law of our God with our whole heart. Such is the meaning of the tenth commandment. Be ye therefore perfect, even as the Lord your God is perfect.

Chapter 2

The Imperfect Perfect Christian

We are not surprised that especially in connection with the tenth commandment the Heidelberg Catechism concludes the discussion of the law first of all with the question: "But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?" The whole law is perfect: as it is reflected in the tenth commandment it demands nothing less of the Christian than inward and outward perfection. And therefore, the question is quite proper, not whether man by nature, but whether the Christian can keep the law perfectly. That the natural man, apart from the grace of God, can keep the law perfectly is, of course, out of the question. A similar question was asked in the very beginning of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 2. There the question was whether man by nature can keep all the commandments of the law of God, expressed in the principle of the love of God and of the neighbor, perfectly. And there the answer was that this is absolutely impossible. The natural man stands opposed to the law with all his heart and mind and soul and strength.

And therefore the answer was: "In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." But that natural man was redeemed by the blood of Christ. Besides, he was delivered not only from the guilt, but also principally from the power of sin and death. He has a new life, and is sanctified in Christ. And now that Christian, so redeemed and sanctified, is confronted with the question whether he can keep the law of God perfectly. And the answer of the Catechism is two-fold. The first part is negative, and at the same time it gives the reason for this negative answer: "No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience." And the second part of the answer is positive: "Yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God."

Let us be sure that we understand this important question correctly. The question is not whether the Christian actually does keep the commandments of God perfectly, but whether he *can* do so. We often have an idea that the perfectionist teaches that the Christian actually does keep the law of God perfectly. But that is not his contention. And this is certainly not the meaning of Question 14 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Once, when I preached on this Lord's Day, I spoke, according to a stenographic record of the sermon, as follows:

"If we ask the question whether we do actually keep the law of God perfectly, we do not have to go very far, do we? Let us ask the question of ourselves as we are gathered here for public worship this morning. Suppose we would examine ourselves before the face of God, and ask the question: did we keep the law of God perfectly this morning, since we opened our eyes? One and all, you and I will have to answer undoubtedly: we did not. We do not even have to go as far back as the time when we first awoke this morning. Let us go back to the moment when we entered the church, when we began our worship. Was even our worship perfect? Did we keep the law of God perfectly while we sang and prayed, as we sat and listened to the reading of Holy Writ and to the perfect law? Was even that worship perfect? Was there since the beginning of our worship not the smallest thought in our mind contrary to the holiness of that worship? Is there anyone here that would dare to say *no* to that question? Was there since the beginning of our worship not the smallest inclination to sin? Is there anyone here that would dare to maintain that he could pass through one hour and a half of worship before the face of God without sin? My answer to that question is negative. And so is yours, if you only examine yourselves properly before the face of God. Perhaps you will say that there arose before your mind a sinful thought, but you suppressed it. There was in your soul a sinful inclination, but you put it down and fought against it. But even though this was the case, the sinful thought and the sinful inclination were there. They were before your mind and they were in your soul, were they not?"

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

17. When the poor and the needy seek water and there is none,
And their tongue is parched for thirst,
I the Lord will hear them,
18. I will open in elevated places rivers,
And in the midst of valleys fountains:
And I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
And the dry land springs of water.
19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the accasia tree.
And the myrtle and the wild olive;
And will set in the desert the fir tree,
And the elm and the box tree together:
20. That they may see, and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the Lord has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

The poor and needy are God's believing people and not the indigent in general. In our passage we see them in a parched and barren wilderness vainly seeking water. In their need they cry unto the Lord and He hears them by changing the wilderness into a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, and a land of abundant vegetation.

This wonderful work of the Lord reminds of His doing with regard to the people of Israel during the period of the wanderings. He fed them with manna from heaven and from the rocks of the desert fetched them streams of water that followed them on their journey (I Cor. 10:4). And so the Lord will again surely provide in all the needs of His people, the captives in Babylon, on their journey homeward. But the Lord did not again fetch them water out of the rock. They did not pass through wildernesses that for their benefit had been converted into gardens of delight by the power of their God. And so it is plain that the promise of our passage calls for a final and more comprehensive fulfilment. In the final instance it is a good tidings in earthy language of the complete salvation of God's people, first of His care of them as they pursue their way through the world, this wilderness of woe, to their eternal home, the Father's house. They seek water but there is none. Their tongue is parched with thirst. And their thirsting is after God. And He fetches them water out of the rock. And the rock is Christ. And they drink and are satisfied.

But this is not all. Through Christ He will purge and make new this sin cursed earth at His appearing and cause His poor and needy to appear in glory upon it. And their thirst after Him will be fully satisfied through their drinking from the rivers of grace that flow from the Throne. And they will see and know and consider and understand that it is all the Lord's work, the creation of the Holy One of Israel.

Also the wicked who perish in their sins shall see and know. In that day all idolatry shall cease also on the part of the reprobated. *Every* tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of the Father.

I am not indulging in unwarranted spiritualizing in explaining this passage as I do. The promise that God for the benefit of His people will convert the wilderness into a land of springs of water and abundant vegetation is not mere literary ornamentation. What disproves this is the affirmation of the prophet that God's people will understand that the hand of the Lord has done it. Being earthy men, the organs of revelation could not do otherwise but set forth the heavenly by earthy imagery. It was the only language they knew. It was the language that God in creating the earthy had prepared for Himself for communicating the thoughts of His heart to them.

The challenge to the idols, XLI:21-29.

21. Draw near and plead your cause, saith the Lord;
Bring forth your arguments, saith the king of Jacob.
22. Let them bring them forth and show us what will be.
Behold, let them show the first things, what they were,
That we may set our heart upon them and know their latter end;
Or declare us things to come.
23. Show the things that are to come hereafter,
That we may know that ye are gods.
Yea do good or do evil,
That we may be amazed and see together.
24. Lo, ye are worse than nothing.
An abomination is he that chooseth you.

In this section the prophet returns to the controversy between the Lord and the heathen and their idols (see vss. 1-7). The pretention of the idols is that they are gods. The Lord summons them to plead their cause, to produce their arguments, that is, to prove their pretention. Let them reveal the future, say what shall be. Doing that, they prove their divinity. For then they show that the destinies of things have been determined by them and that there is in them a will, a sovereignly determining will, according to the counsel of which they work all things. The mark of divinity is the ability not alone to foretell the event but also to determine it and to bring it to pass. The real proof of divinity is the latter two abilities. Just because the Lord determines and does all things, is He capable of foretelling the future? He delivers His people always in fulfilment of His promises. He is a God not only of words but also of action.

And, if they be gods, let them show the "first, beginning, original things." This is the proper meaning of the expression found in the original text. In our passage the term seems to denote the past in contrast to the future. The mandate seems to be that the idols give a correct analysis of the past in order that one may infer what the future shall be, that is, in the words of the text, in order that "we," the

Lord and His people, may set their hearts upon the event explained and interpreted and know the end thereof from its beginning. But the thought conveyed may also be that the idols point to definite events of the past that they had brought to pass in fulfilment of their prophecy regarding it. Doing that, the Lord and His people will know that they be gods. Yea, the prophet continues, let them do good or evil, that is, let them *do* something, whatever it may be. As it is, they do nothing. Yet they say, such is the contention of their worshippers, that they are gods. Words, prophecy alone prove nothing. There is much false prophecy. It does not come to pass. The idols must show that they are capable of action and of such action, of course, of which no mere human is capable. They must show that they are vested with a might to which there is no limit and that therefore they can foretell things of which only a being that is divine can have any knowledge.

Of course, the whole purpose of the prophet in thus mandating the idols is to make impressive the fact that they are worse than nothing and that therefore their worshippers are an abomination.

25. I have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall come;
From the rising of the sun he shall call upon my name,
And he shall come upon governors as upon mire,
And as the potter treadeth clay.
26. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?
And before time, that we may say, *He is righteous*?
Yea, there is none that revealeth, yea, there is none that causeth to hear,
Yea, there is none that heareth your words.
27. The first *to say* to Zion, behold, behold them!
And to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings I will give.
28. For I beheld and there was no man;
Even among them and there was no counsellor,
That, when I asked, they could return a word.
29. Behold, all of them are vanity;
Nothing are their works;
Wind and vanity are their molten images.

The idols cannot say what the future shall be, but the Lord produces a prophecy by proclaiming what He will do. He knows what will be because He brings it to pass; it is His doing. And the proof of the latter is that He foretold the thing. Also this prophecy is occupied with Cyrus; it repeats the former utterance, that the Lord has raised him up. Here it is stated that he comes from the north and from the rising of the sun, thus from the east. This is a detail that points to Cyrus. He came against Babylon as ruler of Media and Persia, the former of which lay north and the latter east of that city. He shall call upon the Lord's name. The fulfilment of this prophecy is the command of Cyrus that the temple of the Lord be rebuilt and its service re-established. It reads in part, "Thus saith Cyrus king of

Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem" (Ez. 1:2, 3).

It would be a mistake to conclude that Cyrus was a true worshipper of the Lord. He was not. But the Lord had bound the prophecies concerning him upon his heart. What must have impressed him is that his appearance in history had been foretold so long a time. It could not be ascribed to human foresight. God must have spoken. It was He by whom he was being mandated. Such seems to have been his belief. He may have prayed for the victories that were to be his. He was to press on irresistibly, treading upon the satraps of the Babylonian provinces as upon mire. The purpose of the prophecy is to bring out that the Lord, in contradistinction to the idols that are nothing, does great things. For Cyrus will be active as His agent. The Lord will raise him up. He, himself, declared that the Lord sent him, and his confession was that the Lord is God. Yet he was not a true believer. What activated him was a superstitious dread of the Almighty. The Lord put His fear in the conqueror's heart—a fear that as to its essence was hatred of God. It was as moved by this type of fear that the wicked king Ahab repented in dust and ashes and that the Pharaoh of the oppression went so far as to confess that the Lord is righteous and that he and his people were wicked. It shows how that also the hearts of wicked men are in God's hand.

Next the Lord poses the question, who among the idols hath declared. The forms of the verbs in the original text (the Hebrew participle) can better be rendered, Who among the idols is declaring, making known, speaking? Making known *what*? The prophet does not say. But it is plain that he means to be asking, Who among the idols is now foretelling the appearance of Cyrus that, so the prophet continues, we may know of the thing beforehand in order that we may say, He (the idol) is righteous, that is, that we may be able to say that this claim to divinity is not false pretention but morally right?

Of course, there is none of them that makes known, is causing to hear. There is none that hears them speak. All are silent. For they are less than nothing.

The first and only one to say to Zion, Behold, behold them! is the Lord. He alone can say what the future shall be, seeing that He is God and none else. Such is here the reasoning. Hence He gives to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings such as Isaiah. To Zion this messenger of good news is given and to none else. For Zion is the chosen of the Lord. And the good news is that the captivity of Zion shall be turned.

(Continued on page 191)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians 5:13-15

This passage in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians reads as follows: *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only (use) not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, (even) in this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that we be not consumed one of another."*

For a proper and correct understanding of this Scripture passage it is of the utmost importance that we understand the context in which these words were written and thus understand their proper background and limitation. It should be borne in mind that the great issue in this letter of Paul is whether works of law must be performed in order to be saved, or whether we are simply justified out of faith that is energized by love through the Holy Spirit. That is the issue. Paul takes the stand that it is "either-or." It cannot possibly be both by works of law and out of faith that we are justified. It is either grace, the free gift of God, or it is of merit of works. In the former we have boast with God, in the latter we boast in man's achievement and deny the very Cross of Christ! So serious is this matter. And well may we, therefore, beware! For, mark you well, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Grace and works will not be commingled. For if justification (the subjective entering into the Kingdom?) is by grace then it is no more of works, otherwise grace has become no longer grace! Grace has then been denatured into works! Romans 11:5.

Such is the serious departure from the grace in Christ implicit in this returning to the keeping of days, months, seasons and years, the return to weak and beggarly principles. Gal. 4:8-11. For if one must even as much as be circumcized in order to be saved, then one is a debtor to go all the way and keep the whole law. But such a return is fatal. Such a one is fallen from grace and from Him who called in the hope of the Gospel. Woe to one who returns to these weak and beggarly principles; principles which are weak because they have no power to make the dead sinner alive, and are beggarly because they cannot make the poor sinner rich with all the joys and graces of a free and good conscience whereby we fight against sin. Oh, the folly of it. For that is to become ensnared with a yoke of bondage once more. Then all the joy of salvation is gone. The quiet waters of joy and peace in the Cross become troubles with anxiety and stark despair! For everyone that is under law is under the curse!

Such is the context.

Paul, in this context, exhibits masterfully what our fathers so succinctly express in the Canons of Dort, V, 14—God *preserves, continues and perfects the work of grace* in us by the hearing and reading of His Word, by meditation

thereon, and by exhortation, threatenings and promises thereof, as well as by the use of the Sacraments!

This exhortation and warning cannot too seriously be taken to heart. For did not Jesus Himself warn His disciples against this "doctrine" of the Pharisees, speaking of it as the "leaven of the Pharisees," which corrupts all sound doctrine?

But Paul is not onesided!

Did I say "onesided?" Let us use that term guardedly and with discretion. The truth of the salvation by grace is not simply a "middle-in-the-road" position between Phariseism and Anti-nomism, between legalism and anti-legalism, so that he would become a semi-legalist!! No, the truth is that it is either the position of the true liberty in Christ or the bondage of sin under law in earnest, or walking in sin as a slave of sin! The position of salvation by faith alone is that of being a "new creature" where old things have passed away and all things have become new. In this "newness of life" there is place neither for legalism nor for anti-nomism! Both are out of the Evil one, setting on fire man's sinful passions out of hell, constituting total bondage!

It is good, therefore, to give account of this "lack of onesidedness" of Paul and listen to his warning against either form of bondage, whether this be legalism or antinomism!

This means that all of the exhortations, admonitions and threatenings are directed to the church on the basis of what she really possesses by faith in Christ. And these exhortations are preached to all from the viewpoint of the living Vine and branches. Thus it is here!

Hence, Paul's warning note to the Galatians: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only (use) not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

What does Paul have in mind when he speaks of using our "liberty" as an "occasion" to the flesh? We should know that the term in the Greek of which "occasion" is a translation into English means: 1. Properly: a place from which a movement or attack is made, a base of operations. Thus Thuloch writes "the Peloponnesians all withdrew and thus to have a *fit place of attack* (aph-ormee). 2. And thus figuratively it means: that by which endeavor is excited and from which it goes forth; that which gives occasion and supplies matter for an undertaking, the incentive; the resources we avail ourselves of in attempting or performing anything!

This is the sense of the term also in the New Testament Scriptures where it is a term peculiar to Paul among the New Testament writers.

In our liberty in Christ, unto which God has efficaciously and powerfully called us, there lies the real starting point of all "loving service toward our neighbor." We have been called unto good works of faith that worketh by love. Such a starting point of Christian conduct cannot possibly be found in the being "under law" of works. The law is the "starting point" of sin, working all manner of concupiscence

from a spiritual-psychological viewpoint. The law is the "power," the dynamic of sin. Not because the "law" is evil. It is, indeed, spiritual, good, holy and righteous. But it is "weak" to incite unto good works. Those, who are under the curse, cannot find any incentive anywhere to do good works, which are born only out of the expectation of the hope of righteousness. This hope of righteousness has in it the resources from which all good works spring forth as a spring-board in our soul!

Now the passionate exhortation of Paul comes to stand before us in bold relief, does it not?

Hear the earnest plea: only use not the liberty in Christ as the place of operation of the flesh! God forbid! O, the depths of iniquity in thus doing! O, the sorrow and contrition of the repenting saint for such conduct! Is there anything so abominable as this? Yes, and this is the abomination of iniquity that lies ready in our flesh to reveal its foulness at every moment. The heart of man is deep, yea, deadly it is, who can know it! And the child of God, who walks according to the Spirit, even as he lives by the Spirit, sighs and confesses: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me, then I shall be upright and free from the great transgression."

The Psalmist speaks here of the true "freedom," which does not want to be a servant of sin!

It is of this "liberty" that Paul here speaks in these verses. And this liberty is that we are free in serving God in a free and good conscience and manfully fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion as part in the New Covenant, the law written upon the tables of our heart! May this faith then be the spring-board, be the Spiritual resources of a godly walk at liberty!

These resources of a faith that is energized by love (verse 6) will surely never be lawless. The fact that we are not "under law" but rather "under grace" is such that by the law of the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" we do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And this walk, we repeat, is not the half-way position between legalism and antinomism, but it is wholly different. It is the manifestation of the New Testament in the latter days, which God made through the Spirit of the Risen Lord, shedding His Spirit abroad in our hearts, the pleroma of the law!

Of this "pleroma" of the law the apostle writes as to its manifestation in our lives in the church. The sons of Sarah, the Jerusalem in heaven, must have a corresponding walk, walking "even as in that Day." Love must be perfected in our lives, come to full fruition. That is only a reality when we do not serve sin, but when by love we serve one another. Such service is the service of a true and living faith. For the same love which prompts us to serve one another is the love that energizes our faith. Only where such love, energizing faith is, is there a service of one another. Justifying faith is therefore at once sanctifying faith. Only the *justified* saint will walk truly in sanctification. We must never say: justifi-

cation can be stressed too much as being *by faith*. We must not say: yes, but there must be works *too*, if we have in mind to place sanctification *next to* justification! But when we insist with Paul that there be works as manifestation of justifying faith, then, to be sure, we say "too" and "but"; however, then it is not placed overagainst our being "under grace" but it is then placed over against the "antinomian" as does James when he says that we are not justified by "faith alone."

In this passage Paul and James meet, or better stated: James speaks of the same aspect of faith in James 2 as does Paul in Galatians 5. James 2 presupposes Romans 5:1.

We should, therefore, use great discretion when we warn against saying there must be works "too!" Also we should be very careful that we do not say too little and therefore say too much, when we say: God elected us. Now do not say: But we *must believe*! It depends whether we are contending with the fathers of Dort or whether we are contending with that nefarious offshoot of the Reformation known as Anabaptism. In the case of the former we say: God elected and, *therefore*, we *believe* and are *admonished* to walk in this faith, which is energized by the love of the Holy Spirit. In the latter case we say, standing in this faith energized by love, having its fountain and cause in electing love: but there must be the works of faith too, lest we walk unworthily of the saints who are called unto spiritual-ethical freedom! Then we answer the antinomian.

Since a good part of our serving one another in love is the accurate instructing of one another and so keep and remove offense from out of the church of Christ I have delineated just a bit about these important distinctions.

The word of Paul is still true that if we bite and devour one another we should beware lest we consume one the other! That would be water on the mill of Satan. But such is not the law of faith which is energized by the Love of God shed abroad in our hearts. It is the principle of the Old Serpent the Dragon from the beginning! There is a famous story of two snakes that grabbed each other by the tail and each swallowed the other. Such is the case when we do not walk in the true and living faith which reveals itself in the pleroma of the law: love thy neighbor as thyself!

G.L.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland expresses sympathy for our brother Elder G. Van Baren and family in the death of his daughter,

MRS. G. VROOM

May the God of all grace comfort them with His Holy Spirit.

The Consistory:

L. Lanting, Vice President

N. T. Terpstra, Clerk.

IN HIS FEAR

The Gate Is Open

(Continued)

A change of mind is not necessarily sinful.

It can be sinful.

It can be the casting out of the truth in order to receive and embrace the lie.

But it can also be the casting out of the lie to receive and embrace the truth.

We were, therefore, at first encouraged and hopeful when we began to read the "fine" essay of Rev. Blankespoor which he delivered in Oskaloosa, Iowa and which was published in a recent copy of Concordia.

For he definitely changed his mind about the cause of the "split" in our churches. He changed his mind in the matter of only a few months. And he went from one extreme to the other.

In August he could with emphasis state in the Reformed Guardian, Vol. II, No. 3, that "First of all we must realize that our churches did not "split" on any doctrinal issues, that of conditions or any other point of doctrine, but solely on *church political issues*." (The italics are his.)

We told him in a recent Standard Bearer article that he was wrong. We showed with proof from several aspects how wrong he was.

He must have read that article.

And now, realizing that he was wrong and that he can never defend that position, having, undoubtedly also noted that several of his colleagues—thus Rev. Howerzyl in a Concordia article of recent date, Oct. 21, 1954—take another position, he has also changed his mind and agreed with them that it is fundamentally a doctrinal issue.

With a view to their ministers' conference Rev. Blankespoor drew up a paper in which he takes that opposite position that is fundamentally a doctrinal issue.

And in his title already he makes plain that he has changed his mind. For, in that Reformed Guardian article he told us what he thought was the *sole issue*. Emphatically he said that our churches "split" solely on church political issues.

Now with new light and to correct himself he prepares a paper to tell those who have followed him in this way of error what *really* happened in our churches. Thus what he wrote in August in that Reformed Guardian was not *really* the thing after all.

Plainly he had misled his followers when he convinced them to follow him and his colleagues because our churches "split" solely on a church political issue. Now he must tell them what *really* happened in our churches.

But he misleads again!

We are not going to duplicate the Rev. Schipper's article

on this "fine" essay of Rev. Blankespoor. We only intend to show, as we wrote before, that the gate is wide open. We did not expect this unsolicited help from Rev. Blankespoor when we began this series of articles. But he surely helps to make it plain to anyone who loves the Protestant Reformed truth that the gate is wide open.

He misleads in this "fine" essay and he confesses no sin in having misled in the past by taking the extremely opposite position that it was solely a church political issue. He deems it sufficient simply to tell his readers that now he is going to tell them what *really* happened. If they forget that he had said it was *solely* a church political issue, so much the better. Otherwise he can cover it up with that word "really."

We are grateful for the growing willingness of those that left us to admit that fundamentally it is a doctrinal issue, that there is a deep doctrinal difference between them and us.

We are grateful to God for this.

We are grateful because we believe that there are many people who still love the Protestant Reformed truth, the doctrinal position which we by God's grace have continued to maintain faithfully, and that these people have been deceived by all this misleading, distorted propaganda of "solely a church political issue," of Rev. De Boer's "a moral issue" and the brazen lie of today that we owe the Christian Reformed Churches an apology for our stand in re the authority of Classis and Synod in the court trial and that we deceived Judge Taylor into believing that our stand today is that which we did not believe in 1924.

We still maintain what we said at that time: Classis and Synod have no authority to *exercise the keys of the kingdom*. That belongs solely to the local consistory. And in 1924 it was the Classis that deposed and so set itself up to exercise the keys of the kingdom upon the Rev. Hoeksema and his Consistory. No such thing happened to Rev. De Wolf and his deposed elders. The Consistory suspended and deposed them, not the Classis. And the Classis in October simply recognized the suspension and exercised the authority which we never denied that the Classis possessed, namely the authority to set outside the denomination. Let anyone prove that Classis East did any more than that! And if they try, let them remember that before October comes September. It does! And in September a Classis that had no right to meddle with the case declared the Rev. Hoeksema and the Rev. Hanko and their elders and deacons to be outside the Protestant Reformed Churches. We, they claim, might not do that to Rev. De Wolf, but they had already in a schismatic way done it to the Rev. Hoeksema and the Rev. Hanko. We never denied that Classis and Synod have authority over the denominational life of the churches and that it is called upon to decide whether teachings are heretical or not.

But as we said, gradually now, and of late more rapidly than in the past, the truth comes to the fore, even though grudgingly admitted, that there is a fundamental doctrinal difference between us and those who left us.

Rev. Blankespoor is right that far.

But the doctrinal difference which he presents is so deceptively presented and so utterly wrong that it may not go unchallenged. He admits himself that it is a "tremendous accusation of those who no longer wished to live with us under one ecclesiastical roof." And he adds, "but that is my conviction, nevertheless."

What assurance can his followers have that he will not change his position once again? He has *that* conviction now. In August he had the very opposite conviction. Will he next month make another about-face? Can you depend upon the judgment and opinion of one who can make such contradictory stands in so short a time? Does he tell his followers this time what *really* happened in our churches?

Rev. Blankespoor we hope and pray that you will tell the whole world what really happened. We hope and pray that you will make one more about-face and that this time it is the correct one. In the mercy of Christ which constrains us in the love of God, the love of His Church, the love of His Truth and of His children we plead with you to consider what we write and not to harden yourself in a stand which can never receive God's blessing no matter—as Rev. Lubbers so beautifully put it—though you may have at the moment a "seeming success." Numbers and a following does not necessarily mean God's blessing. You must prove to the All-Seeing and All-Knowing God that this is true of us and not to man. You can never convince Him of that.

The awful indictment is: "On our part (He means their part) it was and is a sincere attempt to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God, as explained in our Three Forms of Unity." The italics are Rev. Blankespoor's.

The implication of this is that we do not sincerely try to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God. If you please, we do not even *try*! And there is part of the Word of God as explained in the Three Forms of Unity that we deliberately—because we do not sincerely attempt it—set aside and refuse to treat. What a "fine" essay that turned out to be. And Rev. Howerzyl is to be complimented on being able to attach that label of "fine" on a piece that attributes so much devilishness to us!

But let us examine the matter once. We do not sincerely attempt to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God? Let us ask once, what did we reject and what do they reject? We adopted the Declaration of Principles. They adopted the heresy of Rev. De Wolf. We rejected that heresy. They rejected the truth of the Declaration. To live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God, they say, you must preach Rev. De Wolf's statements. We say, you must preach according to the Declaration of Principles. We always maintained that the Declaration was an explanation of what the *whole* Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity declare concerning the covenant promises. Rev. Blankespoor says that the statements of Rev. De Wolf are the Word of God as explained in our Three Forms of Unity.

Rev. Blankespoor I'll never exchange with you those insults to the Living God which Rev. De Wolf deliberately

prepared in his opposition to the Declaration, I'll never by God's grace exchange our beautiful Declaration of Principles for them!

You see how wide the gate is!

To strive to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God as explained in the Three Forms of Unity you have to use Liberated terminology. You have to have a promise to everyone on the condition of faith; you have to have our works as prerequisites to the enjoying of God's works. O, we were in Chatham and in Hamilton! And there you heard that same strange sound. The walls of our denomination must not be so high that they keep out that heresy, for it belongs to an attempt to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God!

And I hear a refrain coming back and back, echoing out of the past. Listen! It sounds like the voice of Rev. Petter: "A full orb'd gospel! Conditions are needed, faith as a condition is needed for a full orb'd gospel."

An attempt, a sincere attempt to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God? Listen, Rev. Blankespoor! You tell us what there is in the Word of God that we do not and cannot and *will* not preach. I'll tell you what you cannot and do not preach and that shows that therefore you do not preach the *whole* Word of God!

Get on the pulpit Sunday. Tell your people that there is no promise to the reprobate; that God neither offers nor promises salvation to them, neither conditionally nor unconditionally. Tell them that Prof. Veenhof is heretical in his teachings when he speaks of a promise to *every* baptized child and that you will maintain with the *whole* Word of God that God's promises are for the elect only. Tell them, if you dare, and you have to in order to preach the *whole* Word of God, that Rev. De Wolf's first statement is literally heretical. If you do not do that YOU are not even attempting to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God as explained in the Three Forms of Unity.

Let us not have awful indictments without proof!

Tell us and prove it from all our writings and preaching that we are not sincerely attempting to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God.

Rev. Blankespoor, shall I publish a document you composed in regard to our calling to send our children to Protestant Reformed Christian Schools? YOU cannot publish that anymore. For you are not attempting to live out of and according to the *whole* Word of God as explained in the Three Forms of Unity. You wrote that document and sent it to the members of your congregation at a time when you were sincerely attempting to live out of and according to that *whole* Word of God. Would to God you had not changed and could publish that document yourself without blushing and without excuses.

Now you tell us what there is in the Word of God that we cannot and deliberately refuse to preach and maintain. Sustain what you yourself call a "tremendous accusation."

(Continued on page 184)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)
THE CHURCH

Continuing with Philip Schaff's description of Julian's ruthless attempt to destroy Christianity, we quote the following, Vol. III, 52, ff.

"This appears in his open partiality and injustice against the Christians. His liberal patronage of heathenism was in itself an injury to Christianity. Nothing gave him greater joy than an apostasy, and he held out the temptation of splendid reward; thus himself employing the impure means of proselyting, for which he reproached the Christians. Once he even advocated conversion by violent measures. While he called heathens to all the higher offices, and, in case of their palpable disobedience, inflicted very mild punishment, if any at all, the Christians came to be everywhere disregarded, and their complaints dismissed from the tribunal with a mocking reference to their Master's precept, to give their enemy their cloak also with their coat, and turn the other cheek to his blows. They were removed from military and civil office, deprived of all their former privileges, oppressed with taxes, and compelled to restore without indemnity the temple property, with all their own improvements on it, and to contribute to the support of the public idolatry. Upon occasion of a controversy between the Arians and the orthodox at Edessa, Julian confiscated the church property and distributed it among his soldiers, under the sarcastic pretence of facilitating the Christians' entrance into the kingdom of heaven, from which, according to the doctrine of their religion (compare Matt. 19:23, 24), riches might exclude them.

Equally unjust and tyrannical was the law, which placed all the state schools under the direction of heathens, and prohibited the Christians teaching the sciences and the arts. Julian would thus deny Christian youth the advantage of education, and compel them either to sink in ignorance and barbarism, or to imbibe with the study of the classics in the heathen schools the principle of idolatry. In his view the Hellenic writings, especially the works of the poets, were not only literary, but also religious documents to which the heathens had an exclusive claim, and he regarded Christianity irreconcilable with genuine human culture. The Galileans, says he in ridicule, should content themselves with expounding Matthew and Luke in their churches, instead of profaning the glorious Greek authors. For it is preposterous and ungrateful, that they should study the writings of the classics, and yet despise the gods, whom the authors revered; since the gods were in fact the authors and guides of the minds of a Homer, a Hesiod, a Demosthenes, a Thucydides, an Isocrates, and a Lysias, and these writers consecrated their works to Mercury or the muses. Hence, he hated

especially the learned church teachers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Apollinaris of Laodicea, who applied the classical culture to the refutation of heathenism and the defense of Christianity. To evade his interdict, the two Apollinaris produced with all haste Christian imitations of Homer, Pindar, Euripides, and Menander, which were considered by Sozomen equal to the originals, but soon passed into oblivion. Gregory also wrote the tragedy of "The Suffering Christ," and several hymns, which still exist. Thus these fathers bore witness to the indispensableness of classical literature for a higher Christian education, and the church has ever since maintained the same view.

Julian further sought to promote his cause by literary assaults upon the Christian religion; himself writing, shortly before his death, and in the midst of his preparations for the Persian campaign, a bitter work against it, of which we shall speak more fully in a subsequent section.

3. To the same hostile design against Christianity is to be referred the favor of Julian to its old hereditary enemy, Judaism.

The emperor, in an official document, affected reverence for that ancient popular religion, and sympathy with its adherents, praised their firmness under misfortune, and condemned their oppressors. He exempted the Jews from burdensome taxation, and encouraged them even to return to the holy land and to rebuild the temple on Moriah in its original splendor. He appropriated considerable sums to this object from the public treasury, intrusted his accomplished minister Alypius with the supervision of the building, and promised, if he should return victorious from the Persian War, to honor with his own presence the solemnities of reconsecration and the restoration of the Mosaic sacrificial worship.

His real purpose in this undertaking was certainly not to advance the Jewish religion; for in his work against the Christians he speaks with great contempt of the Old Testament, and ranks Moses and Solomon far below the pagan lawgivers and philosophers. His object in the rebuilding of the temple was rather, in the first place, to enhance the splendor of his reign, and thus gratify his personal vanity; and then most probably to put to shame the prophecy of Jesus respecting the destruction of the temple (which, however, was actually fulfilled three hundred years before once for all), to deprive the Christians of their most popular argument against the Jews, and to break the power of the new religion in Jerusalem.

The Jews now poured from east and west into the holy city of their fathers, which from the time of Hadrian they had been forbidden to visit, and entered with fanatical zeal upon the great national religious work, in hope of the speedy irruption of the Messianic reign and the fulfilment of all the prophecies. Women, we are told, brought their costly ornaments, turned them into silver shovels and spades, and carried even the earth and stones of the holy spot in their silken aprons. But the united power of heathen emperor and Jew-

ish nation was insufficient to restore a work which had been overthrown by the judgment of God. Repeated attempts at the building were utterly frustrated, as even a contemporary heathen historian of conceded credibility relates, by fiery eruptions from subterranean vaults; and, perhaps, as Christian writers add, by a violent whirlwind, lightning, earthquake, and miraculous signs, especially a luminous cross, in the heavens, so that the workmen either perished in the flames, or fled from the devoted spot in terror and despair. Thus, instead of depriving the Christians of a support of their faith, Julian only furnished them a new argument in the ruins of this fruitless labor.

The providential frustration of this project is a symbol of the whole reign of Julian, which soon afterward sank into an early grave. As Caesar he had conquered the barbarian enemies of the Roman empire in the West; and now he proposed, as ruler of the world, to humble its enemies in the East, and by the conquest of Persia to win the renown of a second Alexander. He proudly rejected all proposals of peace; crossed the Tigris at the head of an army of sixty-five thousand men, after wintering in Antioch, and after solemn consultation of the oracle; took several fortified towns in Mesopotamia; exposed himself to every hardship and peril of war; restored at the same time, wherever he could, the worship of the heathen gods; but brought the army into a most critical position, and, in an unimportant nocturnal skirmish, received from a hostile arrow a mortal wound. He died soon after, on the 27th of June, 363, in the thirty-second year of his life; according to heathen testimony, in the proud repose and dignity of a Stoic philosopher, conversing of the glory of the soul (the immortality of which, however, he considered at best an uncertain opinion); but according to later and somewhat doubtful Christian accounts, with the hopeless exclamation: "Galilean, thou hast conquered!" The parting address to his friends, which Ammianus puts into his mouth, is altogether characteristic. It reminds one of the last hours of Socrates, without the natural simplicity of the original, and with a strong admixture of self-complacency and theatrical affectation. His body was taken, at his own direction, to Tarsus, the birthplace of the apostle Paul, whom he hated more than any other apostle, and a monument was erected to him there, with a simple inscription, which calls him a good ruler and a brave warrior, but says nothing of his religion.

So he died, in the prime of life, a prince, who darkened his brilliant, military, executive, and literary talents, and a rare energy, by fanatical zeal for a false religion and opposition to the true; perverted them to a useless and wicked end; and earned, instead of immortal honor, the same of an unsuccessful apostate (the reader will understand that when Philip Schaff uses the word "immortal" in these writings, he is using it in the current sense of "endless," which is not the Scriptural significance of the term whatsoever; "immortality" in the Scriptures refers to the life of everlasting, heavenly perfection, and is therefore applicable only to the

Church of God and the work of salvation — H.V.). Had he lived longer, he would probably have plunged the empire into the sad distraction of a religious civil war. The Christians were generally expecting a bloody persecution in case of his successful return from the Persian war. We need, therefore, the less wonder that they abhorred his memory. At Antioch they celebrated his death by festal dances in the churches and theatres. Even the celebrated divine and orator, Gregory Nazianzen, compared him to Pharaoh, Ahab, and Nebuchadnezzar. It has been reserved for the more impartial historiography of modern times to do justice to his nobler qualities, and to endeavor to excuse, or at least to account for his utterly false position toward Christianity, by his perverted education, the despotism of his predecessor, and the imperfections of the church in his day (when Philip Schaff speaks in the foregoing of Julian's "nobler qualities" we may take that for what it is worth — H.V.).

With Julian himself fell also his artificial, galvanized heathenism, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving no wreck behind," save the great doctrine, that it is impossible to swim against the stream of history or to stop the progress of Christianity. The heathen philosophers and soothsayers, who had basked in his favor, fell back into obscurity. In the dispersion of their dream they found no comfort from their superstition. Libanius charges the guilt upon his own gods, who suffered Constantius to reign twenty years, and Julian hardly twenty months. But the Christians could learn from it, what Gregory Nazianzen had said in the beginning of this reign, that the church had far more to fear from enemies within, than from without."

This concludes our lengthy quotation from Philip Schaff in which he describes, vividly, the fanatical and desperate attempt of the able but also wicked Julian to destroy the religion of the Christ Whom he hated with all his heart and mind and soul. It was surely a desperate effort. But, of course, it was a hopeless effort. This effort of Julian marks the final attempt of heathenism to crush Christianity. However, as Gregory once wrote: the church has more to fear from enemies within than from enemies without. How true this is!

H.V.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 182)

Sustain it so that you can stand before God and assure Him that you are declaring what *really* happened in our churches.

J.A.H.

P. S. It is sinful for a church to go to the civil courts to get justice done, that is, it is sinful to go to a lower civil court. But it is not sinful for a church that the lower civil court has accused of unjust dealings to appeal to a higher court. Another example of the deceptive and misleading propaganda the engineers of the schism of 1953 present and then abandon without an apology or explanation.

How long will truly Protestant Reformed people let them pull the wool over their eyes?

J.A.H.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 15. What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election, is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own ways, at last for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger thereof.

The English translation of this article is inaccurate and rather weak. The first inaccuracy is found in the opening clause, which should read as follows (as the Dutch also renders it): "Moreover, the Holy Scripture especially illustrates and commends to us this eternal and free grace of our election, because it further testifies that not all men are elect, but that some certain ones are not elect, or in the eternal election of God passed by." The second inaccuracy is perhaps more serious, because it inserts the word "permitting," which does not at all occur in the original Latin version. Correctly translated, this part of the article reads as follows: "whom namely God out of his most free, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure decreed to relinquish (the Latin *relinquere* means "to leave," but also "to abandon, to forsake") in the common misery, into which they have by their own fault plunged themselves, and not to give them the grace of saving faith and conversion, but in their own ways, and under his just judgment having been left (abandoned, forsaken), finally not only on account of their unbelief, but also on account of all the rest of their sins, for the declaration of his own justice to damn and to punish them forever." This later correction we make for two reasons. In the first place, we want to remove the impression that the *Canons* here speak at all of a permission, or of a permissive will, of God. This is not the case. There is no

word in the entire article that could be rendered "permit." And in the second place, it may well be questioned whether the fathers had quite such a passive and weak view of the decree of reprobation as they are sometimes presented to have had. After all, both the terms "pass by" and "relinquish," whether the latter be understood in the sense of "leave" or in the sense of "abandon, forsake," have an active element which must not be ignored. And besides, the fathers speak here very definitely of an act of God in His unchangeable good pleasure whereby He *decreed*.

However, the seriousness of our first correction must also not be overlooked. First of all, there is an evident confusion of the language of the original which is plain when we compare the two versions. Our English rendering has: ". . . that not all, but some only are elected . . ." The original has: ". . . that not all men are elect, but some are not elect." The latter is quite different. The first version says nothing about those who are not elect, while the second version says definitely that they are not elect. In the second place,—and this is more serious,—the English version says something which cannot possibly have been in the minds of the fathers. It states that "others are passed by in the eternal decree." If we take this language at face value, it means that the eternal decree of God says nothing about the non-elect: the eternal decree simply passed them by. And then, of course, you have a contradiction in the article. For later the article definitely speaks of God's decretive act in respect to the non-elect, and it literally mentions the decree of reprobation. But let us understand what this erroneous translation implies. It means single predestination, that is, election without reprobation, instead of double predestination, that is, election and reprobation. And not only does the article itself contradict any notion of single predestination by its later statements. But the fathers make no such statement as our English version attributes to them. For the original has: "*sive in aeterna Dei electione praeteritos*," that is, "or in the eternal election of God passed by." Also this is rendered correctly in the Dutch. And this is surely a correction that should be officially made by the various English speaking Reformed denominations.

The above remarks, in connection with the suggested corrections, we make, not in order to deny that the *Canons* are definitely infralapsarian in their conception of God's decrees, and especially in their conception of reprobation. We freely grant that they are *infra*. And about this we will say more presently. But we want to insist that this infralapsarian conception also be correctly presented and understood, and not be so corrupted as to deny or leave the impression of denying that infralapsarianism maintains the absolute sovereignty of God both in election and reprobation. For also infralapsarianism, correctly understood, grants no quarter, and certainly no aid and comfort, to the Arminian enemy. Let us by all means understand this. It stands diametrically opposed to the Arminian presentation of reprobation,—so

opposed that no Arminian would ever subscribe to *Canons* I, Article 15.

In order to understand the teachings of this article, and to see that they are definitely anti-Arminian, it may be well to recall the Arminian view of reprobation, first of all.

Technically the Arminian does not deny reprobation. He cannot deny the term *reprobation*, although he does not like to use it. And he cannot deny that the Scriptures teach reprobation, because it is too plain that they do. And so, when the Arminian comes with the lie, he does not come "with the wooden shoes on." He must speak softly and deceitfully, must play with words, and wrest the Scriptures. Especially must he act thus when he wants to introduce his error among Reformed people. This is the policy followed already in the *Articles of the Remonstrance*. All mention of the terms *election*, *reprobation*, and *sovereign* is carefully avoided. The article speaks instead of "those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe," and of "the incorrigible and unbelieving." And it apparently makes a legitimate quotation of John 3:36 to support its teaching. In fact, it even makes a fine Reformed impression by speaking of God's "eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world." All this is carefully calculated to deceive the simple. If only the enemy had come out in the open with his iniquitous error, and had said: "God's election is based on foreseen faith and repentance; and His reprobation is based on foreseen incorrigibility and unbelief," then many a soul would not have been deceived. For indeed, such is the teaching of Arminianism. And therefore, while technically the Arminian does not deny reprobation, actually and essentially he does. For he denies that both election and reprobation are sovereign, having their source only in God's good pleasure; and he posits instead an election and reprobation based on foreseen faith and foreseen unbelief respectively. And the above policy, but also the above error, carry through in the rest of the Arminian teachings. They explain the fact that the Arminian teaches general atonement. They explain the fact that in Article 4 he teaches resistible grace. And they explain his veiled refusal to maintain the certain perseverance of the saints. The Arminian maintains that the cause of the decree of reprobation lies in man's refusal to accept divine grace, his refusal to believe, and his unfitness for glory. God has seen beforehand that the reprobate will not accept the offer of grace, and therefore they are reprobated. Even as election is for those of whom God saw beforehand that they would believe, so reprobation is for them of whom God sees beforehand that they will not believe. The decretive power is actually removed from the hand of God and placed in the hands of men.

Now what do the *Canons* teach over against this?

In the very opening clause of this article, when taken in the entire context of this First Head of Doctrine, they say something about the non-elect which no Arminian would ever say, namely, that they "are passed by in God's election."

Mark you well, it is not said that the non-elect are not concerned in God's eternal *decree*, that the *decree* says nothing about them, does not touch them. Then there would be no reprobation at all. And if there is no reprobation, then there is no election. But the fathers state that the non-elect are passed by in God's *election*. The decree of *election* says nothing about them. This indeed already implies sovereign reprobation. For bear in mind that when the term *election* is taken in its context in the *Canons*, it means: 1) an election "out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will;" 2) an election unto final salvation, and to all the blessings of grace necessary to reach that final salvation; 3) an election that is the one and only decree respecting all that shall be saved; 4) an election not founded upon foreseen faith, etc., as the pre-requisite, cause or condition upon which it depended; 5) an election that cannot be interrupted, changed, recalled, or annulled. That the non-elect are passed by in God's election, therefore, in the language of the *Canons* means that they are eternally, sovereignly, unchangeably, irrevocably, unconditionally passed by in the one and only decree of God both to grace and glory, to salvation and the way of salvation. This already shuts the door on all Arminianism.

But there is more. God's election is not His only decree. There is, positively speaking, also a decree of God that indeed concerns the non-elect, and that touches them in a most fearful manner. Note this: *God actually and actively decrees something of the non-elect*. And what is the contents of this decree, according to the fathers? The following: 1) God decreed to leave, abandon, them in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves. 2) God decreed not to give them saving faith and the grace of conversion. 3) God decreed to damn them and punish them forever. And mark well, the phrases, "not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins," do not modify the verb "hath decreed;" but they modify the infinitives "to damn and to punish."

This, then, is the content of the decree of reprobation.

And what, according to Article 15, are the attributes of this decree? The answer to this question settles the whole matter as far as the Arminian is concerned. For this decree of God proceeds "out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure." H.C.H.

MEMORY GEMS

"He shall be like a tree that grows
Set by the waterside,
Which in its season yields its fruit,
And green its leaves abide;

"And all he does shall prosper well.
The wicked are not so,
But are like chaff which by the wind
Is driven to and fro."

Psalms 1:3, 4

DECENCY and ORDER

Equality of Office-Bearers

"Among the ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office, and also in other matters as far as possible, according to the judgment of the consistory, and if necessary, of the classis; which equality shall also be maintained in the case of the elders and deacons." Art. 17, D.K.O.

Among office bearers in the church equality shall be maintained as far as possible. If the church in the world was perfectly free from sin and if the office bearers in the church would always conduct themselves according to the Word of God, it would be unnecessary to express a rule such as this. However, the reality in the church in the world is that there is still a great deal of the spirit of James and John found among the disciples of our Lord. Each seeks to be the greatest and the words of Christ, "But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant," are frequently forgotten. (Matt. 20:26, 27) Each one seeks too often the things of self instead of looking upon the things of others. (Phil. 2:4) Jealousies and envies which are rooted in the flesh are manifest among those who ought to co-labor together. It requires an abundance of grace always to maintain the Scriptural rule of equality. Without this order and decency cannot prevail in the congregation.

The first part of this article applies to the larger congregations which have more than one minister. This does not imply that equality is not also to be maintained among ministers, elders and deacons denominationally but only that this is not included in the scope of the present article. Articles 41 and 84 of the Church Order cover that matter. The present article has its origin in the Netherlands where, it must be remembered, it is not uncommon to find one church in the larger cities, governed by one consistory but having several ministers and church buildings. We have only one congregation that has more than one minister so that throughout our denomination the need and practice of this rule as applying to the ministers of the Word is hardly felt. We should not forget, however, that the article also speaks of the elders and deacons and this phase touches every congregation. This is a rule that everyone privileged to serve in those offices does well to constantly bear in mind. Doing this much offense will be removed from the church of Christ.

The occasion of the present article is an attempt to avoid the hierachical error of the church of Rome. In the Romish Church we find various ranks among the clergy which are arranged in an ascending scale from priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, to the office of the pope which is over all.

Each rank is higher than the preceeding and, consequently, vested with higher authority. There is no equality here. Also in the Lutheran Churches we find superintendents over the clergy. This, too, is one of the remnants of Roman Catholicism retained by that church. When, therefore, the Reformed Synod of Middelburg in 1581 considered the overture of delegates from Zeeland, East Vlaanders and England to appoint Inspectors or Superintendents to take oversight of the churches of their respective locality, the Synod declined to do so, considering this was an unnecessary and dangerous practice, and instead adopted the above cited article of our church order. In doing so they acted wisely and in accord with the expressions of several other Reformed Confessions and Church Orders. For example in the Second Helvetic Confession of 1562 we read: "To all ministers in one church is given one and the same authority and office." In the French Confession of Faith of 1559, which agrees with our own Belgic or Netherlands Confession, Art. 31, we read: "As for the ministers of God's Word, they have equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop, and the only head of the church." And the Scotch Church Order of 1581 states: „En om weg te nemen alle gelegenheid voor tirannie, wil Hij (Christus) dat zij zouden regeeren met wederzijdsche goedkeuring der broederen en gelijkheid van macht, alles in overeenstemming met hunne functies."

The article speaks first of equality with respect to the duties of the office. This is not the same as speaking of equality with respect to the person or gifts of the office bearers. A rule concerning the latter could not possibly be made. Each office bearer does not conduct himself in his office in the same manner so as to merit equality of honor and respect. Some are more zealous than others, more faithful in the performance of the duties that belong to the office, more devoted to their calling, more godly in their conversation. Others sometimes do things that cause them the loss of all respect. We do not refer to censurable sins that in themselves would deprive them of the office but rather of those things which in themselves are not transgressions but which, nevertheless, are not expected of the office bearer. A minister, for example, who spends half of the week on a golf-course or at the lake or sitting in front of the television set instead of performing the duties of his office cannot expect to receive the same respect of the people of God as one who labors faithfully in his calling. Nor can we speak of equality of gifts and talents. God has not made His servants thus. To one He gives more than to another. All do not have the same ability and no rule could possibly legislate that equality shall be maintained with respect to these.

With respect to the duties of the office, however, this rule must be applied. This means that in a congregation each elder and each deacon shall share equally the labors peculiar to their office. The mere fact that there may be one elder in a congregation who is especially gifted does not mean that he shall do all the work. And, when there is more than one

minister in a congregation the work shall also be equally distributed. One is not to do all the preaching and another all the sick visiting or catechetical work. Both shall do some of each. In as far as possible it shall be apportioned and divided equally.

There are also other matters concerning which equality is to be maintained that do not belong to the functions of the office as such. Such matters as vacations, salary, housing, etc. no doubt may be included in this category. This does not mean that each minister is to be paid exactly the same amount and that they are to live in identical houses but it does mean that there shall be no partiality shown by the consistory in dealing with these matters and each minister shall be treated fairly and honorably. It may appear superfluous to even mention these things as they are of irrelevant importance and, yet, it is because of the flesh that these things have in many instances become the occasion of jealousies causing no small trouble in the church. Things like these could create quite a disturbance in a consistory and even cause a marked division. If ever there is a place where these troubles are obnoxious it is in the church of Christ where it is expected that we live by the rule of faith and seek the things above where, Christ, our Lord, sits at the right hand of God. Fight the church must but then let her warfare always be spiritual and let her rise valiantly in defense of the Truth and let her never quibble about insignificant things.

The Consistory is the proper body that is to regulate these things and see that equality is maintained. Not to the ministers, nor to the congregation but to the ruling body of the church this function belongs. If agreement on certain matters cannot be reached in the consistory, the matter necessarily goes to the Classis. The Classis in that case has the authority to pass a judgment which then becomes binding. This is in accord with Art. 41 where the question is asked of each consistory: "Do you need the judgment and help of the Classis for the proper government of your church?" Suppose that there are two ministers in a congregation. The consistory fails to find a satisfactory way in which the labors are to be distributed between them. They request the Classis to express a judgment which it does. Do you suppose that the decision of the Classis is just some brotherly advice that may be accepted or rejected according to the desire of those involved or is it an authoritative judgment according to which the labors of the ministers involved are to be distributed? One feels the complete inability of a Classis to help in a situation such as this if its decisions are to be taken only advisedly.

Finally, the article says, "As far as possible." This phrase qualifies both "the duties of the office" and "the other matters." Dr Bouwman says, „Men kan het leven niet ophangen aan de letter van eene bepaling." You cannot suspend life on the letter of a rule. Life is broader than any set of rules and circumstances frequently not only allow for but even demand an exception. One minister may be advanced in years while another is at the prime of life. Common sense dictates that

the latter will carry a greater share of the work of the congregation. One elder may be in ill health, justifying his being released from a certain amount of labor that otherwise would be apportioned to him. If there is an occasion for several reading services in a church and there is one elder of exceptional reading ability, should not his services be sought for this work instead of having another elder do this who, in a stammering manner, would fail to edify the congregation? And so there is more. Rules of order are certainly necessary and will be most effective toward the maintenance of good order in the church when applied with wisdom and sanctified thinking.

G.v.d.B.

PRAYER ANSWERED BY CROSSES

I ask'd the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answer'd prayer:
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

I hop'd that in some favour'd hour,
At once He'd answer my request,
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in ev'ry part.

Yea, more, with His own hand he seem'd
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Cross'd all the fair designs I schem'd.
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this? I trembling cried,
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
" 'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"Those inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break the schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in me."

— John Newton

ALL AROUND US

What Really Happened In Our Churches.

Such was the subject of the essay delivered by the Rev. J. Blankespoor at a conference of schismatic ministers held recently in Oskaloosa, Ia., and occupying the editorial space of *Concordia* of December 2, 1954. In the last issue of the *Standard Bearer* we quoted the introduction to this essay and made a few remarks. However, due to the fact that our space was limited by the transcription of the decision of the Superior Court Judge, Honorable Thaddeus Taylor, of the case of First Protestant Reformed Church versus the De Wolf group, my article was cut short. I now wish to finish my remarks on the introduction and continue my quotation of Blankespoor's essay inserting here and there a few remarks of my own.

In reply to his introduction I offered five remarks. I was busy with the fourth which had to do with Blankespoor's insistence that the schismatics had "the majority of our people" with them, who also were ready for the split. I wrote as follows:

In the fourth place, Rev. Blankespoor talks about "the majority of our people" who were ready for the split. I am not going to dispute about numbers. This makes very little difference to me. A majority in respect to matters of doctrine is not always correct, and generally wrong. That's history. It may even be true that a majority of our people were ready to step out with the schismatics. That is nothing new either. And I may add that it was the secret hope of the schismatic leaders that they would take along with them the entire denomination. The Lord, however, spoiled their plans. He preserved His remnant. This He always does. No question about that. But if it is true that the majority were ready to go along with the schismatics, how is that to be explained? In his case it is fast becoming evident that many of them have been mis-led, they have been told the lie. Just as the essay of Rev. Blankespoor presents the matter, very piously they first created a dislike for the *Standard Bearer* so that people ceased to read it. They then came with a lot of talk about Hoeksema changing. They tried desperately to discredit him with talk that he is broken in mind and body, a man too old and set in his ways to change, a man who is seeking only himself at the expense of the church and the truth. All this talk of Blankespoor about how once these people almost worshipped the ground Hoeksema stood on, but now that they have their eyes opened they repudiate him, that is what changed the minds and attitudes of our people if they have changed. But I'm not so sure as Blankespoor that the majority of our people, even those in the west who have gone along with the schismatic leaders, would feel this way if they really knew the truth. In fact, I have objective reasons for believing that several are already getting their eyes open to what has been going on of late, and they are

going to come back to us in deep sorrow for having listened to these "ecumenically" minded leaders.

Finally, Rev. Blankespoor, in close connection with the foregoing, makes much of what the common people think. This is also a part of his deceptive strategy. He knows that people like to be catered to, to be acknowledged, even when they are wrong. The people who are not aware of his tactics and are gullible for this kind of talk, when they read his essay in *Concordia* are going to say, "Blankespoor is the man; he is so humble. Look how he recognizes us." They will forget, or remain ignorant of the fact that almost all that really happened in our churches began with and ended in their ministers and elders who have led them. To be sure the people are responsible for what their ministers do, especially when they are told what they did. But the heresy and schism did not begin with the "common people." It usually does not begin there. It began with and stayed with the leaders who succeeded in carrying along the people by confusing, mis-leading, deceiving, the majority of them. Of this I have no doubt. So Blankespoor must not say "we did not foster nor actually bring about a split. They became schismatic." Neither should he say that they, the leaders of their group, were guided to an extent by the will of the common people, who were so convinced of what was wrong in the Protestant Reformed Churches that they were ready for the split. This I could never believe!

Now let us attend to what Blankespoor has to say in answer to the question: "What then really happened and why did we (the schismatics — M.S.) follow this course?" Here is what Rev. Blankespoor writes:

"Let me first of all state what I do not consider to be the cause of the schism.

1. That the whole thing is *purely* a matter of personalities, and that our people no longer could possibly digest the behavior of some of them. No doubt this is true of some of them, but not of all our people, nor as I see it of the majority of them. No doubt with some of them there was a climax in 'bearing up' with personalities. In simple language they couldn't take it any longer. Others, however, and many of them, for the sake of the truth were able and willing to tolerate much more. I don't think that it ever is possible to say regarding a church difficulty that it exclusively is a matter of theology or exclusively a matter of personalities. It is most natural for everybody to project his personality into the foreground, to some extent, regardless how humble he may be. A church split brought about solely because of an unbearable attitude towards individuals to my mind is most deplorable and cannot receive the Lord's blessing.

2. Neither did the split come about because of a rejection of the denial of common grace, which of course is the reason for our existence since 1924. Of course, we all know that we are commonly accused of such things and much worse things. For such contentions the accusers surely have not been able to find any proof.

3. Neither do I think that the deepest cause of the split

is to be found in the fact that some of the leaders were too one-sided in their presentation of the truth. Again, this is how some of us view the matter, and perhaps not a few laymen. There was not enough emphasis on the matter of man's responsibility, they say. And a few went so far as to say that there was too much emphasis on God's sovereignty. Both evaluations of course are terrible, to say the least. Neither should we say that the preaching was unbalanced. I certainly think that Dr. Daane is right when he says that such terminology is improper. Never can we say too much that God is sovereign, and on the other hand we can never preach too much the responsibility of man and the Christian. Can one ever exhort too much, preach too often and too much too the saints living in this sinful world that they must serve God? Of course not. The proper thing to do is to show the relationship between these two important truths." So far Rev. Blankespoor.

I would call your attention to a few things in Blankespoor's negative answer to the question: What really happened in our churches?

In the first place, I am glad that Rev. Blankespoor denies that the cause of the schism "is *purely* a matter of personalities." And I believe him when he says "no doubt this is true of some of them, but not all our people, nor as I see it of the majority of them." Of course, the actual cause of the schism, as I will point out more particularly later, is the doctrinal issue involved. As far as we are concerned there was no other issue in our recent controversy. The sole issue was the two statements of the Rev. De Wolf and the doctrine they set forth. More of this later. But will the reader please notice the italicized word "purely" in the above quotation. Blankespoor meant thereby that it is his conviction that though the cause of the schism was not "purely" a matter of personalities, it nevertheless had much to do with molding the minds and hearts of the schismatics into wanting the split. He admits that, though it is most deplorable that churches should split on account of an unbearable attitude towards individuals, it nevertheless had much to do with their act of schism. He knew it was not right what many of his people and colleagues were doing and yet, like Eli, he allowed it all to go on, never protesting against it, and worse yet, almost patting them on the back for doing it. What we really have here is some more of his "pious" talk intended to set forth a pious principle, namely, that the matter of personalities should never be the cause of schism, while at the same time almost praising those who made personalities an issue.

In the second place, Rev. Blankespoor denies the cause of the split was due to the fact that he and his schismatic brethren repudiated their denial of common grace. He asserts that they have been accused of this but without any proof. Now it is deplorable that Blankespoor passes over this accusation with a mere shrug of his shoulder and makes no attempt to disprove it. A blanket denial is no proof. I would insist upon it that their doctrinal position implied and

maintained in the first statement of De Wolf is worse than the First Point of 1924. It not only teaches common grace, but developed the dogma further. This not only I but others of our ministers have often said. As Rev. Blankespoor and all who were formerly in Classis East well know, both the Revs. Vos and Hoeksema have publicly declared this on the floor of Classis. The Rev. Vos even wrote the statement on the blackboard to show up the fallacy of that first statement. He said "that God promises every one of you that if you believe you will be saved," is far worse than the First Point which said, 'God offers'. Blankespoor knows this full well, but he denies this without a ray of proof. Besides, the Rev. Daane, with whom Blankespoor agrees in another part of his essay, boldly declared in the Reformed Journal that the schismatics had taken a step in the direction of the Christian Reformed Churches. Blankespoor may deny this, but he knows this too. Until he shows us that this accusation is not true, I am continuing to accuse the schismatics of repudiating their denial of common grace, and I am going to continue to say that they walk in a worse error than the Christian Reformed Churches which embrace the error of common grace.

In the third place, what Rev. Blankespoor writes about his denial that the "*deepest* cause of the split is to be found in the fact that some of the leaders were too one-sided in their presentation of the truth" is perhaps the biggest humbug of all. Here is an example of some more double-talk. The double-talk consists in this that, on the one hand, he denies that the presentation of the truth on the part of some of the leaders was too one-sided, while on the other hand he and his colleagues are guilty of charging us with being one-sided. Did he not virtually do this, as I will comment later when I show how he charges us with being sectarian, or with "a tendency towards sectarianism." A sect, according to Blankespoor, in the first place, "denotes the action of taking or capturing a chosen course of thought or action. They always have a certain banner, motto, a pet notion or doctrine by which they swear, and this becomes their slogan." What this slogan is that we are supposed to have, he does not say, but he believes that we have one. And so we have here some of his double-talk. It is true that Blankespoor does not consider this the *deepest* cause of the split, but he must not leave the impression that he doesn't believe this to be the cause at all. And that is what he tries to do with his third negative point above. In plain words he says in the negative answer to the question: What really happened in our churches? that he does not believe we are a sect, but in the positive answer to the above question, to which I call attention next time, D.V., he does not hesitate to call us a sect or at least with tendencies toward sectarianism. Now just what do you mean, Rev. Blankespoor? Let's not beat about the bush. Say what you mean, and mean what you say! That is at least being honest.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

ARMINIANISM

In the statements of the Arminians man is always first and God always comes trailing behind to assist man by His grace to get to heaven.

1. Man's believing is the cause of his justification.
2. Our obeying Christ is the cause of Him giving us eternal life and that our obedience to Christ is the cause of Him becoming the author of eternal salvation to us.
3. God the Son, they tell us "hath redeemed us only on the condition of our concurrence and compliance."
4. Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of God.

PROTESTANT REFORMED

In the statements of the Protestants Reformed, God is always first and man is nothing.

1. Our Lord doth not say, "there are some things you can do without me." But "Without me ye can do nothing;" nothing good, nothing pleasing and acceptable unto God; whereas if we could either prepare ourselves to turn, or turn ourselves when prepared, we should do much.
2. But the Spirit tells us elsewhere "it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is He who first enables us to will what we ought to do, and then to do what we will. Both the grace we desire and our desire of grace proceeds from Him.
3. In the work of conversion and sanctification, all is to be ascribed to grace and nothing to human nature. The prophet Jeremiah saith: "Turn thou me and I shall be turned; heal thou me and I shall be healed." And therefore it is requisite in order to our conversion that the understanding be not only so enlightened as to discern the evil from the good; but that our wills be also so rectified as to prefer the good before the evil.
By this rectifying or bringing of the will into its right order again, its liberty is not destroyed, but healed: so that it is free, after, as well as before conversion; free to God and holiness, as it was before free only to sin and wickedness.

And this was not only the doctrine of the Rev. H. Hoeksema but also of the primitive church.

Thys Feenstra

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 178)

The Lord beheld (among the priests of the idols) and there was no man that could say, Behold them! no counsellor who could return a word when asked. For all are vanity. Their works are nothing and their gods wind.

The Servant of Jehovah, Chapter XLII:1, 2.

1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold;
Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;
2. I have put my Spirit upon him;
He shall bring forth right to the gentiles.

Who is meant by the "servant of the Lord?" The question is pertinent as the expression often occurs in the Bible. It is used to denote the saints in general, Ps. 35:23; men of God as Moses (Ex. 14:31), Joshua (Judges 2:8), Job (Job 1:8), David (Ps. 89:4) etc., and the prophets in general. In Isa. it denotes the true worshippers of the Lord, the people of Israel, and the prophets in general.

In the above and related prophecies the expression is understood in various ways. But the literal testimony of the New Testament Scriptures is, that the "servant of the Lord" of our prophecies in Christ. Matt. 12:15 sq., "And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, and charged that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Behold my servant whom I have chosen:

My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:" etc.

This witness is conclusive for faith. Many hold the view that the expression is used directly of some typical personage of Isaiah's day and only indirectly of the Messiah. Opinions differ regarding who the person directly indicated was. Some think of Uzziah or Hezekiah, others of Josiah, Jeremiah or Zerubbabel. But the view must be held untenable on the ground that the entire description of the "servant" of our prophecies is of such a character of some typical person. This will become plain as we proceed with our exposition.

In all there are five such prophecies regarding the "servant of the Lord." They are 42:1-7; 49:1-9a; 1:4-9; 52:13; 53:12. It is said that there is little if any connection between these prophecies and those surrounding them, and that therefore they cannot be of the same author. But this is a mistaken idea. The two series of prophecies do constitute a unity. In both occur the expression "servant of Jehovah," here for the Christ, there for His people, the true Israel for whom He laid down His life (Chap. 53), and who therefore are conformed according to His likeness.

Behold! my servant. It is the Lord speaking. The appellation "my servant" indicates the relation that the Messiah obtains to His Lord. In virtue of His having chosen Him, He is His servant. He thus has a task to perform given Him of His Lord, the triune Jehovah. And it shall be accomplished for the Lord upholds Him, is His strength.

The word in the original rendered *behold* is not a verb

but an exclamation here expressive of the infinite ardor of the Lord's love of His servant. His soul delights in Him, meaning that He loves him with all His heart. He puts His Spirit upon Him and thereby qualifies Him for His task, which is to bring forth right to the gentiles, — right, that is, the true knowledge of God, God as revealed in the face of Christ. He will bring it forth, publish that which hitherto was hid.

G.M.O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy with its fellow member, Mr. John Dykstra, in the loss of his sister,

MISS BETTY DYKSTRA

May the God of all grace bring this comfort to his heart that his loss here on earth is her heavenly gain and may we all set our hearts on wisdom's way and look for His coming.

Rev. J. A. Heys, President
G. Korhorn, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids hereby expresses sincere sympathy to elder John Dykstra in the sudden death of his daughter,

BETTIE DYKSTRA

Our prayer is that our Heavenly Father may comfort the bereaved with His all-sufficient grace.

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

IN MEMORIAM

May the God of all grace who is our fulness, comfort the bereaved in the death of

MRS. GEORGE VROOM

John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

Pvt. George Vroom
Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Van Baren
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Zandstra
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony De Young
Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Vroegh
Agnes Van Baren
Gertrude Van Baren
Gise Van Baren
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Hugen
Gilbert Van Baren, Jr.
Frank Van Baren
Anna Mae Van Baren

South Holland, Ill., December 23, 1954

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, hereby wishes to express sympathy to our fellow-members, Mrs. Gilbert Van Baren, Mrs. A. Zandstra, Mrs. A. De Young, and Mrs. S. Vroegh in the loss of

MRS. GEORGE VROOM

May the Lord comfort the bereaved with the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Mr. John Van Baren, President
Mrs. J. Van Baren, Secretary

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 18, 1954, our dear parents

WILLIAM JANSMA

and

ALICE JANSMA—VAN DYK

celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our God for having them spared for each other and for us, and we pray that God may bless them further in the way that lies ahead; and as the days approach when their earthly pilgrimage shall end, may they enjoy the peace which alone can be found in Him.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Tunis Jansma
Mr. and Mrs. James De Boer
Mr. and Mrs. Peter De Boer
William, Jr.
Barteld
and 3 grandchildren.

O GOD OF HOSTS, O GOD OF GRACE

O God of hosts, O God of grace
How lovely is Thy holy place,
How good and pleasant is Thy dwelling!
My thirsty soul longs earnestly,
Yea, fainst Thy holy courts to see
'Mid festal throngs and music swelling.
My heart and flesh cry out to God, . . .
To Him I spread my hands abroad.

The sparrow finds a house to rest,
The swallow deftly builds her nest,
And broods her young hard by Thine altar.
O Lord of hosts, my God, my King,
With all my soul to Thee I cling!
Hold Thou My hand, lest I should falter.
How blest are they that dwell with Thee! . . .
They praise Thy Name continually.

Psalms 84:1, 2