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MEDITATION

"Love Not The World"

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

John 2:15-17

My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not.

For God is a light, and in Him is no darkness at all. As such He has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus. And therefore, the children of God are children of the light, and are called to walk in the light. In the light alone can they have fellowship with one another. And in the light alone can they experience the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ. To walk in darkness, and to say that we have fellowship with the Father is the lie.

Therefore, sin not; for God, Whom ye call your Father, is a light in Whom is no darkness at all.

And therefore also: love not the world!

Ye, little children, whose sins are forgiven you for His name's sake

Ye, fathers, who have known Him that is from the beginning

Ye, young men, who have overcome the wicked one

Your calling with regard to the world is: love it not!

For if ye love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.

And: that world passeth away. And if ye love it, ye pass away with it.

Only he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Beware, therefore, lest ye love it!

* * *

What and where is that world which we must not love?

Surely, it is evident that the *world* does not merely consist of *men*, and that it is not *all men*. How shallow and un-

thinking, how "unscientific," is such a conception. For, first of all, the text does not even speak of men that are in the world, but of "the things that are in the world." And secondly, such a conception must give us a very strange and contradictory view of things. For if by *world* we must simply and in every case understand *all men*, then Scripture here calls us to hate the world which in John 3:16 it teaches us that God loves. And is it possible that our heavenly Father requires of us to hate that which He loves? Moreover, is it actually possible that when in John 3:16 we are told that God loved the world, that this means also that God loved the things of this world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? Still more: how is it possible that this world passes away? Is God's love changeable, perhaps? Or is the love of God, — the very thought of which is blasphemy, — impotent to save its object? Or can it be that when God's only begotten Son dies for the world, He dies in vain? Hence, it must be plain that we must read Scripture sensibly, and must carefully distinguish between its various uses of the term *world*.

And then it is clear that the world which we are not to love is an evil world, a world which is the object of the Father's displeasure, His consuming wrath, — so that it passes away, — and a world which must therefore also be the object of loathing, not love, on the part of us, who have the love of the Father in us.

World, whatever its connotation, denotes an organic whole, a unity, and orderly arrangement. It includes the whole of the earthly creation, with all that it contains, and in all its inter-relationships, with man at its head. And here, the "world" is obviously the fallen world, the world that is governed by the principle of sin, the world that is dominated by the principle of enmity against the living God. It is the world as it develops in the sphere of sin, as it is characterized by lust, and as it must inevitably pass away. It is the whole of reprobate, ungodly men, together with all the earthly creation. It implies all that is produced out of the earthly creation by way of the development and use of all earthly things in the service of sin throughout history. All its culture, all its intellectual and philosophical development, all its inventions, all its scientific productions, all its literature, its

music, its art, all its government and law and jurisprudence, all its economic and industrial productions, from the viewpoint of the spiritual, ethical fact that it all stands in the service of sin,—that is the world.

O yes, there is a certain beauty and harmony even about that world,—a beauty that is certainly appealing to the natural man.

For it is the harmony and unity of a fallen and depraved race of sinners. That harmony has its principle in this, that there is in that world perfect agreement to live in enmity against the living God, to employ all things in His creation *against* Him, not for Him. The fellowship of that world is the camaraderie of sin. Its beauty,—carnal, sensual,—is essentially the ugliness of that which is without true virtue. Its glory and splendor are as vain and ephemeral as itself,—and it is not abiding; it passes away!

For a brief moment that world seems to succeed. For, mark you well, it is out of this world that the power of antichrist rises. And as momentarily it dominates all of life,—religion, political affairs, society, economic affairs, labor and industry, trade and commerce, science and art,—it makes one grand concerted effort to dethrone the Almighty, exalt itself in the place of the Most High, destroy His church, persecute His saints, proclaim itself the savior of mankind, and reign supreme over all things, without God. And it shall deceive many!

But be not deceived! The world passes away . . . Love it not!

You are in that world. Wherever you turn, you come into contact with it. It streams in upon your consciousness, when you walk on the street, when you work in shop and office and factory, when you read your daily paper, when you turn on your radio. You see it in its lowest and most open forms in the movie and the dancehall and the gambling den and the houses of ill repute. But do not imagine that you can ever get away from that world. Even should you attempt to separate yourself locally from that world, you can never escape it until you die. For you even carry it about with you in your sinful nature, your "flesh."

* * *

That world you, child of the light, may not love. And the things that are in it must not be the object of your love.

Nay, heed not the deceptive philosophy that would teach you that it is your calling to improve that world as much as possible, that would lure you by means of the deceitful message that you must not always "withdraw," that you must offend as little as possible, that you must exercise a measure of "tolerance," that you must not only condemn the bad, but must also strive to bring improvement. Listen not to those who proclaim that there is much good in that world yet, and that it must be the aim of the Christian to bring out that good.

Scripture has but one word: Love it not!

Let there be no harmony, no agreement, no fellowship, no

bond between you and the world. Let no affection for, no attraction to that world be manifest in your walk, even while you are in the midst of it. Set not your heart upon it. Seek it not. Let not the world and the things that are in the world be the object of your striving.

Love it not!

That means not that you shall assume a neutral attitude toward that world. Such is impossible. Should you imagine to be neutral, you would actually fall into the sinful way of loving the world and its things. Your very nature is such that you must either love or hate. If you love the world, you do not hate it; and if you love it not, you must needs loathe it with all your heart. Spiritually at odds with that world you must stand. A fundamental disharmony between you and that world must be manifest in your walk and conversation. Avoid that world you must. To despise its things, to turn away from its attractions in spiritual nausea, to oppose that world with all your heart,—that is implied in your calling not to love it.

Never is your calling any different. Never is there any room for compromise. Always, unequivocally, and exclusively it is this: Love not the world!

* * *

For that world is full of lust . . .

And that lust is not of the Father, but is of the world!

How, then, can you, in whose heart the love of God has been shed abroad, love the world? Your heavenly Father does certainly not love it!

Sinful man, whose heart is filled with enmity against God, reacts upon the things which God has created, and he creates a world of lust,—the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. No, the lust is not merely in the men of the world. It is in the world. In this world we are surrounded by lusts, objective lusts, all of which appeal to our old nature. For man, as he hates God, as he seeks not God, as he has not the love of God in his heart, refuses his calling to serve the Lord of heaven and earth. Instead, with all the natural light which he has retained after his fall he reacts upon the earthly creation in enmity. He seeks himself. And he uses all things in God's creation, not in the service of the Creator, but in the service of the creature. He desires the world not as a means whereby He may glorify the Most High; but he desires the world as an end in itself, for his own pleasure, for his own enrichment, for his own praise. And thus, reacting in sin upon all that God has made, he creates a whole world full of lust. He besmears everything he touches with his sinful and rebellious hands. And he subjects all to the service of sin.

The result is a world full of lusts. There is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the so-called lower desires,—gluttony, drunkenness, immorality. Man refuses to eat and to drink, to marry and to be given in marriage, as the servant of God. He says: "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." And he creates a world of things that appeal to

those lusts. The result is: the lust of the flesh. His higher senses are also dominated by the power of sin. And to satisfy the carnal desires of his eyes he creates a world of lust in the sphere of art and culture, painting, drama, music, philosophy, literature, science, — all to satisfy his sinful desires. And the object in life that he sets up as the goal of all things is man, the glory and praise of mere man. He seeks himself. He glorifies his own life, pure earthly "animal" life. He seeks the honor of man. He wants to be seen and praised of man. And that is the pride, or vainglory, of life!

And that is "all."

Nothing more will you ever find in the world. No tiny ray of goodness, no fruit of "common grace" will you discover. Nothing but lust, lust, lust . . .

And it is all of the world. There is nothing of your heavenly Father in it. It is all godless, instead of godly. If you seek it, you love what is of the world, not what proceeds from the Father. And if you love what is of the world, you love the world, not the Father. Exactly so exclusive is the love of God!

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him . . .

You, then, who are Father's children, Who are the objects of His love from eternity, who have had that love lavished upon you in Christ, and who have that love shed abroad in your hearts, — the love that is divine, the love that is the bond of *perfectness*, — love not the world. For the love of the Father does in every respect exclude the love of the world; and the love of the world excludes the love of the Father. It is either . . . or!

* * *

And remember this too: that world passeth away. It is on the way to utter destruction. Nothing of all its accomplishments shall be left. And he whose love is set on that world goes to destruction with it. He is one with that world, — one in sin. And he must be destroyed with it.

But he that doeth God's will abideth forever!

Such an one belongs not to the world, but to the work of God's grace in the midst of the world. He has been delivered from the world, from sin, from death. He has been rescued out of the power of darkness. He has been in principle transformed into a child of the Father. The love of the Father is in him. And therefore he loves the Father's will. And loving Father's will, he does it also in principle.

He belongs, therefore, not to the stage, not to the scaffolding, to that which shall be destroyed when Father's work is finished in history. But he belongs to the work itself!

And Father's work abideth forever!

And he with it . . .

Glory to His name!

H.C.H.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

"Love not the World . . . 337
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

EDITORIALS —

Schism in History (II) . . . 340
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Triple Knowledge (Part III — Of Thankfulness) . . . 342
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS —

The prophecy of Malachi . . . 344

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of John 3:14-16 (Cont.) . . . 347
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

Interesting and Revealing . . . 349
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments . . . 351
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht (Art. 17) . . . 353
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

Student-Peaching (Concluded) . . . 355
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

FEATURE ARTICLE —

Principles of Christian Giving to the Offering in the Churches . . . 357
Rev. J. McCollam

CONTRIBUTIONS —

Brethren, let us speak the truth . . . 359
Cecil Vander Molen

EDITORIALS

Schism in History

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

II.

The rest of the quotations which candidate Harbach sent to us all deal with the Arminian controversy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Here is the first:

"On the subject of Predestination, there came an open rupture between him (Arminius) and Gomar. An attempt had been made to resolve this division into a mere matter of jealousy on the part of Gomar, and that the latter regarded Arminius as seeking to usurp authority over him. That Arminius may have sought to weaken the authority of Gomar is more than possible, seeing the definite stand which Gomar made for Calvinistic teaching, but the issues lay far deeper than mere petty jealousy . . . The cry of jealousy is ever the usual one in all such cases, especially from the lips of those who are the partisans of the real offender. The real issue in this case did not center in any real or fancied affront to the dignity of Gomar, but lay in the duplicity which had been practised by Arminius, his breach of the pledges which he had given and the heretical teachings which he was promulgating . . ." (*Calvinism*, by B. A. Warburton, in chap. 3, *Arminius and the Synod of Dordt*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1955)

This last is, undoubtedly, true though, of course, Arminian writers will deny this.

For me it is not difficult to understand that a man like Gomar could not get along with Arminius as his colleague at the University of Leyden. Nor must this be attributed to personal jealousy on the part of Gomar as is often alleged. On the contrary, the cause must much rather be sought in the sneaky methods of Arminius who, in different ways, sought to introduce his heterodox views, well aware that they departed from the views of the Reformed Church, and attempted to inculcate them into his students. He did so by lecturing on the New Testament which was not his proper field but that of Gomar. And he did so by inviting students to his home and by privately influencing them in favor of his heterodox view of predestination as opposed to the doctrine of the church. It was such methods that provoked Gomar and set him against Arminius, not because of personal jealousy, but because he felt and had reason to feel that he could not trust his fellow professor and that the latter was secretly corrupting the truth.

Duplicity and secrecy always characterize the methods of those that intend to spread doctrines within the church of which they know that they are heterodox.

Also in this respect history repeated itself in the recent history of our Protestant Reformed Churches.

Witness the report of DeJong and Kok in the Netherlands according to the now notorious letter of Professor Holwerda.

Witness the fact that those that departed from us, by hook and by crook, in speech and in writing, tried to introduce the conditional theology of the Liberated, and to undermine the Declaration of Principles.

Witness the fact they advised many of our people not to read the *Standard Bearer* anymore.

I could mention more, but let this be sufficient. Such are not the methods of those that are convinced that they are fighting for the truth, confessed by the churches to which they belong, but of heretics.

The quotations continue:

"In this posture of affairs, several of the magistrates of Leyden urged Arminius to hold a conference with his colleagues in the University, before the Classis, respecting those doctrines to which he had objections, that the extent of his objections might be known. But this he declined. In the same manner he treated one proposal after another, for private explanation; for calling a national Synod to consider the matter; or for any method whatever of bringing the affair to a regular ecclesiastical decision. Now a Classis, then a Synod, and at other times secular men attempted to move in the case; but Arminius was never ready, and always had insurmountable objections to every method proposed for explanation or adjustment. It was evident that he wished to gain time; to put off any decisive action in the case, until he should have such an opportunity of influencing the minds of the leading secular men of the country as eventually to prepare them to take side with himself. Thus he went on evading, postponing, concealing, shrinking from every inquiry, and endeavoring secretly to throw every possible degree of odium on the orthodox doctrines, hoping that, by suitable management, their advocates . . . might be gradually diminished, so as to give him a good chance of a majority in any Synod which might eventually be called.

"This is a painful narrative. It betrays a want of candour and integrity on the part of a man otherwise respectable, which it affords no gratification even to an adversary to record. It may be truly said, however, to be the stereotyped history of the commencement of every heresy which has arisen in the Christian church. When heresy rises in an evangelical body, it is never frank and open. It always begins by skulking, and assuming a disguise. Its advocates, when together, boast of great improvements, and congratulate one another on having gone greatly beyond the 'old dead orthodoxy,' and on having left behind many of its antiquated errors: but when taxed with deviations from the received faith,

they complain of the unreasonableness of their accusers, as they 'differ from it *only in words*.' This has been the standing course of errorists ever since the apostolic age. They are almost never honest and candid as a party, until they gain strength enough to be sure of some degree of popularity. Thus it was with Arius in the fourth century, with Pelagius in the fifth, with Arminius and his companions in the seventeenth, with Armyrout and his associates in France soon afterwards, and with the Unitarians in Massachusetts, toward the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. They denied their real tenets, evaded examination or inquiry, declaimed against their accusers as merciless bigots and heresy-hunters, and strove as long as they could to appear to agree with the most orthodox of their neighbors; until the time came when, partly from inability any longer to cover up their sentiments, and partly because they felt strong enough to come out, they at length avowed their real opinions." (*Synod of Dordt*, by Rev. Thos. Scott, D.D., from *Introductory Essay* by Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D., pp. 12-13, Presbyterian Bd. of Pub., Phila., 1841)

Yes, indeed, heretics for evermore conceal their real views as much as possible, stalling for time until they can hope to have a majority in the church of which they are members.

In the meantime, they like to camouflage the truth and to use all kinds of ambiguous terms, so that if they are challenged they can explain them in a Reformed sense, though they certainly do not to convey by them the sound Reformed truth.

Thus, for instance, in Feb. 1604, Arminius, when his orthodoxy was questioned, offered the following definition of predestination: "Divine predestination is the decree of God in Christ by which He has decreed with himself from eternity to justify, adopt, and gift with eternal life, to the praise of his glorious grace, the faithful whom He has decreed to gift with faith. On the other hand, reprobation is the decree of the anger or severe will of God, by which He has determined from eternity, for the purpose of showing his anger and power, to condemn to eternal death, as placed out of union with Christ, the unbelieving who, by their own fault and just judgment of God, are not to believe."

At first sight, one wonders that a man of keen intellect and learning, as Arminius undoubtedly was, can make such a bungling definition of predestination. It is neither *supra*-nor *infralapsarian*.

But when one looks at this definition a little more closely, one soon discovers that is not lack of learning or even of logic that characterizes the definition but intended ambiguity.

Who are the objects of God's election, according to this definition? The faithful. Hence, Reformed scholars would accuse Arminius of teaching election on foreseen faith.

But, if he were thus accused, he would, undoubtedly reply: "But I teach that faith is a gift of God." Thus the definition could work both ways, although he meant to convey

the thought of election on the ground of foreseen faith.

The definition of reprobation is, if anything, still worse from the viewpoint of ambiguity. In apparently very strong terms Arminius describes the decree of reprobation. He speaks of it as the decree of God's anger or severe will, of His determination from eternity to condemn to eternal death, and that, too, for the purpose to show his power and anger. But, in the meantime, the objects of this decree of reprobation are not all men outside of the elect, but the unbelieving, who, by their own fault and by the just judgment of God, are not to believe. Hence, not sovereign reprobation, which Arminius wished, by all means, to avoid, but reprobation on the basis of foreseen unbelief.

Indeed, even this meaning he tries to camouflage. Does he not say that the reprobate are *placed* out of union with Christ? Does he not plainly declare that, in God's just judgment they *are not to believe*?

Yes, but even this definition of reprobation is neither *supra* nor *infra*. It intends to teach that God rejected men from eternity only because He saw that they would not believe in Christ.

The same ambiguity characterizes the language of those who, in the Reformed, really want to deny God's sovereign decree of predestination.

Think of 1924 and the "Three Points."

In the preaching of the gospel, God is not gracious to the elect alone but to all that hear the gospel preached. On the part of God, the gospel is a well-meaning offer to all. In other words, He would have all men to be saved.

Or think of the many preachers in the Reformed churches that hardly ever mention the doctrine of election, still less of reprobation. For whom the truth of predestination is a dead doctrine; certainly not the heart of the church.

Or again, think of the preaching that was heard in our own Protestant Reformed churches, by those that apostatized, though they still try to sail under the name of Protestant Reformed.

God promises to every one of the hearers that they shall be saved, if they believe. A general promise on condition of faith! Yet, this plain and outright Arminianism was supposed to be Protestant Reformed!

O, yes, in a way, even this language was meant to be ambiguous. It was not a promise for all, but only for those that believe. And is not faith a gift of God? And is it not, therefore, after all for the elect that the promise is meant?

Indeed, the language is ambiguous.

Nevertheless, the express purpose of this kind of preaching was to contradict the Declaration of Principles, adopted by the Protestant Reformed Churches, and to proclaim a conditional promise to all the hearers. And a conditional promise depends on the acceptance of those that hear, ultimately on the free will of man even though he receive the faith from God.

I have one more quotation.

But this must wait till the next issue.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 46

Chapter I

Addressing God as our Father

Also in the many prayers that are found in the Psalms we find that God is usually addressed as Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth and the God of His people Israel, that will surely save them. In the vision of Isaiah 6 we find that the seraphims are chiefly impressed by the holiness and glory of the Lord God. For they cover their faces and their feet, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." When the apostles Peter and John were released from their captivity by the Sanhedrin, and return to their own company, the church of Christ lifted up their voice in adoration and thanksgiving, and evidently addressed Him as the Lord, Who is sovereign over all the kings of the earth, and Who executes His own counsel not only in spite of them, but even through them. Cf. Acts 4:24-30. And the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4 cast down their crowns before the throne of God and worship Him, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And the great multitude in heaven, standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, cried with a loud voice: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And the angels at the same time, standing round about the throne, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, "Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever. Amen." Particular circumstances, therefore, under which we pray, the peculiar state of our mind and heart when we pray, and the specific consciousness of the needs we wish to present before the Most High often cause us to think of God particularly in the light of one or more of His infinite and marvellous virtues, whether it be His sovereignty or His omnipotence, His forgiving grace or His abundant mercy. And we address Him accordingly.

Nevertheless, in the first place, these glorious virtues of God are all very really implied in the simple address of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father Which art in heaven." And secondly, this address is certainly fundamental, and the attitude presupposed by it is surely indispensable to all true prayer. For if we cannot or dare not address God as "Our

Father," we cannot approach Him at all. And secondly, if we cannot add "Who art in heaven," we make Him like unto us, drag Him down from His excellency, and pray to an idol. As long as we must cry unto Him from the darkness of our present death, as long as we have not entered into the heavenly glory, we will never find an address to our prayers that is more perfect and all-comprehensive in its simplicity than that of the Lord's Prayer, acknowledging as it does at the same time the excellency of His majesty while bringing Him very near unto us in His everlasting love and mercy.

The Lord Jesus teaches us in this prayer to address God as "Our Father."

What does this mean?

Let us ask, first of all: to whom are these words addressed? The answer must be, of course, to the Triune God, the one adorable Being of infinite perfections, Who is One in Essence, yet Three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. By calling upon God as our Father, we do not address Him as the First Person of the Holy Trinity, but as the one God subsisting in threeness of Persons. This Triune God is the Father of creation, Who of nothing made heaven and earth. The same Triune God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, Who was delivered for our transgressions and raised for our justification, and is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. And again, this same Triune God is our Father for Christ's sake only. It is true that we call upon Him as our Father through Jesus Christ His Son, and that it is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit that we can cry, "Abba, Father." Nevertheless, through the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of Christ, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of God and man, we address not the First Person of the Holy Trinity, but the Triune God when we say, "Our Father Who art in heaven." In Trinity the First Person is Father of the Son in the Spirit. But in relation to us the Triune God is our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord and by the operation of the Spirit of Christ, Which He has given unto Him and unto us.

But what does it mean that we call Him our Father?

It surely expresses that He made us His children. And this is a profound mystery. Surely, you can teach the smallest child to address God in the words, "Our Father Who art in heaven." Yet, the depth of truth expressed in these words is not readily fathomed. For it implies nothing less than that the infinite, glorious, adorable God, Who is the implication of all infinite perfections, Who is a light in Whom there is no darkness at all, so made us, so formed us, that there is in us an affinity and likeness to the divine nature. As the apostle Peter expresses it in I Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." It also means that on the basis of this likeness and this affinity, there is a communion of life and a communion of love between God and us. It signifies that He made us after the

image of His eternal Son, so that in a creaturely measure we resemble Him and reflect His virtues, the virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. It means that there is between Him and us the living bond of love and fellowship, so that we can know Him and trust in Him and believe that He will give us every good thing, and that we delight in seeking His glory and walking in humble obedience to Him in the way of His precepts. It means, finally, that we have received the right of children, the right to be called by His name, to claim His care, and to dwell in His house for ever. It means that we have the right to the eternal inheritance of glory which He prepared for all them that love Him. All this is implied in the relationship between God and us that is expressed in the words, "Our Father."

We must not overlook the fact that here we have not the expression of a mere doctrine of the Fatherhood of God or of the Fatherhood of God in Christ Jesus. Nor are we discussing the Law of God, that demands that we love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. But this is a prayer. It presupposes, therefore, that in these two words he who prays and thus addresses God is conscious of this relationship and confesses all that is implied in it. He is consciously assured of his privilege to be called a son of God, and feels in his heart that God is not ashamed to be called his Father, and that He will not reject or repudiate him. He is confident that he may approach God, that he may expect all good things from Him, that he may dwell in the sanctuary of the Most High. He is conscious of the fact that God has made him a reflection of His own virtues, and that there is in his deepest heart a desire to be pleasing to Him Whom he calls his Father: to be righteous, as He is righteous; holy, as He is holy; and to keep all His good commandments. He trusts that God loves him, and that He will surely give him all things necessary for soul and body, and in the end, eternal life in God's own tabernacle forever. It is in that spiritual disposition of humble obedience, of filial love, and of childlike confidence that we approach the Most High in His sanctuary when we begin our prayers with the simple, but profound address: "Our Father."

The question must be asked: how is it possible that we can call God our Father? What right can we possibly have to call Him thus? How can we have the assurance in our hearts that we are His children? Whence is the confidence whereby we cry to Him, "Abba, Father?"

We certainly cannot possibly have that right by nature.

Many a modernist speaks of the universal Fatherhood of God, and of the universal brotherhood of man, as if nothing happened to destroy that relationship since God created us after His own image. God, so they claim, is the Father of all men. And all men are children of God by virtue of their creation. Man was made after God's image. That is the excellency of man above every other creature. That is his real worth. On this fact of man's creation after the image of God modern man bases his right to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, his right too to enter

into the sanctuary of God and to address Him in the words, "Our Father."

This modern philosophy, however, completely ignores the tremendous and terrible fact and reality of sin and death. It is true indeed that God is our Creator. It is true too that in creating us He made us after His own image, in true knowledge of Him, righteousness, and holiness. By virtue of this image of God in him, Adam was indeed the son of God. Cf. Luke 3:38. But no longer is it possible to call upon God as our Father on the basis of that original relationship. For by the fall and disobedience of the one man, Adam, we lost all the rights and privileges of sons. We became aliens and strangers. We were expelled from Father's house. The image of God was subverted into the very image of the devil, and we are by nature children of wrath. Thus the Lord spoke to the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem in John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." And the apostle Paul writes in Eph. 2:2, 3: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh (fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others." This means that of ourselves, by nature, we have no right, neither are we spiritually capable to utter the first words of the Lord's Prayer in spirit and in truth, and that modern philosophy of a universal Fatherhood of God, which would place the address of this prayer upon the lips of every naked sinner, without Christ, is sheer presumption, provocative of the fierce anger of the Lord. Would not even a mere sinful man be provoked to wrath and indignation if a person from the lowest strata of society, notorious as a public enemy number one, would spread the story everywhere that he was his father? How abominable, then, in the sight of God must be the pride and presumption of the naked sinner, who walks in darkness and loves iniquity, who reflects the image of his father the devil, and who nevertheless insists that he may take the son's prayer upon his lips and call upon the Holy One as his Father?

The address of the Lord's Prayer, therefore, does not refer to the Fatherhood of God in creation, but to that far richer and deeper Fatherhood which He revealed and realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We can distinguish between our legal and our spiritual, ethical sonship of God.

The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has adopted us, who were not His children, and has conferred upon us all the legal rights of sons. That is, first of all, the confession of him that humbly enters into the sanctuary of God, crying, "Abba, Father." When he prays, and in his prayer addresses God as his Father, he thereby consciously and humbly confesses that of himself he has no right whatsoever to be called the son of God.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Malachi

V. The sinful withholding of tithes and offerings. 3:6-12.

8. *Will a man rob God? For ye have robbed me. Yet ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*

9. *With a curse are ye cursed, for me have ye robbed, this whole nation.*

10. *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be provision in my house, and prove me in this, saith Jehovah of hosts, if not I will open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

11. *And I will rebuke for your sake the devourer, and not shall he destroy to you the fruit of the ground, neither shall be unfruitful to you the vine of the field, saith the Lord of hosts.*

12. *And shall pronounce you blessed all nations; for you shall be a land of delight, saith Jehovah of hosts.*

....8....*Will a man rob God?* — that is what they do. *Yet ye say, wherein have we robbed thee?* — They refute the charge and demand an explanation. *In tithes and in offerings.* — These they withhold and thereby they defraud Jehovah. The last word means literally heave offerings. Here it denotes all the offerings specified by the law. How the fraud was perpetrated is stated in 1:6-14. The ordinance of the tithes is contained in Deut. 14:22ff.; Lev. 27:30ff.; Num. 18:21ff. Offerings and tithes were the only means of support for priests and Levites. Some portions of the tithes they may have been giving, but they were cutting down on the proper percentage. 9. *With a curse are ye cursed.* Jehovah has already shown that He is angry with them, but still they continue in their sinful way. How the curse operates is not stated, but verses 10-12 imply that it causes scanty harvests, drought and perhaps a plague of locusts. And the curse comes upon the whole nation, because the whole nation is guilty. 10. *Bring ye the whole tithes* — All the tithes. The emphasis rests on *all*. Defrauding Jehovah must cease.

That they commit a great sin is plain from what the Israelite must declare while he still stands before Jehovah's face with his offerings. It is this:

A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous.

And the Egyptians evil treated us, and afflicted us with hard bondage.

And we cried unto the Lord of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice and looked upon our afflictions, and our labour and our oppression.

And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a migh-

ty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders, and brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord hath given me

Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swearest to our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey (Deut. 26:5-15).

Withholding the firstfruits and the tithes was a denial of the truths set forth in this word. It was a repudiation of Jehovah as Israel's Saviour and King. Only the Israelite who denied his stewardship and thus exalted himself in his mind to the position of absolute owner of God's things would withhold the tithes. Such a one showed by his action that he refused to be with his possessions in the service of Jehovah as the sheep of His pasture. For the tithes and the firstfruits represented by divine ordinance the entire harvest. We may add that tithing was a symbolical-typical institution; it belonged to the things that waxed old and vanished away. It is no longer compulsory as was then the case. The will of God for us is: "Give as the Lord hath blessed thee," that may be placing one under the obligation of giving more than the tenths.

That there may be food in my house — That there might be provision for God's altars and for the ministers of the sanctuary. *Prove me* — Whether or not for Christ's sake Jehovah prospers the penitent, the people that fear Him and keep His covenant. *If I will not open to you the windows of heaven* — Such will find that in the way of repentance blessings will come like a pouring rain however ill-deserving they may be apart from Christ. *There will not be room enough* — There shall be superabundance. According to the context the prophet has in mind rain in season and plentiful harvest. Such material blessings were sent to the true Israel of that day as a token of Jehovah's love of them, it being the dispensation of shadows. The seasonal rains by which Canaan was changed into a land flowing with milk and honey during Israel's residence in it was a wonder of grace. *And I will rebuke* — The rebuke of Jehovah will make an end of the devourer, the locust, so-called because of his destructiveness. *For your sakes* — The penitent, the true Israel. The impenitent evildoers must be excluded. For they shall be destroyed when Jehovah comes in judgment, 3:6-12. *Your vine shall not cast her fruit in the field* — Shall not fall from the vine before it ripens. *Shall call you blessed* — The prosperity of God's people will be so remarkable that all nations will call them blessed. Thereby also they will express their approval. *A delightful land* — A land where joy and blessedness reigns supreme.

We must hear the law in this connection. Lev. 18:5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them." Deut. 27:26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of the law to do

them." Let us take notice, "which if a man do he shall live in or by them," that is, in the statutes and judgments of the law. That man lived not in Christ but in the commandment as did Adam in the state of integrity. Paul quotes both these passages, the first to describe the righteousness of the law in contradistinction to the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 10:5), and to show that, since all men are totally depraved, no man is justified by the law in the sight of God (Gal. 3:2), and the second to show that accordingly as many as are of the works of the law—as many as vainly imagine that they keep the law—are under its curse (Gal. 3:10). And so it is. For the law demands a *perfect* obedience and it curses the man that does not fulfil this requirement.

It must not be imagined therefore that in admonishing this ill-deserving post-exilic community to bring into the house of the Lord the tithes, the prophet was telling them that their only hope lay in their fulfilling the requirements of the law. For then he would have been telling them that their case was utterly hopeless and would have been putting the period here. Then his message to them would have been one solely of despair. For with the exception of a few, the whole people was guilty of withholding the tithes. But even the most holy among them was in the service of God only in principle. They, too, were sinful men by themselves under the curse. Though true children of God, they were still continually sinning. And so the prophet's admonition to the effect that they cease cutting down on the proper percentage of their tithes was a call to repentance. It was, rightly considered, and exhortation that the offenders, cursed of the law, confess and forsake their abominations and cast themselves upon the mercy of Jehovah to be assured of Him that for Christ's sake, by whom all the requirements of the law were to be fulfilled, they were forgiven and delivered from His wrath. To preach repentance in the true sense is to preach Christ. And that is what the prophet (prophets) was doing always, as truly as let us say Paul. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of Hosts" (3:7). "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (3:6). This is Gospel, isn't it. The prophet was no more of a legalist than Paul was a legalist.

The elect by the grace of God did repent. And by faith they kept the commandments of God in principle. That was their privilege, chosen as they were in Christ unto life in glory. And the Lord did open to them the windows of heaven and poured out blessings for Christ's sake, and in token that they were the object of His favor. And at His second coming they shall appear with Him in glory on the new earth. Certainly at no time in Israel's history was the Lord sending rain in season and giving abundant harvest because His people were fulfilling the requirements of the law. He blessed them always solely for Christ's sake.

VI. A new vindication of Jehovah's justice, 3:13, 4:3.

13. *Strong against me have been your words, said Jehovah. Yet ye say, what have we spoken against thee?*

14. *Ye have said, It is vain to serve Gods and what gain is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked in black before Jehovah of hosts?*

15. *And now we call happy the proud; yea, are built the workers of wickedness yea, they that tempt God are delivered.*

Strong . . . your words—Their words are hard, severe, wicked. They contain an accusation that brings Jehovah under a cloud. *Yet you say*—In lodging his charge the prophet again speaks in general terms. And so his hearers request that he be specific. He tells them what they have been saying. *Serve God . . . kept his ordinance . . . walked in black*—They claim that they serve God, do what the law requires of them, fast and clothe themselves in sackcloth in token of their contrition of heart. But they argue, if they have done this, they should flourish, be built and delivered. As it is, it goes evilly with them. This is not explicitly stated, but it is implied in their complaint. But the point to their argument is not primarily that they do not prosper nor even that they suffer affliction; what especially perplexes them is that at the same time the wicked live in ease and prosperity. *The proud*—According to the context definitely the arrogant persons within the Jewish community. There is no fear of God in their hearts. Asaph (Ps. 73) describes these persons. They set their mouth against Heaven, and their tongue walks through the earth. *The workers of iniquity*—Those that oppress the hireling, widows and orphans. *They that tempt God are delivered*—They that challenge God by their wickedness are helped of Him out of their difficulties. And they are built and whatsoever they do prospers.

It is this that makes it seem to the complainers that it is utterly vain, senseless, to serve God.

Can this be the doing of a just and righteous God? They were the sceptics in the community. The prophet excludes them from the class of Godfearing persons that he next addresses. Yet they were not committing the unpardonable sin so that they could not be brought to repentance. For the God fearing Asaph of Ps. 73 fell into the same skepticism. Yet there was a difference. From fear that he would be offending against the generation of God's true children Asaph kept his thoughts to himself. Moreover he went with his perplexities into the sanctuary of God where all was made plain. But these sceptics did not go into the sanctuary of God but instead they gave public expression to their unbelief. It seems to have been a topic of daily conversation with them. What it indicates is a malicious spirit rather than honest doubt. They hated God and therefore made far too much of the inequalities of which they complained. It is not invariably true that the wicked prosper in this life. It was not invariably true then. To say that it was is to make the same mistake that the three friends of Job made.

16. *Then spake they that feared Jehovah each to his companion: and listened the Lord and heard, and was written a book of remembrance before him that feared the Lord and thought upon his name.*

17. *And they shall be for me, said Jehovah of hosts, for the day in which I shall act, a peculiar possession; and I will pity them, as pities a man his son the one that serves him.*

18. *Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not.*

Chapter 4

1. *For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and shall be all the proud and all that do wickedly for stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall not leave them either root or branch.*

2. *But shall rise unto you that fear my name the sun of righteousness and with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and thrive as calves in the stall.*

3. *And ye shall tread down the wicked; and they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I act, said Jehovah of hosts.*

Then (vs. 16) — When the sceptics were giving expression to their doubts. *They that feared Jehovah* — The true people of God within the community. They had passed through the same perplexities but their faith had not faltered but had continued to blossom. *They spake each to his companion* — Daily they sought out each other. It is not stated what they said. But that can be easily conjectured seeing that in such circumstances the conversations of the faithful always run in the same well-known channel. They spake words of exhortation, consolation and encouragement. They told each other that sometime Jehovah, breaking His silence and making an end of His inactivity, would manifest His righteousness in the punishment of the wicked and in the rewarding of the just. They thought upon His name, His revelation of self through all His marvelous works of the past. They declared His praises and their soul waited upon His salvation. *And listened the Lord and heard* — He was attentive to their conversations. *And was written a book of remembrance* — So pleased is He with them — they are His workmanship — that their names are written in His book. According to another figure (Isa. 49:16) expressive of the same idea, they are always before Him as engraved on the palms of His hands. *For the day on which I shall act* (vs. 17) — When He shall come in judgment, these faithful ones shall be for Him a peculiar possession. He will not destroy them with the wicked. *And will pity them* — In His pity He will spare them and give them life in glory. *As pitieth a man his son the one that serves him* — This pity is a creaturely reflection of the Lord's pity of them that fear Him. *Then shall ye return and discern* (vs. 18) — Indicated is the sceptics. In the day of reckoning they shall return. They shall cease accusing Jehovah of injustice then when they see the wicked destroyed and the faithful exalted. Then they shall be compelled openly to discern between him that serves

God and him that serves Him not. For in that day it will be so obvious who the wicked are and who the righteous that every excuse for being confused and maliciously accusing Jehovah of injustice in His dealings with His moral creatures will be gone.

It is doubtful whether this return of the sceptics must be construed as a true conversion. For it takes place in the judgment day when every tongue shall be justifying God including the tongues of the wicked who perish in their sins. It would seem therefore that these sceptics must be comprehended in the class of godless in the community that did not come to repentance. Supporting this view is the fact that they are excluded from the class of Godfearing persons.

Chapter 4:1. *For* — connects these verses (1-3) with 3:18. The sceptics shall discern because of the doings of Jehovah set forth in these verses. *The day that cometh, that shall burn as an oven* — The manifestation of Jehovah's fierce anger on that day shall be like a fire that burns in a furnace; it consumes everything combustible such as stubble. *All that do wickedly* — though they now prosper, on that day they shall be for stubble; they shall be burnt up by Jehovah's anger root and branch.

The sun of righteousness — This is a title that must be applied directly to Christ, because then only does it take on for us a real meaning. He is the Sun. The sun of our earthly creation is His symbol. The virtue of its light reflects in a creaturely way the goodness of His light. The healing power of His light, here compared to wings, is marvelous. It causes the dead to live, the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the lame to leap. It dispels all the gloom of the weary night of sin and transforms the wilderness into a garden of delight. It fills those in whose heart it shines with peace and makes them to shout with joy.

Such is the virtue of His light the reason being that He, the Christ, is the Sun of *righteousness*. Implied is the following. 1. He loved righteousness and practiced it. He knew no sin. There was no deceit found in His mouth. It was His meet and drink to do the will of His Father. 2. He fulfilled for His own all righteousness and bore their curse as activated by a pure love. 3. And He gives life and righteousness not alone but He is our sanctification, justification and redemption forever. Believing in Him we have life. And in the final judgment He shall again rise unto them that fear His name. And the result will be that they shall rise from their graves unto life in glory. In the imagery of our text, they shall go forth and thrive as calves in the stall.

And they shall tread down the wicked (vs. 3) — Not apart from Christ but through Him their head and glorified Lord in whom they are forever grafted by a faith living and indestructible because He prays for them and with whom therefore they reign. *For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in that day* — Their victory over the adversary will be that complete and absolute.

(Continued on page 356)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of John 3:14-16

(Continued)

May we, and all, who formulated the letter of "testimony" to Classis East, put off the shoes from our feet and submit our every thought to the instruction of Christ as this was given to a "teacher in Israel," Nicodemus. That is, indeed, salutary and sobering, leading to the true sobriety which can compare spiritual things with spiritual. I Cor. 2:13.

Then may we notice particularly that in this entire section, the verses 3-21, our Lord unfolds to us the entire Mystery of godliness that is great. This Mystery is that only reborn men and women, those born from above, can see the Kingdom of heaven. Says Jesus "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born from above he cannot see the Kingdom of heaven." It is a question of having an entire new birth in our hearts, our will and mind. All the hatred and rebellion must be taken out of us and new life must be infused into our mind and will. It is wholly the Wonder of grace. Man must be *saved*. And Jesus came exactly to save His people from their sins; He is an entire and a complete Savior. Either He saves alone and completely or He is no Savior at all.

Such is the teaching of Jesus. And all, who would maintain and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, will here with bowed head and holy adoration say: Amen! O, some may with Nicodemus say: How can these things be? I venture that even some "leaders in Israel" may ask this question of Nicodemus, or at least ought to ask this question so seriously and fundamentally that they study this question to salvation and to the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And from this latter group I shall not count myself exempt. It is with this sobering reality in mind that I have set myself to this study.

Notice, then, how Jesus teaches that the birth from our parents out of Adam profits nothing. The flesh profits nothing. It is the Spirit that giveth life. We must be born out of water and Spirit, that is, out of the Spirit of the Christ, who shall be lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Num. 21:8, 9. That birth alone makes our seeing the Kingdom and our entering into it a reality. By that birth from above this seeing of the Kingdom is made a reality, *it is brought about*.

Notice too that the subject Jesus is here discussing is not simply the fact of the Cross in history, but he looks at the Cross as *the realization of our new birth in Christ*. John 3:3-21 is really speaking about *applied* salvation, Soteriology, and not simply about what Christ did *for* us on the Cross. No, Jesus is speaking of this salvation as it is such a reality in our heart, in our mind and will, that we are indeed the

possessors of everlasting life! The *point of departure* in the Argument, here is *regeneration, faith, and not the Cross*.

Hence, we have a very marked duty to perform. In this study we must point out that John 3:16 is not a mere aphorism, a little text of Scripture into which we may place our own meaning, as do the Arminians and all, who teach the "free-will" of man. For them John 3:14-16 simply teaches that God in Christ made salvation "possible" and that now it is up to man whether he will believe in this "offered" Christ. And they can do this only by placing this text in their own context and by pulling it brutally and unbelievably out of the context in which Jesus Himself placed it. Such "study" of Scripture is indicative of neither faith nor godliness. It is a denial of the "testimony" of Jesus and the Word of His patience! For they will say: Christ made salvation *possible* for all, but a *reality* only for those who shall believe. Here the distinction between meriting of salvation and the application of the same is employed to deceive the innocent. In this category of thought one will surely wish to preach everywhere: God promises every one of you, that, if you believe you shall be saved! And such Arminians will surely insist that such is the "face value," the simplicity of the Scriptures here, and insinuate that, they, who will to read this text in the light of Jesus' entire discourse to Nicodemus, will not receive Scripture at "face value," but are making a simple thing so complex and involved that "only the elite" and those that study "Thayer's Lexicon" (Dictionary) can understand such an involved Gospel. Forsooth, only the so-called "face-value" of the text is the "simple Gospel."

But we shall, however, cling to the aged old and tried rule of sound exegesis that Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. That is the *analogia fide*, the analogy of the word of faith.

Applied here we will then see that John 3:14-16 is Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' question as to how this new birth by the Holy Spirit, Who blows sovereignly and powerfully where He desires, is realized. He receives an answer to the question how such a profound and glorious reality can be realized, come to pass (*genesthai*) under heaven. It is, indeed, a strange matter that a "teacher in Israel" does not understand these things. And, yet, we should realize that relatively this is true with the best of us, and absolutely this is true with those who pervert this Scripture to their own destruction as they do with all the Scriptures! That our birth in Christ is a matter of sovereign grace, a matter in which we do not cooperate in the least, nor that it is simply a matter of *our believing* with *aiding* grace, is certainly a truth that we must so thoroughly understand and confess that we never let go of it, but keep it in our hearts as a cherished gem, a matter for which we will sell our all to keep it. For only thus do we see the kingdom of God, and only thus do we give indication that we ourselves are born from above and give God, our Father, all the glory in His church, world without end!

This is the matter in which Nicodemus is here instructed.

He asks: How are these things able to realized? How can one elect child be born again? How will this be realized in the 144,000 out of every tongue, tribe, people and nation? That is, indeed, the "face value" of the text, as is evident for all who are not blind with the blindness of unbelief. All who have eyes to see the Kingdom of heaven and its glory will know that the subject here is: how can a man be born again, one man or thousands upon thousands, who shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb!

I repeat: the subject here is not how did Christ make salvation "possible," but that it is most emphatically as to how, *according to the will and love of God*, salvation is made a "reality" in the hearts of all of the elect. Jesus here tells us explicitly how He saves His people from their sins in their inmost heart and life. Of this His "signs" speak. Blessed is he who is not offended at such a Savior!

Bearing the foregoing in mind let us pay a little closer attention to the terms in the text.

Notice then that Jesus here calls attention to a certain "pattern" of things in the realization of the salvation of the elect-believers. It is the pattern of the "heavenly things." The "earthly things" are here distinguished from the "heavenly things." These are not two different realities, entities. Nay, they are the same work and wisdom of God in our salvation viewed from the viewpoints of what *is manifest* of salvation in faith and walk and of what is the *Divine design, pattern and purpose* of God in all of this. The latter are the "heavenly things" and the former are the "earthly things." Now, if one does not understand what rebirth is in his own life, faith, conversion, the fruit of the blowing of the sovereign power and grace of the Spirit, how shall he possibly ever have any knowledge of the great love and design of God, the Architect in this work of salvation. Then all these things of the "depths of Divine plan and purpose in all things" are foolishness. And we will never really truly have life eternal in knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom He hath sent.

Those who do not love God in all of His virtues, His praises, surely have not been called by regeneration out of darkness into God's marvelous light. Then surely God's elective love is not the "heart of the Gospel" in John 3:16. The "heart of the Gospel" is then "whosoever believeth" considered as dissected from the sovereign and elective love in the first part of the text. The "pattern" of God's love is mutilated with the shears of man's misinterpretation, by separating what God had in elective love joined together. The "golden chain" is broken. And as separated and disjointed links they are no Gospel, neither does this make a simple Gospel, understandable to God's simple people, who love the simplicity of all God's attributes and works!

The simple Gospel, in which all God's virtues come to manifestation, simply cannot be seen by the man, who is not born again. He cannot see the simplicity of our rebirth, the blowing of the Spirit where He listeth, and the resultant faith

in our hearts by which we have life. That is *too simple*! It is too much the *oneness* of God works in which man cannot at all find himself as contributing something. It says too much "the Lord our God is one Lord" and "He is a Rock and all His works are perfect." He stumbles at the simplicity of the Gospel, and, therefore, proclaims a "simple gospel" which is neither Gospel nor is it simple, as a manifestation of the simplicity of God in all His virtues.

This simplicity of God's works in Him, the Son of Man, Jesus here underscores in this portion of Holy Writ.

He does two things here.

He first of all shows how the eternal foundation of our salvation, of the rebirth of all the children of God is brought about. It is given in verses 14 and 16a. Here we read in each respective passage "Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness thus must the Son of Man be lifted up . . ." And, again, "For God thus loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ."

Secondly, He also indicates in this passage who the objects and recipients are of this lifting up of the Son of Man. They are: every one believing in this lifted-up Son of Man! And by this "believing" we may know whether we are born from above by the sovereign blowing of the Holy Spirit or not.

And this is not performed by God, according to whim or fancy, but it is performed according to the "manner of God's love." And this love is elective love, directing the Spirit in the hearts of all His own! This God constitutes them believing children, by the Spirit of the Son, whom He hath exalted on high. And everyone that believes surely will not perish but have everlasting life.

Yes, unto that faith all are called in the external preaching of the Gospel, to whom God in His good-pleasure sends the Gospel. But in this preaching "eternal life" is not "promised to all, if they believe." It is promised to "everyone believing." It is a general preaching of a very particular promise!

Such a general preaching of a particular promise is faithfully performed by those who heed the "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again . . ." and who therefore understand that "everyone believing" in the text in John 3:14-16 may not be read as if it read, "*That everyone, if they believe, might have everlasting life.*"

Only the blind cannot see this distinction.

"One marvels how sane man will call this a "like passage" with the "Statement" "God *promises everyone* one of you, that if you believe, you will be saved" And one is equally amazed how "every one believing" could be *interpreted* (not sophisticated) as being a prerequisite to enter the kingdom.

Yet, a "Classis" thus stated it, and mirabile dictu, under the alleged banner of Reformed truth!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Interesting and Revealing

Christ or Conditions.

That essentially is the doctrinal issue that brought about a "split" in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Thus we wrote more than a year ago.

By those who prefer conditions we were criticized for taking this stand. But the farther we proceed in this struggle to maintain the truth over against those that introduced a false note into the preaching in the Protestant Reformed Churches, the clearer it becomes that the more conditions are preached, the more Christ and His cross are relegated to the background in the preaching.

The reality of this fact that it is Christ or conditions was brought to our attention very forcefully over five years ago. To be exact it was in the late afternoon of Sunday, October 30, 1949 after preaching for the second time that day in Chatham, Ontario for those who became Protestant Reformed in name but at heart intended to remain Liberated.

We went home after church with the leading figure in that movement, as was the custom of all who went to preach there.

Because we preached a Protestant Reformed sermon on Ephesians 2:10 in which Christ came to His own and was presented unconditionally, we were told that it was a "vreeselijke preek," a terrible sermon.

That could, of course, be the case and for those who care not for the truth of Scripture it must have been a "vreeselijke preek." But when we began to discuss the statements to which objections were made, it became so very clear that for the Liberated it is conditions rather than Christ.

The remarks made in answer to our defense of the truth of the text are indeed interesting and revealing.

In our sermon that afternoon on the text of Ephesians 2:10 we pointed out the unconditionality of our salvation as presented in the text. The text reads thus: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We pointed out that according to Scripture creating is that act of God whereby He called into being the things that *are not* as though they were. He called into being things that before the calling were not. So He created Adam; and this Adam did not help God along with his creation, did not ask God to be created and surely filled no condition to being created in such glory. And such a word, a word that leaves man entirely out of the picture until God acts, is used in the text. We are *created* in Christ unto good works. Thus before we perform one good work, God works. He brings into being those who spiritually are not and who fill no condition for their becoming His workmanship and for performing good works. The word "created" leaves nothing at all for

man's fulfilling of conditions but lays all the emphasis upon God in Christ.

Along these lines we presented the truth and sought to be loyal to the churches which had sent us out to do missionary work amongst these Liberated. One of the members of the Mission Committee, located at present very close to the undersigned, had given him advice simply to take along sermons that would "edify." It becomes plain now why he gave that advice. He wanted then already to sell the Protestant Reformed Churches down the river to the Liberated. But we felt it our duty to point out the differences between us and them in order to instruct them and in order to find out how strong and great these differences actually were.

The first remark made after calling the sermon a terrible sermon was that although Adam was not there before his creation and therefore could not and did not fill any condition unto it, he was created in a conditional relation. He was created to fill the condition of the "Covenant of Works." The reader will recall that according to this so-called "covenant of works" God gave to Adam a promise, a condition and a penalty. The promise was eternal life. The condition was that obedience which consisted in refraining from eating from the forbidden tree. The penalty was death if he would disobey and eat that fruit.

This custodian of the Liberated heresy in Chatham — he was well named — then tried to defend that theory of the "Covenant of Works." We asked him to show us in the Scriptures where that theory was taught. He opened his "Staten Bijbel" and wanted us to read a page that was inserted in that Bible between the Old and the New Testaments where a short treatise was given, I believe, on the relation between the Old and New Testaments, in which that "Covenant of Works" is mentioned and defended. We asked him to give us something out of Scripture itself.

Instead he began to argue, for he had not a text to quote.

Indeed, at first he quoted the verse: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." We admitted there was a condition to death. We admitted that mention was made there of a penalty. But we insisted that he give us proof that God promised *eternal life* to Adam if he continued to be obedient.

All he had left was an argument.

He philosophized that this was implied, that if Adam remained obedient he would receive eternal life.

We took the time to show him that a continuation of Adam's earthly life which he could receive in the way of obedience was not the same as the eternal life which we now obtain through Christ. Adam would have continued, if it so pleased God, to continue to live in Paradise as a friend-servant of God. But through Christ we now receive eternal life as children in the New Jerusalem. We pointed out the higher glory which is eternal life in comparison with the glory of Paradise.

Then we got a glimpse into the mind of conditional theology.

His next statement revealed that their love of conditions is so great that Christ and His cross and the glory in Him falls entirely away.

He said, in all earnestness, that he would be satisfied if Adam had not sinned, if he had fulfilled the condition and we with Adam were now in Paradise; and then, as far as he was concerned, Christ would not have needed to come.

If you please!

That is where your "different emphasis" and "different approach" gets you, Rev. Blankespoor. These are the men for whom you could preach and never be criticized. These are the men whom you will defend over against the Declaration by giving them the "benefit of the doubt."

What did you preach in their midst?

We showed him the awfulness of his statement by calling his attention to Colossians 1:15b that Christ is the "firstborn of every creature." He will remember that, if he reads these lines. For when we showed him that in the counsel of God — not in time, of course — Christ is first, even before Adam, even before the creatures created and born before Adam's creation — he readily admitted that he did not know that this text in Colossians 1 was in the Bible.

And Rev. Blankespoor speaks of the *whole Word of God*. There are definitely passages that the Liberated do not know are in the Bible and when they have their attention called to them they reject them.

No, Rev. Blankespoor, we have the whole Word of God. Conditional theology needs to ignore important passages of it. And Colossians 1:15 is an important one and forms the basis for all election, which the Liberated hate.

The conditional-theology mind is so concerned with man that it finds no need of Christ, if only man can have glory, be it but the glory of Paradise. The glory of God in Christ, or as Paul writes to the Ephesians (1:6) "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved," is of minor significance to the mind of those who want conditions to glory.

Indeed, with them it is conditions rather than Christ.

* * * *

Another interesting and revealing matter we found in the March 5, 1955 issue of the Canadian Reformed Magazine, a small paper put out by the Liberated in Canada.

Rev. L. Selles makes comments on Rev. Hofman's article in Concordia, concerning the problems those who left us would have to face this year. First he tells them that to return to a combined Classis meeting is from many viewpoints a step backward. Then he goes on to give advice(?) in regard to Rev. Hofman's "problem" about where to send their students for training to preach in their pulpits.

Now before we give the suggestion of Rev. Selles let us state that we agree that those who left us surely do have a problem in regard to their theological school. And that problem reveals that they have falsely tried to sell to their people the propaganda of Rev. Blankespoor that it is "solely

a church political issue." That they have the men to teach in such a Seminary is of secondary importance. Their calling in of help from outside for the first step in their new missionary project shows that they could solve that problem. The big problem is actually what is to be taught. For it is not "solely a church political issue." And they could solve this problem as to what should be taught if they did not continue to try to tell their people that they are still Protestant Reformed and that they have not changed. As long as they talk like Rev. Blankespoor wrote in opposition to the Declaration "All this does not mean that we would sacrifice any one of the truths we as Prot. Ref. have confessed and preached during the past years," they will continue to have this problem. In 1951 he may have felt that way, and then the problem of what to teach in such a Seminary was not a problem at all.

But now since condemning the Declaration and defending Rev. De Wolf's heresy, what will they teach in their course of Dogmatics?

Let us put it very pointedly: whose dogmatic works are they going to use as a textbook? Hodges, which the Reformed Churches in America use? Berkhof's as their students are now being taught in Calvin College? (By saying that it is the best that they can do at the moment Rev. Hofman shows that they do not want that either.) Some work of a Liberated Theologian?

Surely they do not intend to use the Rev. H. Hoeksema's dogmatics work, do they? With it they cannot agree, for they claim that we departed from the truth. And Rev. Kok is sure to object that you cannot use the works of a man who is "broken in mind and in body."

What then?

By rejecting the works of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, they will show that they have departed from the Protestant Reformed truth.

But now the suggestion of Rev. Selles.

He says, wouldn't Kampen extend the helping hand? He has no doubt that their Theological School is open for such students. After all, he argues, one of the Protestant Reformed students did study there already. He has Carl Reitsma in mind, no doubt.

Then this giveaway sentence "In every instance that (Theological School) is 'closer' than Calvin College or Seminary where the remaining students now attend."

Not closer by miles or feet, Rev. Selles.

Doctrinally we will grant you that it is closer. You agree one hundred percent with Rev. De Wolf's statements and simply underscore our claim and the claim of Classis East in May 1953 that these statements are Liberated.

But where do you get that "closer" in quotation marks?

Did Rev. Kok or Rev. De Jong tell you that in the Netherlands, when they sold us down the river to you? Are you quoting them when you say Kampen is "closer" to

(Continued on page 352)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The Donatist controversy, we noticed in our preceding article, was, according to the eminent church historian, Philip Schaff, a conflict between complete separation and catholicism. The Donatists started from an ideal and spiritualistic conception of the visible church in the midst of the world. The church must be a fellowship of perfect saints. This also determined their conception of the sacraments. Unholy priests cannot administer the sacraments. That which is holy cannot be imparted by unholy men. And this applied especially the traditors, who had been unfaithful during the times of persecution and had delivered the sacred writings to government officials. Augustine, on the other hand, although maintaining discipline, maintained the catholicity of the church and that "apostolic connections" constitutes another true distinguishing mark of the Church of God in the midst of the world. The parables of the tares among the wheat and of the net constituted the chief exegetical battleground in the conflict between these two contending parties.

As stated in our previous article, we wish to quote from another recognized authority in connection with this Donatist controversy: The History of Doctrine, by Reinhold Seeberg. What he writes is partly a repetition of what we have already written. It can do no harm, however, to quote from this authority as he describes this controversy and states the doctrinal differences between the two parties.

REINHOLD SEEBERG.

The greatest schism in the ancient church arose from personal and local conditions in the congregation at Carthage. As in the case of the Novatian schism, a persecution furnished the occasion. Various courses of action were advocated in North Africa in response to the demand for the surrender of the Scriptures during the Diocletian persecution. Bishop MENSURIUS OF CARTHAGE represented the milder view (surrender of other writings of indifferent character permitted). He and his archdeacon CAECILIAN also opposed the exaggerated veneration of confessors and martyrs. SECUNDUS OF TIGISIS advocated a rigoristic view. After the death of MENSURIUS, Caecilian, who was hated by the strict party in Carthage, was chosen bishop and consecrated to the office by FELIX OF APTUNGA, whom the strict party regarded as a "traditor." This election awakened great indignation among the "pious" (Lucilla), which was encouraged by the foreign rigotists. The Numidian bishops had sent Docetus from Casae Nigrae to Carthage as vicar of

the bishopric. An assemblage of 70 bishops in Carthage (A.D. 312) declared the ordination invalid. MAJORINUS was then elected Bishop of Carthage. His successor was DONATUS THE GREAT. Through a combination of many influences, this conflict led to the formation of two warring churches sharply opposing one another, the Catholic and the Donatistic. The pride of the martyrs, the spirit of piety quickened anew under the stress of persecution, the idea of the holiness of the church, archaistic religious reminiscences, the pressure soon brought to bear by the civil authorities, the league of the Catholic church with the state, social distress, perhaps also national motives, all united to expand the personal dispute into the great schism which distracted the church of Africa for a century. The African church was really split in two (in A.D. 330 there were 270 Donatistic bishops at a council, and in A.D. 311, at Carthage, 266). Outside of Africa, Donatism secured no following worthy of mention (a bishop in Spain and another in Rome are spoken of, gesta collationis I. 157), only Caecilian and his followers being recognized. The emperor, Constantine, after being drawn into the matter by the Donatists, assumed a similar attitude. He ordered an investigation of the subject; then examined it himself, deciding that Caecilian and Felix were innocent, but that their assailants were contemptible slanderers. Stringent laws were enacted against the latter, but, proving ineffectual, they were soon revoked. But the most important measure was that adopted, under the influence of Constantine, at the council of Arles (A.D. 316, according to Seeck, I. c., p. 508 f.; cf. Eus. v. C. 44, 45), *i. e.*, the establishment of the milder view on the ground of principle. It was here decreed that even the ordination administered by a "traditor" is valid, provided only that the persons so ordained "remain reasonable" (can 13); also, that persons who had been baptized by heretics should be questioned only upon the Creed, and that, if it be found that they have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, only the laying on of hands shall be further administered to them (can. 8). According to this, ordination and baptism are not dependent upon the worthiness of the ministrant. Thus a doctrinal difference runs parallel with the personal and historical conflict. The agitation spread with great rapidity, especially among the lower ranks of society. Socialistic ideas as to property and a reckless fanaticism, leading to a complete outward separation, to frightful deeds of violence, and to wanton and contemptuous surrender of life, became distinguishing marks of the church of the saints (Circumcelliones, Agonistici, vid. Opt. II. 18 f. 21; VI. 1 f.; III 4. Aug. unit. eccl. 19. 50; c. ep. Parm. II. 3. 6; c. Crescon. III. 42. 46; brev. III. 11). Against this, church and state were alike powerless. Restrictive measures under CONSTANS and CONSTANTIUS, as under JOVIAN, VALENTINIAN, GRATIAN, and HONORIUS, were unable to suppress the movement. The most serious obstacle encountered by the party was its division into mutually antagonistic groups (Rogatus, Tyconius, Maximian, and Primian) — the fate of all

separatists. Augustine, soon after entering upon the episcopacy, addressed all his energy to the work of reconciling the opposing factions. This resulted in the three-day conference at Carthage in June, 411 (vid. gesta collationis in M. IV, and Aug. brevic coll.). Both the historical and the doctrinal questions were here discussed. No reader of the proceedings of this assembly can escape the impression that the Donatists here appear in the light of embittered fanatics, incompetent but vain, adepts in the most trifling legal quibbles, in questions of formality and in intrigue, always seeking to impede the progress of the proceedings. The imperial presiding officer (Marcellin) accorded the victory to the Catholics upon both points of dispute. His decision was a just one. Augustine continued to labor in the same spirit. Strict imperial edicts forbade assemblages of the Donatists upon penalty of death and their churches and church property were given over to the Catholics. The power of Donatism was broken, and it soon after disappears from church history.

The doctrinal difference between Donatists and Catholics may be briefly expressed. Donatism does not question the episcopal foundation of the church. It demands only that the bishops be holy men, and maintain that only when they are such are the sacraments administered by them effectual. In this, as at other points, it could appeal to Cyprian. It was well known that Cyprian denied the validity of heretic baptism (p. 184—we, too, have already called attention to this in preceding articles—H. V.). He taught that there was no virtue in the sacrifice or prayers of fallen priests (referring to John 9:31), and warned against the contamination of their touch (p. 181, n. 1). When Donatists appealed to the miracles performed by their bishops, to visions and dreams (Aug. unit. eccl. 19. 49), they had in this also a precedent in Cyprian (p. 181, n. 3). They maintained, further, that they were the only true and real Catholic church (gesta coll. I. 148, 202; III. 22, 91, 165), the holy, persecuted church of the martyrs (ib. 1. 45; III. 116). The Catholics are not a church, but adherents of Caecilian, traditors, and blood-thirsty oppressors (Optat. II. 14, 18; gest. I. 148; III. 14, 29, 258). The Donatist church is in reality the holy bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle, because it requires holiness of its bishops and its members (ib. III, 75, 249, 258. Optat. II. 20; VII. 2). They apply the term Catholic, "not to provinces or races," but: "the name Catholic is that which is filled with the sacraments" (sacramentis plenum, gest. III. 102, cf. Aug. brev. III, 3), or, "thou shouldst interpret the name Catholic, not from the fellowship of the whole world, but from the observance of all the divine commandments and of all the sacraments" (Aug. ep. 93. 7. 23). In accordance with the holiness of this church, its members are to carefully avoid association with all who are not in its fellowship, all such being regarded as no better than heathen. Any connection whatever of the church with the civil government is regarded with abhorrence: "What have Christians to do with kings, bishops with the palace?" (Opt. I. 22; Aug. c. litt. Petil. 92. 202). The dogmatic reason for this separateness

lies in the invalidity of the Catholic sacraments. The moral unworthiness of the bishops of the traditor-church robs their sacraments of value: "How can he give who has nothing to give?" (Opt. V. 6; cf. gest. III 258). Hence the repetition of the sacraments, the second baptism, and the repetition of extreme unction are necessary (Opt. I. 5; III. 2; IV. 4; V. I. 3 f.; VII. 4). Yet it is going too far to regard re-baptism as, without any modification, a characteristic mark of Donatism. The Donatist Tyconius advocated the validity of the Catholic sacraments, and maintained that this was the genuine Donatist view—a position that is supported by historical evidences from other sources (Aug. ep. 93. 43; cf. HAHN, Tyconius-Studien, p. 102 ff.). But, since the Donatists have the full observance of the sacraments, they are the Catholic church. Hence, Christ and true baptism are to be found only among them: "For how can it be, if the church is one and Christ undivided, that anyone located without may obtain baptism (gest. III. 258)?"

The Catholic position, on the contrary, is as follows: The orthodoxy of the Donatists is acknowledged, as well as the validity of their sacraments, and they are regarded as Christian brethren (gest. I. 16, 55, 62; II. 50. Opt. I. 4f.; IV. 2): "Both among you and among us there is one ecclesiastical life (conversatio), common texts, the same faith, the same sacraments of the faith, the same mysteries" (Opt. V. I). Even their baptism is unassailable, for baptism is baptism, even though administered by thieves and robbers (gest. I. 62); for it is not a man, but the holy Trinity, which here bestows a gift (Opt. V. 7). The Trinity is necessary in baptism, and also the faith of the recipient. These elements are unchangeable; but the administrant is a variable element. "Administrants may be changed, but the sacraments cannot be changed. If, therefore, you consider all who baptize, they are administrants, not lords; and the sacraments are holy in themselves and not through men" (Opt. IV. 4, I). Thus regarded, the Donatists are also a part of the church."—end of quote from Seeberg. We will halt at this point, as far as our quotation from Reinhold Seeberg is concerned, and continue with it in our following article. The rest of this quotation will be brief, but we desire to give it in its entirety.

H. V.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 350)

those that left us for Rev. De Wolf's statements than the Christian Reformed Churches with their Theory of "Common Grace?"

We will probably never find out.

But that, too, would be interesting and revealing, to find out who you quote when you say that Kampen is "closer" to those that left us to embrace your conditional theology.

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 17

Since we are to judge of the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy.

Especially the words "have no reason to doubt" are not a very exact rendering of the original Latin of this article. The original has: *dubitare non debent*. And this might better be rendered by the simple words: "ought not to doubt." The Dutch version, with its "*moeten niet twijfelen*," is more correct here. We may add that this is a rather important change in the meaning of the article. The words "no reason to doubt" introduce into the article a certain objective note which the original does not express. A comparison with the original will reveal further that our English is correct in leaving off the Scriptural references which the Dutch version adds. The original does not insert these, although it may be admitted that the passages are pertinent to the thought of the first part of the article. It must be remembered, however, that these passages from Scripture do not furnish any objective proof for the main proposition of the article, that "godly parents have no reason to doubt (or: ought not to doubt) of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy." With these corrections made, we may proceed to discuss the article itself.

For a correct understanding of this article, it is first of all necessary to bear in mind the occasion and background of it. It must be admitted that this particular subject of the salvation of infants who die in infancy seems to appear here rather suddenly and without warning. It does not seem to fit in smoothly with the previous trend of thought of the First Head of Doctrine, but is rather arbitrarily inserted at this juncture. In fact, if one puts aside all feelings and all emotions that are very easily stirred by this question of the salvation of infants, and views the question with what might be called a "cold" objectivity, one might well ask, "Why were the fathers concerned about infants that die in infancy, and not about all infants of believers? What reason was there to think that God dealt in His sovereign predestination any differently with children that die in infancy than with chil-

dren that grow to maturity?" This question can only be answered in the light of the Arminian controversy itself. The Arminian denied both the election and the reprobation of infants, in the first place. This was, of course, a necessary consequence of their "conditional theology." It stands to reason that if predestination depends on the condition of foreseen faith or unbelief, then one cannot speak of the predestination of infants who are as yet incapable of the act of faith or unbelief. And, it may be added, that the Arminian must also necessarily exclude all infants from any covenant relation on the same basis. Consequently he must also deny infant baptism. And this also explains why in the history of the church it is so extremely difficult to cling to the doctrine of infant baptism in any more than a mechanical and traditionalistic manner. Logically considered, Arminianism excludes the baptism of infants, just as it excludes any organic view of a covenant of grace. It is individualistic. Strange to say, however, while the Arminian denied the possibility of election and reprobation of infants, he did not deny the salvation of infants, but rather insisted on it. Instead the Arminians charged the Reformed with maintaining a monstrous and cruel conception, namely that God would eternally destine little babies to everlasting destruction. They pictured Reformed men as having delight in the idea of a hell full of small, innocent babes. And it is in this light that we can understand that the fathers were virtually compelled to say something about this subject and inserted this brief and rather incomplete and unsatisfying article.

It may also be helpful, in view of the difference of interpretation that have arisen with this declaration of Dordrecht, as well as in view of its unquestioned lack of the desired measures of clarity, to consult the "Acts of the National Synod of Dordrecht," in order to gain, if possible, some idea of what the fathers themselves thought of this question, and thus some idea as to how this article found a place in the *Canons*.

Of the foreign delegates to the Synod, we may notice, in the first place, that the British delegates expressed themselves extensively on the subject. In treating the seventh proposition of what are called "Unscriptural Propositions Concerning Election, Which We Reject," (this proposition reads: „Van kleine kinderen, voor het gebruik der reden stervende, is geene verkiezing.") they write as follows: „Eene valsche leering gesteld zijnde, komen er vele overhoop. Dit namelijk rijst daaruit, dat ze in alle verkiezing vereischen het voorgedien geloof, waarop zij gebouwd wordt. Deze kan, voorwaar, in de kinderen niet voorzien worden. Maar wij bewijzen, integendeel, dat deze dingen tegen de rechtzinnige Theologie strijden.

„In betrekking to diegenen, welker inleiding in 't eeuwige leven in den tijd toegestaan wordt, is, zonder twijfel, voor de tijden der wereld, de verkiezing ten eeuwigen leven. Anderszins zoude het getal der verheerlijkten te boven gaan het getal der gepraedestineerden; maar dat moet wederkeerig en even gelijk gesteld worden; die Hij te voren geordineerd

heeft, die heeft Hij ook verheerlijkt; die, namelijk, niet anderen, gelijk Augustinus zegt, de Predesti. Sanctorum, Cap. 27.

„De Schriftuur veronderstelt, dat de namen van sommige kleinen zijn geschreven in het boek des levens, en dat die gesteld zullen worden voor den troon Gods, Openb. 20:12; en toegelaten in het nieuwe Jeruzalem, Openb. 21:27. Inge- lijks Luk. 18:16; Zoodaniger is het Koningrijk der Hemelen. Die nu uit loutere genade in het rijk der hemelen toegelaten worden, die waren, naar het onverdiende welbehagen te voren verkoren tot het rijk der hemelen. Nu zoo velen uit de kin- deren in den Hemel gaan, dien is het eeuwige leven een geschenk door Jezus Christ, Rom. 6:23. Derhalve, zij zijn daartoe verkoren geweest in Christus. Of, indien dit de zin is van deze Stelling: Daar is geene verkiezing der kinderen, dat is, onder de kinderen des eenen voor het andere, alsof ze allen zonder onderscheid zalig werden; voorwaar, ook deze stelling heeft geen fundament; en die toegestemd zijnde, zal daaruit de voorzegde stelling niet volgen. Want om de reden van de verkiezing te stellen of weg te nemen, is de omstan- digheid des tijds eene onbetamelijke zaak en werket gansch niet. Schoon gegeven dan, dat alle kinderen zalig worden, niet een voorbijgegaan zijnde, nochtans, dewijl de verkiezing en het voorbijgaan op de massa ziet, niet op den ouderdom, hoewel ze uit het getal der kinderen niet zijn afgezonderd, nochtans zijn ze afgezonderd uit de gemeene massa der zon- dige menschen, 't welk genoeg is om de reden van de ver- kiezing te stellen.

„De schatten der goedheid Gods zijn uitgestort op den oorsprong van sommige kleine kinderen, in dewelke noch de voorgaande, noch volgende Godvruchtigheid verkoren wordt.

„De kleinen, nog geene willen hebbende, en geene eigene handelingen, worden niet zonder Gods oordeel afgezonderd, sommigen worden aangenomen tot erfgenaam, en sommigen worden gehouden voor schuldenaars.

„Den kleinen, die Hij wil, komt Hij te hulp, ook hoewel zij noch willen noch lopen, die Hij voor de grondlegging der wereld in Christus verkoren heeft (Prosp. de Liber. Arbitr. Prosper Epist. ad Augst. de bono Persever, cap. 11)“

This is rather extensive and clear statement of position. In it, without saying very much about children of believers who die in infancy, the British delegates nevertheless insist that the lines of election and reprobation are carried through also in regard to infants.

The Swiss theologians devote the following proposition to the subject (Paragraph VIII, on Predestination):

„Dat er is eene verkiezing en verwerping der kinderen, zoowel als der volwassenen, kunnen wij tegen God, die de nog niet geboren barmhartiglijk bemint en onstraffelijk haat, niet ontkennen. Maar wat aangaat de kinderen der geloovigen; dewijl God uit kracht des genadigen verbonds hun God is, en Paulus dezelve, uit een geloovigen vader en moeder, ten minste uit een van beiden geboren heilig noemt, en de Heere des Hemels dezelve verklaart erfgenamen des hemelschen rijks, zoo zij in hunne kindsheid sterven, voor

de jaren des onderscheids; wij hopen van hen het beste. En wij twijfelen niet, dat de Engelen van zoodaniger kinderen, dewelke zijn dienstbare en zeer liefhebbende geesten van de teere jonkheid, die altijd het aanschijn Gods zien, om dezelve meest uitgezonden worden, en hun ambt getrouwelijk be- dienen.“

Here, therefore, we find something said directly about children that die in infancy. The Swiss theologians, while they insist that the line of election and reprobation also carries through in regard to children, do not dare to say anything positive and objective about the children of be- lievers. They say only: “We hope the best of them.” And then they add that interesting word that they “do not doubt” that their angels are sent out mostly for them, and serve faith- fully in their office.

The Wetteraw theologians also express themselves very carefully, and, again, subjectively: „Al is het, dat God om de erfzonde de kinderen verdoemen mag; nochtans moeten de Christelijke ouders van de zaligheid hunner kinderen geens- zins twijfelen; want hun en hunnen kinderen is de belofte gedaan, Gen. 17:7; Marc. 10:16; Hand. 2:39.“

Here we find the idea that „de erfzonde,” original sin, is sufficient ground for the condemnation of children, even if it be so that they are not yet capable of actual sin. But, while a connection is established here between believers and their children in relation to the promise, we still find no definite statement that all such children are saved. Besides, we find no distinction here between children who die in in- fancy and children who grow to maturity. Christian parents are in no wise to doubt of the salvation of their children, — any of their children, we may conclude.

The Bremen theologians are a bit bolder apparently: „Van de kinderen der geloovigen alleen, die, eer zij de leer kunnen vatten, komen the sterven, oordeelen wij, dat God de- zelve liefheeft, uit datzelfde welbehagen om Christus' will, door Christus, en in Christus, uit hetwelk Hij de volwassenen liefheeft; derhalve zijn zij ook, ten aanzien van 't verbond, heilig. Om dit te bevestigen, worden zij door den heiligen doop ingehuld, en doen Christus aan.“

They speak directly of the children who die in infancy. They define these children as those who are not yet able to receive the doctrine. And they “judge” that God loves them out of “the same good pleasure, for Christ's sake, through Christ, and in Christ, out of which He loves the adults.” And they make mention in this connection of the seal of baptism.

H.C.H.

TEACHERS

The Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minn., is in need of two teachers for the 1955-1956 school term.

Please send qualifications with application to

Ray Bruinsting, Secretary
R. 3, Box 35, Pipestone, Minn.

DECENCY and ORDER

Student-Preaching

(Concluded)

The difference between the official preaching of the Word by the ordained minister and the unofficial speaking of the word of edification by the unordained student or candidate may be variously illustrated. And oft used illustration is that of the ambassador who is sent by the government to a foreign country. Let us suppose that the government has a very important message which it wishes to have conveyed to the head of another country. Two men are equally informed of this message. Both are fully qualified to deliver it. However, only one of these receives the official mandate and is given documented credentials to represent the government in the matter. He is officially sent. The other is not. Even though both of them may speak the same thing, the words of the one are backed by no authority while those of the other are. The most that can be said of the one is that his message is informative. The other's message, however, is authoritative. In the latter case, the message is brought with all the force and power of the government sending it behind it.

Now, if this distinction is applied to the official preaching of the Word and speaking and edifying word in the church, it would mean that in the former case the Word is ministered to the church upon the authority of Christ Himself. That is preaching. Christ calls and sends the preacher and through him speaks to His church. (Romans 10:14, 15) The word of the preacher is the authoritative Word of God. However, in the case of the student speaking, this cannot then be the case. He does not speak officially. He is not called and by ordination authorized to preach. He can only speak informatively. To maintain this distinction, either in theory or in practice, seems to me, necessitates this conclusion.

It is my opinion that this conclusion is untrue and, therefore, the entire distinction ought to be discarded. It may readily be granted that there are problems involved here which do not lend themselves to a simple solution but, it seems to me, that the students ought to be licensed to officially preach the Word for the objections lodged against this are not as great as those that may be lodged against the present manner in which students are granted admission to the pulpit.

For instance, if students speak unofficially, Christ does not authorize them to speak and, consequently, also does not speak through them, . . . officially at least! If that is so, they cannot even speak an edifying word in the service for Divine worship because the word must be sanctified unto the hearts of the hearers through an operation of the Spirit of Christ in order to edify. And, if Christ does apply that word, it is no longer simply "an edifying word" but it is "preaching." What possible difference can there be between an edifying word

applied by Christ and the preached word applied by Christ? Both are spoken by man and in themselves are ineffective but are made powerful by the mighty operation of the Spirit of God!

Then, too, the conclusion cannot be escaped that if a student does not preach the Word, the churches that engage students do not, on those Sundays, have preaching of the Word. Sometimes it will happen that a student will serve a particular church for several consecutive weeks or even months. Is the Word then not at all preached in such congregations during that time? Surely the very fact that the consistory meets before the service and during the service exercises oversight and supervision of the word spoken indicates that the word is regarded in some way as official preaching. If it is not, there is a most striking inconsistency in our current practices.

To mention but one more thing, if a student does no more than speak an edifying word, what would prohibit a church to permit a gifted layman to do likewise? Undoubtedly there are many capable laymen who are able to speak so as to edify. Why must one first receive permission through the school which amounts to authorization by the churches? This action or requirement in itself, it seems, gives some official or authoritative character to the student's speaking.

Realizing that it is a departure from precedent, and risking possible criticism, I venture to advocate the position that regards student-preaching as official preaching of the Word. He, the student, speaks through the office of the church for the office of the ministry of the Word does not reside in the person but belongs exclusively to the church. If this were not so there would be no necessity in a minister being installed when he transfers from one charge to another. The church preaches the Word through her offices, sometimes using the ordained minister and at other times a licensed student. That student is then regarded as having been called by the church that requests his services and, by virtue of that calling, is authorized by the church to preach. It is true that the student is not formally ordained and that his occupying the office is only temporary but this can serve as no real objection. Christ can, no doubt also does, speak much more through one who, without formal ordination (student), preaches the pure Word of God than through many, who with formal ordination, fail to speak the truth. In the case of the latter there is no real preaching although, theoretically at least, we regard it as such, while in the case of the former where the essence of preaching is indeed manifest, we hesitate to call it such.

This does not mean that the church can place anyone in its pulpit to preach. Not at all! One must first be judged by the churches as competent or qualified for the ministry of the Word. This is done through the theological school and by the office bearers of the church who are appointed professors. Hence, whereas the ordination to office consists of two things—the calling and qualification—the student *essentially* has both of these when he is declared qualified by the

Seminary and called by a particular church to minister the Word. He lacks only the *formal* ordination which he receives when the calling takes on a permanent instead of a temporary character. In the formal sense of the word, it may also be said that a minister who preaches in another church is not ordained in the office in that church. Yet, he certainly preaches the Word, pronounces the benediction, etc. I see no real reason why students, who according to the rule in the matter have received permission, should not be authorized to do likewise.

If this position were adopted, the 20th. Article of the Church Order must needs be revised to read something like this:

"Students who have received permission according to the rule in this matter and have been judged competent for the ministry of the Word, shall, for their own training and for the benefit of the churches, upon the request of the churches be permitted to preach the Word of God in the meetings of public worship."

Consistency would then require that we go a step or two farther. If students may preach the Word, there can be no principle objection to their performing other ministerial labors in the same limited capacity in which they are permitted to preach. As occasion requires they should then be permitted to administer the Sacraments — Baptism and the Lord's Supper —; give instruction in the catechism classes which they also in some instances do; they would be called to visit the sick and bereaved, conduct some family visitation, and sit in at least at consistorial meetings, etc. All of this would be of great practical advantage to the student and enrich his training for the ministry. A student who would first visit the sick or conduct family visitation, for example, with an experienced minister would be in a position to not only learn much that would not have to be learned during the first years of his ministry but also, profiting from the other's experience, would avoid later mistakes. It is not principally consistent nor correct to draw the limitation of his *practical* training to a single aspect of the work of the ministry. Practical training should include, as much as is considered expedient by his instructors, all that is involved in the practical labors of the minister of the Word. Not only would the students themselves profit from this but the churches as well would be beneficiaries for they would receive candidates who are practically as well as theoretically trained.

This conception, of course, stands or falls with the correctness of the supposition that the work of the ministry can begin, not at the time of the "formal ordination" but at the time of the "essential ordination." When one is declared by the churches qualified for the work of the ministry and is requested by one or more of the churches to engage in these various labors, essentially he has the right to perform them. The requisites for ordination he then possesses. Christ then authorizes him to "Go forth!" If this is not so, he has no

right to perform any of these functions and should not be allowed to "speak in the churches" and deprive them of the "preaching of the Word."

No doubt there are also objections that can be lodged against this position. All of the difficulties are by no means solved. However, we have tried to show that the distinction made between "speaking and edifying word" and "preaching the Word" is not above criticism and is in need of further clarification if it is to be usable. Adopting this distinction, without clarifying it, we have solved no difficulties at all but have only created many of them for the phrase "speaking an edifying word" can mean so many things that it, in practice, applied to Art. 20, results in meaning "preaching the Word." And why not then say "preaching" instead of camouflaging the matter?

G.V.d.B.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 346)

The sun of righteousness — some conceive of this righteousness as a personal attribute of God and translate: The Sun, namely righteousness (of Jehovah). By its revelation and operation the wicked are destroyed and His believing people healed from all the hurts and pains that now afflict them. But also this exposition necessitates bringing in Christ. For the righteousness of God would not be righteousness were it not operative as a saving healing power on the ground of Christ's atonement and for His sake. But the chief objection to this exposition is that it makes God's righteousness an abstraction. The exposition that applies the expression directly to Christ is well founded. Elsewhere in the Scriptures Christ is called the light of men, the light of the world, a light to the Gentiles (Is. 49:6), a great light (Is. 9:1), the true light, the day-spring on high, sun and shield.

G.M.O.

CALL TO SYNOD

The Consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the calling church according to the decision of the last Synod, hereby notifies our churches that the 1955 Synod will hold its opening session on Wednesday, June 1, D.V., beginning at 9 A.M. in the above mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, May 31, at 8 o'clock in the Fourth Church.

Delegates to this Synod, needing assistance for lodging arrangements, please inform the Clerk of Fourth Church: J. Veltman, 1112 Prince St., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Consistory of the
Fourth Prot. Ref. Church

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING, APPLIED TO THE OFFERINGS IN THE CHURCHES

The principles of Christian giving, in the offerings in the churches, are set before the church of all ages for its instruction and admonition, in the offerings and sacrifices instituted in the church of the old Dispensation. These offerings and sacrifices that God gave to His church through the agency of the prophetic Scriptures and their authors, were visible and tangible representations of the invisible and abstract principles of the true religion of Jehovah God. These principles lay hidden to the eye of the worshipper under the types and shadows of the ceremonies that God instituted for the proper worship of Himself and His thrice holy Name. It was only when the child of God, the believer, by grace, was lifted, in his worship, out of the realm of the sensual and earthly to that of the spiritual, that he worshipped God in spirit and in truth. When the offerings and sacrifices of Jehovah's worship were seen by the believer to be pictures of the redemptive revelation of God concerning the salvation of His church in Christ, then the religion of Jehovah was revealed to be one of fervent principle and deep spirituality. In order that the child of God may worship the Lord in spiritual benefit to his soul when he presents his gifts and offerings to the church, it will be helpful to earnest worship to determine what are the principles of Christian giving represented in the sacrifices and offerings of the church of the Old Dispensation.

Of the offerings that God instituted there were three main classifications: Drink, Vegetable (or meat, A.V.), and Animal. The offering could be made public in behalf of the nation, or Israel; or made privately in behalf of the offender himself.

The important thing to notice about these offerings, whether they were public or private, is that the shedding of blood was a necessary accompaniment, except in cases of extreme poverty. Even then, in connection with the poor, their offerings were made and accepted only in connection with the blood of the altar. (Lev. 5:11-13). Without the blood shed by the sacrificial offering, the sinner had no right of approach to God. This principle was the standard of the acceptance of the offering made by the offender. The lesson taught by the offerings was this: without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22). This is the basic principle.

This same principle of the sacrificial offering was met by the non-animal offerings: namely, the Drink and the Vegetable offering, in the following way: the Drink offering was made only in connection with the meal offering, which accompanied all burnt offerings. (Numbers 15:1-12).

The Vegetable offering, too, had to conform to the principle of blood-shedding, because this offering, when it was offered in part, or when it was offered whole, was consumed on the altar. When only part of the offering was placed on the altar, then the remainder belonged to the priest, as in private voluntary offerings, and when accepted as a sin offer-

ing from the very poor in lieu of an animal sacrifice. (Lev. 5:11-13). When the whole vegetable offering was placed on the altar with the intention of having the whole offering consumed by fire, it corresponded to the burnt offering, which was entirely consumed on the altar of sacrifice. This activity was observed at the consecration of the high priest and at the cleansing of a leper. (Lev. 6:19-23 and 14:10,20).

The animal sacrifices of cattle, sheep, goats of both sexes, and (rarely) doves, easily conformed to the principle of the shedding of blood. The corresponding reality which was symbolized by the bloody sacrifice was the passion and death of Christ, who shed His blood as the true Lamb of God (John 1:29) for the sins of His elect church, His people.

Now the reason why the sacrificial system of the Old Testament Church was instituted by God as a means of approach to Him, was the sin of Adam and Eve, whereby the whole human race was plunged into sin, corruption, and misery. For in them the race of mankind was organically and legally united. The fall of man was a cause for the institution of the blood sacrifices. The eternal Jehovah's word and command were transgressed; His Covenant was trampled under foot; the image of God in man was turned into its very opposite; and man became worthy of death, judgment, and Hell. The way of fellowship and communion with the eternal God was closed. But the revelation of God was not frustrated by man's sin. God is on the throne—even while man sins. God continues His revelation

This revelation is that God is One; His counsel is one as He is One God. Sin does not change the counsel of God, for God willed to reveal in His own way the glory of the life of His Covenant in its highest and purest manifestation. This highest and most beautiful revelation, which is the Covenant life of God, was not to be reached in Adam; but in Christ. Therefore, the fall of Adam was determined according to God's counsel and His eternal good pleasure. In the conception of the eternal good pleasure of God, all things revealed in the Scriptures take on their true meaning as they are related to all things. Since the revelation of God is the revelation of His eternal Covenant life of living friendship with the persons of the divine Trinity, He, in sovereign good pleasure and mercy, is pleased to reveal this life to the creature. Maintaining His Covenant by visiting the transgressor with wrath, death, and the curse, He reveals His Covenant as life, fellowship, and joy in Christ. The way of approach to Himself He has ordained, and the basis of communion and fellowship is the supreme sacrifice of Christ as a redemptive propitiation for sin and offense. On the basis of Christ's bloody sacrifice on Calvary's cross God's covenant children are again taken into the blessed fellowship as friend servants of the Living God. In this relation they experience the forgiveness of sin, a right relation to the Most High on the basis of imputed righteousness, and the impartation of a new life in abiding communion with the body of Christ, the Church, forever. Man once again worships God by elective love and

grace in true spiritual worship, through the sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice was pictured in the Levitical offerings brought by the pious to the Tabernacle and Temple. On the basis of blood which was shed (Lev. 17:11) the Covenant children of God performed the sacred rite of sacrificing and offering. In this way they drew near unto God.

It is interesting to note too that the drawing near unto God by the pious of old was put positively to Israel by way of a prohibition. Never could the faithful appear before God empty-handed. That is, never may Israel approach God without an offering. (Ex. 23:15) This prohibition was repeated in the second giving of God's law recorded by Moses. (Deut. 16:17) Because the worshipper must always come to God with his offering, the pious, who were the poor of the flock, could approach God's house with the special provisions that were given in the law for the destitute and needy. No matter how straitened private circumstances were, God must be approached with a gift of the worshipper. The principle of the shedding of blood as a satisfactory propitiation to divine justice was realized in the Cross of Christ. To the offender who worshipped with his offering in Tabernacle and Temple it meant that he did not have to die; he is covered by the blood of his offering, as a picture of the forgiveness of his sins by the true Lamb of God, the Christ, who shed His precious blood on Calvary. With his sins covered, the offender, who is engaged in the act of worship, was not cut off from the congregation of Israel. Positively, it signified to him that he had a place in the sanctuary of God and an entrance into the heavenly Canaan. On the basis of blood atonement the Covenant children of God have a right to perform the sacred act of sacrificing and offering to Jehovah God. It is on the basis of Christ's perfect love for His Church, for which He shed His blood as an atonement, that God's people bring their gifts and offerings, as an expression of their right to worship God in sincerity and truth.

There were other principles taught by the system of sacrifices and offering in the church of the Old Testament. These principles are very helpful for the worshipper of the New Testament to know, because it indicates to him what is the proper attitude of heart of the worshipper who brings his offering to his church. These offerings in Israel were specifically designed to touch the heart of the elect sinner of all ages, who by grace desires that his own heart is rightly disposed to worship the Most High God. The following are the spiritual lessons of the specific offerings.

The burnt offering, which prescribed a male lamb, bullock, ram, goat—or in the special provisions provided in the law for the poor and the destitute in Israel (Lev. 5:11-13)—was the expression of the complete self-dedication of the offerer to Jehovah. In the complete combustion of the burnt offering, the pious symbolized his utter consecration to Jehovah.

The sin offering and the trespass (guilt) offering, with the special provisions for the proper observance of these offerings, spoke to the worshipper in terms of deep humility

and need. Since no part of these offerings was eaten by the offerer, as in the peace offerings, the worshipper came before the sanctuary as one unworthy of communion with God. These offerings indicated the sacrificer's need for atonement on account of his sins. Being brought into the knowledge of his need, by grace, he is brought into contact with the virtues of Christ's atonement, as the only satisfaction to God's offended majesty. In the consciousness of the need which may be satisfied only by Christ, the worshipper approaches God's house in true humility.

The peace offerings of which there were three kinds, too, were used of God to teach His children how to approach Him, with their gifts and offerings. First, the thank-offering was given as an expression of thanksgiving for God's unmerited blessings. Secondly, the votive offering was given to express the believer's joy that he may make a vow unto the Lord. (Lev. 7:11-21). Thirdly, provision was made to permit God's people to give vent to their love for the Lord by the offering of any animal authorized for sacrifice, of either sex; but no bird. (Lev. 3 and e.g. Judges 20:26, II Sam. 24:25). The offerings, in these instances, were an expression of the love of God presented by the unworthy worshippers, who experienced God's love which He shed abroad in their hearts. This love finds expression in Israel's peace offerings.

When mention is made of the specific offerings—the Vegetable, Burnt, Trespass, and Peace offerings—it must be remembered that the form of these offerings in the church is now gone. No longer does the church have the form of the Levitical sacrificial system. It has given way to the coming of the True Sacrifice, Christ. He is both Priest and Victim in the New Testament Church. But the essence of the offerings remain. The spiritual principles whereby the pious assemble and worship in God's church are inviolable. They are the principles of utter self-consecration, deepest humility, personal need of divine mercy, and irrepressible love. By means of the sacrificial system of the Old Dispensation God taught His church these beautiful spiritual principles in order that the church—even today—may worship Him in spirit and in truth.

To worship God in spirit and in truth by their gifts and offerings is the desire of God's people. This desire is the longing of their hearts. But how do they really do this? The answer is not far afield.

True worship of the Lord, in the believer's giving to the Church, is the fruit of the priesthood of the Gospel. This priesthood is manifest in God's house, His Church, together with the prophetic and the kingly offices. These offices together, manifest the presence and fullness of Christ in His Church, through these offices which He has instituted. In the midst of the church, constituted of those in the office of all believers, with their spiritual seed, the offices of prophet, priest, and king function. The priestly office of Christ in His Church functions through the office of the ruling and teaching eldership. The teaching elder, who is also the servant of the Lord, serving as the preacher, through the office

of Prophet, shouts forth the power of God unto salvation through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. The servant, as the preacher, proclaims the piercing sword of the Word to the organism, the Church. This sword of the Gospel slays the people of God. It goes forth as the Word of Christ, as a sharp two-edged sword, quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and as discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The sword of the Gospel going forth from the prophetic office accomplishes its twofold effect: a savor of death unto death, and of life unto life. (Heb. 4:12 and II Cor. 2:16)

It is life unto life in the believers, because the Gospel by grace wounds and pierces the innermost recesses, until, by the power of grace, the soul is broken in spirit. With the proud rebellious heart slain by the sword of the Spirit and under deep conviction of sin, the believer cries out in confession of his sins: "Lord, be merciful unto me, a sinner." With heartfelt contrition and humbled in dust and ashes, he receives the assurance by the same sword of the Gospel, "I am thy God, and I cleanse thee in the blood of my sacrifice, Christ, from all thy sins and miseries, and I grant thee, by my grace, eternal life and glory."

Being broken in spirit, and receiving the assurance of sin forgiven, God's people return unto God, being renewed by the Spirit, dedicating themselves to God, with all that they have, and devoting themselves to God's cause in the world, with all their earthly talents and belongings. This is the sacrifice that Paul refers to in Romans 12:1 as the believer's reasonable service. Slain and renewed, they offer themselves to the Lord. Their gifts and offerings are now presented out of the love of God in their hearts. To do God's will becomes their meat and drink, and they offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God, in unreserved obedience and with pure joy. Then the saying, "It is more blessed to give," becomes a reality in the heart of the elect sinner.

Lest the meaning of complete self-consecration, with all the talents and properties that God divides severally as He will amongst His children, be misunderstood, it may be well to point out the meaning of the offering of Abraham's son Isaac, and in this connection the offering of Jephtah's daughter. In both instances it was the attitude of heart that characterized these two servants who would not withhold—in each case—an only child. It was not necessary to actually sacrifice. The disposition of heart bespoke complete self-consecration. Thus, for God's servants; they consecrate themselves with all things unto the Lord. It was this principle that the Lord commends in the poor widow who cast in her two mites. (Mark 12:42).

God's people receive comfort in the knowledge of the fact that the offerings and gifts of the household of faith support the church as institute. Through this institute the poor are fed the Living Bread from Sabbath to Sabbath, and others come in. The public worship supported by the slain is maintained with a view to others who have not heard—the

weary and heavy laden. Usually God builds up His church in the generations of the believers. Sometimes He adds others, from outside, through means that He ordains. All the monies expended in the maintenance of the Institution have not been spent in vain. Through the gifts and offerings to the church institute, the needy of heart are reached, who are the truly meek and humble, by elective grace, whom God has redeemed, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation.

It is these blessed principles of Christian giving that we may apply to our offerings in the churches, and it is these principles that regulate the maintenance of God's house, the temple of His truth.

J. McCollam

CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Editor of the Standard Bearer:

Would you please place the following in the Standard Bearer for me? Thanks!

I would like to tell the readers of the Standard Bearer, especially those in Pella and Oskaloosa, something about the way that Rev. M. Gritters reports to you readers of Concordia on the letter of me and M. Sietstra to the Consistory of Pella. It grieves my soul a lot that I must call your attention to this. I have sorrow in my heart for Rev. Gritters' sake and for the sake of Consistory and for the whole congregation. How I long that they would come to a "hearty repentance, and stand with us in the same principles and tenets we have always maintained as Protestant Reformed Churches." That's what we asked of them in our letter. And they turned a deaf ear to our pleadings. That gives me great sorrow every day. But now they make matters worse yet. Rev. Gritters, President of the Consistory and Clerk of "Classis West" doesn't even tell the readers of Concordia the whole truth. He withholds some of the most important facts of our letter.

Brethren, let us speak the truth. Even in a worldly, secular court the *record* is kept straight. Even there we must solemnly swear to speak the truth, the whole truth, and all the facts!

Rev. Gritters writes only the following concerning the *content* of our letter: "In it (the letter) they resolve and petition to reestablish their (should be "our") relationship with the true continuation of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as represented by Classis West, of which Rev. H. Veldman is Clerk 'They further' maintain their, (should be "our") claim on the property of the Protestant Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa with all its physical assets' and give the Pella Consistory until January 31, 1955 to join them."

I am afraid that there is no room for the publishing of our entire letter. I shall simply tell you what parts Rev. Gritters omitted and quote it. Then the readers in our

churches may read it for themselves and judge whether Rev. Gritters told them all of the facts.

Rev. Gritters omitted the *body* of our letter. This reads: "Dear brethren, We, the undersigned, come to you with heavy hearts, yet also with strong conviction that we are called by our God to build His church. We are convinced, after long and prayerful consideration, that our consistory, and therefore we also, have grievously sinned in breaking down God's church by supporting Rev. De Wolf and his deposed elders in their schismatic action. We realize now that we have been grossly misinformed about the happenings in First Church of Grand Rapids. We must confess, in as far as we also have made ourselves guilty, that we sinned before God in supporting this schismatic group."

That is the chief part of our letter. Here we confess that we have sinned. We repented of this sin and do repent of it. Why did Rev. Gritters keep this information from his readers? Was it "lest his deeds (too) should be reproved?" John 3:30, O, brethren, let us together humble ourselves and in the way of repentance build God's Church and be built in the faith. Then we shall in love rejoice together in the truth. That will be a healing of the terrible schism in our churches as far as Pella is concerned. Do not stand in the way of this way of repentance, Rev. Gritters. Bow down next to me and then tell all the facts, and admit the grounds on our confession: None rejoices in this terrible sin of supporting schismatics and of casting out the faithful office-bearers, as we in Pella have done as Consistory in August of 1953, and which evil we have helped perpetuate on the Classis of September 1953!

Let us in repentance remove this evil.

Rev. Gritters also omitted the reasons and grounds for our claim to the property. He omitted "as has been established in the Articles of Incorporation of the Protestant Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa." He presents this as the chief part of the letter. That it is not. If Rev. Gritters would awaken to the seriousness of *our sin as Consistory* he would see that we have come to that bridge in the road by our act, so that only by confession and return can we claim the property which has been believingly and prayerfully dedicated to these who maintain the doctrine and Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Otherwise God takes from us in every sense what we think to have.

Brethren, let us return to God in sorrow as did the Prodigal son. Then will prosperity be within our gates and peace within our palaces.

Then we will not need to keep back any facts.

They are all open and naked anyway before God. He is not mocked.

Just one more remark. The reader must understand that when we gave the Consistory till January 31, 1955, to join us in condemning the wrong and loving the right, we did not have in mind that then they would need to vacate the buildings of the church of Pella, but we intended, that, should

they not join us, we would then be necessitated to take measures ourselves to seek to be reestablished with the Protestant Reformed Churches as represented by the Classis West of which the Rev. H. Veldman is clerk.

Cecil Vander Molen
Pella, Iowa, 201 Morningside Dr.

IN MEMORIAM

On April 6, 1955, we were cast into sorrow when the Lord took unto himself our beloved husband, father, grandfather, son and brother,

BENJAMIN RIETEMA

at the age of 58 years.

May we be comforted by the Holy Spirit in the assurance of faith that all things work together for good unto them that love God and are called according to his purpose. Rom. 8:28.

The Rietema Family

IN MEMORIAM

The Senior Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids hereby wishes to express their sympathy to one of its members, Mary Lou Rietema, in the death of her father,

MR. BENJAMIN RIETEMA

May they be comforted that he now rejoices in the heavenly mansions above with his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Rev. C. Hanko, President
Jeannette Faber, Secretary

O GOD, THOU HAST REJECTED US

O God, Thou hast rejected us,
And hast afflicted sore;
Thou hast been angry but in grace
O once again restore.

Lo, Thou hast torn and rent our land,
Thy judgments dread appall;
O heal her shattered strength before
She totter to her fall.

Through ways of trial and distress
Thy people Thou hast led,
A bitter sup Thou givest us
Of misery and dread.

A glorious banner Thou hast given
To those who fear Thy Name,
A banner to display abroad,
And thus the truth proclaim.

That Thy beloved may be saved
And from their foes set free,
Help with the might of Thy right hand,
In mercy answer me.

Psalms 60:1-5

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST IN SESSION

April 6, 1955 in the Hope Prot. Ref. Church.

The meeting began with the singing of Psalter No. 170, after which Rev. G. Vanden Berg, chairman of the former Classis, read II Cor. 4 and led in prayer.

Credentials from the twelve churches residing in this Classis were received, and Classis, consisting of 24 members, is declared constituted. The Rev. R. Veldman presides, and Rev. G. Vanden Berg functions as secretary.

The chairman welcomes those delegates who were present for the first time among whom was the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema who came to this Classis recently from Classis West.

The Stated Clerk read the minutes of the last Classical meeting. These were adopted.

The chairman appoints a committee of two, J. M. Faber and H. G. Kuiper, to approve of travel and wage expenses for this session.

The Churches of Hope, Creston, and Kalamazoo requested Classical appointments. A committee was appointed to form a schedule, and later the following schedule was adopted:

Hope — April 17, J. McCollam; May 1, G. Lanting; May 8, G. Vos; May 15, E. Emanuel; May 22, G. Vanden Berg; June 5, R. Veldman, June 12, H. C. Hoeksema; June 26, M. Schipper; July 3, C. Hanko.

Creston — April 24, M. Schipper; May 8, R. Veldman; May 15, J. McCollam; May 22, G. Lanting; June 5, H. C. Hoeksema; June 12, C. Hanko; June 19, G. Vos; July 3, G. Vanden Berg; July 10, E. Emanuel.

Kalamazoo — April 24, H. C. Hoeksema; May 1, G. Vanden Berg; May 8, M. Schipper; May 15, C. Hanko; May 22, G. Vos; June 5, E. Emanuel; June 19, J. McCollam; June 26, G. Lanting; July 3, R. Veldman.

The Stated Clerk gave his report of correspondence. The Committee to audit the books of the Emergency Finance Committee gave its report and the Classical Committee rendered its report. All these were received for information.

Kalamazoo came to Classis with request for subsidy. Classis approves their request and sends it on to Synod.

A letter from the Stated Clerk of Classis West is received for information. Classis West requests one sermon from each of the ministers of Classis East for reading services. Classis grants request. Also a letter from Rev. M. Gritters relative to former correspondence was received for information.

The committee appointed to compose a Constitution for the Classical Committee in conjunction with Classis West reads its proposed constitution. With a few alterations this proposed Constitution is adopted.

Classis now votes for Delegates Ad Examina. Those chosen are: Primi: Revs. C. Hanko, M. Schipper, and G. Vanden Berg. Secundi: Revs. G. Lanting and R. Veldman. Term for three years.

Classis also votes for one member on the Classical Committee to replace Rev. J. Heys. Rev. R. Veldman is chosen.

Also Classis votes for one minister to replace Rev. J. Heys as secundus delegate to Synod. Rev. G. M. Ophof is chosen.

Church Visitors for this year are elected. Those chosen are the Rev. G. Vos and Rev. M. Schipper. Rev. R. Veldman is alternate.

Classis decides to meet in Creston the next time, July 6th, D.V.

The Stated Clerk is instructed to write letters to the Rev. G. Vos and elder N. Yonker of our Grand Haven church, both of whom could not attend Classis because of illness.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order are read and satisfactorily answered.

There being no further business, the Classis adjourned at noon. Elder J. M. Faber led in the closing prayer.

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk,
1900 Belden Ave., S.W.
Grand Rapids 9, Michigan.