

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Fixed and Pious People

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

It sounds like a challenge! Do what ye will, I am going to heaven!

At first flush it does not sound very much like Joshua, who is commissioned to bring the people of God into the Holy Land. It seems as though he is using the wrong kind of pedagogy.

Listen to him, who is called upon to lead Israel aright: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

Does it not seem very poor leadership to leave the people as it were to the inclination of their own hearts? Would it not sound much wiser to say to them: Don't you dare serve other gods! Don't let me see the semblance of idolatry in your midst! Would it not work much better to whip them into shape, like a dictator?

Ah, but Joshua is not the leader of a political party which must be kept intact by hook or crook. He is no dictator who will stand or fall all according to the size of the following he has. Joshua is the type of Jesus Christ our Lord!

And the theme of his discourse is *religion, the service of the God of heaven and of the earth!* That makes a tremendous difference.

Religion, the service of God, is entirely a matter of freedom, of liberty, of spontaneous endeavour. There is not an inkling of compulsion in religion. On the day of the Lord of hosts, He will have a people that are very willing and

very eager to do His sovereign will. Religion is that we submerge our will entirely in the will of God. And that will is that we love Him, know Him and obey Him from the motive of purest love.

And Israel must learn this. Therefore Joshua casts the ball their way. Choose ye this day!

* * * *

To serve the Lord!

That is very seemly, that is entirely proper, it is holy obligation.

You know, we are getting used to the most profound truths and to such an extent that the tremendousness of these truths does not touch us anymore. It takes lifelong striving, study, endeavour to remain sensitive to these truths.

I have in mind the ground for the proposition that it is entirely obligatory to serve the Lord God.

That ground is this: He is our Creator.

When we read this we are inclined to say: that is nothing new. We know that God is the Creator of all men and that we therefore must serve Him. And then we are inclined to let the matter rest. But there is exactly our failing. We let the matter rest. The truth is so stupendous, so great and profound that we do not even see it anymore. I am persuaded that if we saw this truth as clearly as the angels of God see it, we would be shaken to the depth of our being.

Serve God for He is your Creator. He made us.

Ah, we think of this truth mostly as if God made us like the carpenter makes his house and walks away. We are all to a certain extent deists. Practical deists.

For God did not walk away. He made us and we are as it were in the very hollow of His hand. He made us and sustains us every moment. He preserves our being and He it is that gives us being now and forever. His omnipotent and omnipresent power is around us and within us. And He is so great and glorious that Paul bids us in this connection to fear and tremble. For it is God that worketh in you. He is so close to us every moment of the day, that we ought to be filled with reverence and awe continuously and forever.

We belong to Him. He made us and keeps us in the hollow of His hand.

We belong to Him for He made us for Himself. The very devil is in God's own property. We are not our own. You cannot call even a mere thought your own. All that is and breathes is God's own property.

Serve Him we ought for He is our God that made us and sustains us.

* * * *

But there is more.

We ought to serve God because He is the Ruler, Judge and End of all things. Whether you are a heathen or a churchman, a man or woman or child. Whether we are devil or angel, man or beast, we are created for His glory.

The definite, determinate, absolute purpose of this world and its fulness is that they all should be to the praise of the Almighty.

That is revealed. Even the created things of this present world teach this. God has revealed it unto us by the things that are made. They shout aloud of this glorious purpose. They tell, nay, they sing a beautiful song regarding the invisible virtues of God. And singing they reveal the invisible virtues of God's power and Godhead. And the purpose of that song of created things is that we may serve and thank Him. Mind you, that is revealed. We have no excuse to offer when we have not served Him and must appear before His judgment seat. "That they may be without excuse." Romans 1.

Hence, it is altogether obligatory that you and I serve Him.

* * * *

Moreover, He is the Lord.

That means that He is the God of His everlasting covenant. That He has had thoughts of everlasting peace and harmony and unutterable lovingkindness toward men of His goodpleasure, that is, the elect.

He has revealed Himself as such. He revealed Himself as the Covenant God first of all in Paradise. And when man fell away from Him, He has again revealed Himself as the Covenant God in the killing of the sacrificial animal and the altar. Also in the tabernacle and Temple. Also in the people whom He chose to bear His name, even Jacob whom He loved. He revealed Himself as the Loving One when He bowed down before His people in sweetest mercy when they groaned in bondage.

But the most glorious revelation of that Covenant God we have in the Cross of Golgotha. Ah, here we must needs stammer. The view is so blindingly glorious. Here glitters a love that will be the theme of heavenly singing, world without end!

The glorious Cross. It tells me that I ought to serve Him, who gave Himself for me, even for me!

Oh, serve Him, you people of His choice, for you are bought with a price, even the heart's blood of the Son of God. Serve Him for He went down into your agony, an agony of eternal death. Serve Him, for He is the Lord.

Yet, to serve the Lord is difficult.

Difficult, for He is very truth and righteousness and holiness!

He is never content with lipservice. He must have nothing of outward form, when such form hides a heart that is full of dead men's bones and all outward manner of uncleanness. He hates the self-righteous Pharisee and the feigning hypocrite.

He demands perfect holiness, utmost perfection, He demands that you be followers of God!

Moreover, we are idolatrous by nature.

Our idols abound on every side, without and within. There are the idols of the heart and mind. Of loves and affections for the creature or self. There are the idols around us. Their name is legion. In the world there is a creeping, crawling, abominable mass of filthy idols that makes the saint shudder with loathing.

And we are ever inclined to serve them instead of the glorious God, the Covenant Jehovah.

Yet we must needs serve Him.

It is, oh, so difficult!

What do I say: difficult? It is impossible! God demands the impossible of His people. Hear Him: Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect! Is that not impossible, I ask you? How can you then serve Him?

* * * *

Well, there is an answer. Christ Jesus stands in your and my stead and He served Him. He is really the only One who served Him. We did not. Neither did Israel. Neither did Joshua. No one serves God but Jesus.

Does this shock you? Well, I would ask that you even now search your hearts. Where is your reasonable service? Where is your perfect obedience? Where is your unfeigned love all the day? Have you loved Him in the morning and loved Him in the watches of the night? Have you not on the contrary wasted your time in running after idols? Of course, I mean the children of God. I mean the chosen, regenerated, converted children of God. I am not talking now of the godless.

Listen to Paul: Ah, miserable wretch that I am! Or the publican. Or Job and Abraham: I am dust and ashes; I have a veritable horror of myself. I am sometimes inclined to ask Divine pardon for my service of the Almighty. We are miserable sinners all.

* * * *

If you are not yet convinced, then compare yourself with Christ. He went out in a solitary wild place to pray, *all night!* How many among us ever prayed to God for one solitary hour? Compare yourself with Christ indeed. Who even went into the abyss of eternal death for whores and publicans who smote His blessed face? Who ever bore the wrath of God from the purest motive of love? Who of you ever stood on the bottomless bottom of hell and cried: I love Thee, O Divine God for the very rays of Thy holiness that burn me in unspeakable agony? Compare yourselves indeed

with the service of God of Christ and . . . weep for shame.

Be still therefore my heart, and mock not. One only served God and that One is Christ.

And He served God in your and my stead, beloved children of God. His service was a vicarious service. And that service shall never end. He lives everlastingly to pray for us as the High-Priest.

And all the true service that you have in the midst of your sins and abominations is Jesus. I would cry it once more and then from the housetops: All your and my reasonable service by which we serve God is Jesus! It is Christ Who lives in us. It is His Spirit that groans in us and that cries: Abba! Father!

Where is then our boast?

Our boast is eternally in God through Jesus and in His loving Spirit: Majesty and honor and praise and power and glory is unto Thee, O, our God, our Rock and our Deliverer!

Let there be death and desolation to the detestable Pelagian in us!

G.V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 7, 1955, our beloved parents

REV. AND MRS. GERRIT VOS

hope to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We thank our God for having spared them for each other and us for these years. We pray that he may bless them in the future.

Their loving Children

Mr. and Mrs. John Poelstra

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vos

Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Zandstra

8 Grandchildren.

IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself on July 23, our beloved Wife, Mother, and Grandmother:

MRS. ANNA BUITER, nee Vroom

at the age of 46 years.

The assurance that all the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed comforts us in our deep bereavement.

Mr. John Buiter, Sr.

Everett

Mr. and Mrs. Walter De Vries

Mr. and Mrs. John Buiter, Jr.

William

Anne

Clara

Albert

Neal

James

Jeanne

Richard

One Granddaughter

Tinley Park, Illinois

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C O N T E N T S

MEDITATION —

Fixed and Pious People.....457
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

Why Was It Not Published?.....460
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

Of Grace461
The Triple Knowledge (Part III — Of Thankfulness)....464
Rev. H. Hoeksema

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of Matthew 19:10-12.....466
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

A Snare for Our Children (2).....468
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments.....470
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht (Rejection of Errors).....472
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

To the Utmost of Your Power.....474
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

The Unbelief of Barthianism.....476
Know Yourself477
Rev. M. Schipper

CONTRIBUTIONS —

Lest we forget.....478
The Board of the R.F.P.A.

Missionary Notes479
Rev. G. Lubbers

EDITORIALS

Why Was It Not Published?

In one of my recent editorials I mentioned, in passing, that I had written an article on the subject of "common grace" for *"torch and trumpet"* which was never published. It is evident that the editorial staff of that paper took notice of my remark and of the Rev. Schipper in the same *Standard Bearer*, for now I received the following letter:

June 30, 1955

The Rev. Herman Hoeksema
1139 Franklin St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Rev. Hoeksema:

Herewith I return to you an article entitled "Of Grace," written by you some months ago for *torch and trumpet* at our request. You will recall that this article was to be one of a series in the subject of "Common Grace" written by men of differing viewpoints.

We regret that we have not been able to place this article. This gives us some embarrassment, since we asked for the article in the first place. But there were two reasons why our editorial committee felt that it was for the best interest of the magazine not to publish the article. These two reasons are as follows:

1. Some of the articles that we had definitely planned on for this series were not forthcoming. Hence we were unable to carry out our project as described in paragraph one above.
2. At the time our committee called on you to ask for the article we were not aware of the full nature and depth of the cleavage developing in your church. As the controversy continued in your church several of our men became hesitant regarding the publication of your article, lest such publication be construed as a bias on the part of our magazine in favor of one side in the sharp controversy. This hesitaton was increased when one of your men spoke in the columns of *The Standard Bearer* of your being asked to write for *torch and trumpet*.

This combination of reasons kept the article out of our magazine. We have delayed returning it to you in the hope that we might still be able to use it somehow. But we have already held it too long. And a majority of our editorial committee still feel it should not be published.

We wish to thank you for taking time in your busy life to write this article. We regret that we must return it to you, but feel this is the proper course for us to take.

For the editorial committee,

Respectfully yours,

Edward Heerema

I wish to make just one or two comments on the above missive:

1. The letter states that my article was written "some months ago." Fact is that it was written over two years ago.

2. It is true that when the committee approached for an article on "common grace" for *"torch and trumpet"* they informed me that my article was to be one of a series on the same subject written from different viewpoints. But the excuse mentioned in the letter why my article was not published, namely, that "some of the articles we had definitely planned for this series were not forthcoming" is a very poor one. Consider that, if I remember well, at least three articles were published in *"torch and trumpet"* all in favor of the theory of "common grace" and the reader will admit that my article, that defends the opposite conception, should surely have been published. This rather leaves the impression that *"torch and trumpet"* is biased.

3. The second excuse mentioned in the above letter is, if anything, still poorer than the first. It alleges that the publication of my article might leave the impression that *"torch and trumpet"* is biased in favor of our side in the controversy in the Protestant Reformed Churches. Such reasoning I cannot understand. Did not the editorial committee ask me to write an article on the subject of "common grace"? Were they not aware of the fact that from my pen they might expect an article opposed to theory of "common grace"? Did not everybody know that, by publishing my article, they would not leave the impression of also being opposed to theory of "common grace." How, then, could they possibly be construed as favoring our side of the controversy in our churches? Was not the discussion of "common grace" in *"torch and trumpet"* to be conducted on the high, objective and scholarly level of men who are interested in the truth? And now they drag into the discussion the fear of being construed as being biased in a most miserable, though very necessary controversy? In other words, *"torch and trumpet"* introduces into a supposedly scholarly discussion personalities and personal motives. I say: shame on them!

In order that the reader may learn exactly what I wrote for *"torch and trumpet"*, I hereby publish the entire article under the rubric "Our Doctrine."

IN MEMORIAM

The Young People's Society of the OakLawn Protestant Reformed Church express their heartfelt sympathy with five of their members, Everett, Anna, Bill, Clara and Albert Buiters, whose mother

MRS. JOHN BUITER, Sr.

the Lord took unto Himself on July 23, 1955.

May they be comforted in the knowledge that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

The Oak Lawn Young People's Society

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, President
Grace Ipema, Secretary

OUR DOCTRINE

OF GRACE

Being asked by a committee of the staff of *Torch and Trumpet* to write an article for this magazine on the question of "common grace," I gladly acceded to that request. And in this contribution I will set forth what, ever since about 1918, has been and still is my conception about what is called the problem of common grace.

Since, however, the problem is as wide as creation, and concerns really all of theology; and since, on the other hand, the space allotted me is necessarily limited; I decided to write this contribution in the form of some definite proposition, which I offer for thorough discussion and criticism.

1. The problem of so-called "common grace" concerns in its deepest sense the realization of God's eternal covenant in time, along the line of God's eternal counsel, particularly the counsel of predestination, including election and reprobation, and in connection with this realization of God's everlasting covenant, the question concerning God's attitude to and operation upon the whole of created things in their mutual relationship and affinity, the question concerning grace and sin, God's favor and His wrath, nature and grace, Adam and Christ, creation and redemption, and finally, the question concerning the place and calling of the people of God in and over against the present world.

2. By the everlasting covenant of God I understand:

a. Not an agreement between God and man, with mutual stipulations, conditions, and obligations. Nor is the covenant essentially identical with the promise, especially not in the sense of a well-meaning offer of salvation. Nor is the covenant a way of salvation. It is not a way or means unto an end. But it is the end itself.

b. But the covenant is the living relation of friendship and fellowship between God and man, in which God is the Friend-Sovereign of man, and man is God's friend-servant. It is that relation according to which God makes Himself known to man, opens His heart to him, reveals to him His secrets, makes him taste His favor and lovingkindness, and blesses him; and man knows God, loves Him, enjoys His fellowship, and serves Him freely.

c. The deepest ground of this covenant relation is the relation between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

d. This idea of the covenant is evident from all Scripture. Man was made after the image of God, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. God speaks to him, makes him His friend-servant, makes him king over all the works of His hands; and man knows and speaks to God. Gen. 1:29, 30; 2:15-17; 3:8. Enoch walked with God. Gen. 5:22. Noah walked with God, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God talks with him and reveals His secret counsel to him, establishes His covenant with him. Gen. 6:8, 9, 13; 9:9. Abraham is called the Friend of God, and God hides nothing from

him. Gen. 18:17; Jas. 2:23. Moses knew God face to face. Deut. 34:10. This covenant relation of friendship is symbolized in tabernacle and temple: God dwells with His people under one roof. It is centrally realized in Christ, Immanuel, God with us. And it is literally expressed in many texts. John 17:23; II Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3.

3. God created in the beginning not an aggregation of individual creatures, but a kosmos, an organic whole. At the pinnacle of this organic whole stood man, created after the image of God, so that in a creaturely sense he resembled God, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Adam, who thus stood at the pinnacle of the whole earthly creation, stood at the same time from the very moment of his creation in covenant relation of friendship to God. In that covenant relation God was his Sovereign Friend, and caused him to taste the fellowship of His friendship, which is life. And in that covenant relation man stood as the friend-servant of the Most High, as His officebearer, prophet, priest, and king, to represent Him in all the earthly creation, to glorify the Lord his God in all the works of His hands, to love Him with all his heart, and to have dominion over all things in the name of his Sovereign Friend. In the heart of man was found the spiritual, ethical center of the organic whole of the earthly creation. And through that spiritual, ethical center in the heart of man, the entire earthly creation was taken up in God's covenant of friendship.

4. In this relationship a breach was struck by the sin of Adam. Man violated the covenant of God. We must remember that the breach struck by sin is of a spiritual, ethical nature. Sin can never have the result that the essential nature of the creatures, man included, would be destroyed, nor that the relationship between the creatures mutually would be altered, so that the kosmos would change into a chaos. True, the earthly creature, in connection with man, temporarily bears the curse and is subject to vanity. But the organic affinity of the earthly creation was maintained. Fallen man still occupies his position at the pinnacle of the earthly creation, even though after the fall he was very limited in his natural gifts and talents, so that he only has a few remnants of them. But sin was a violation of God's covenant of friendship. A breach was struck in the relation of man to God. The breach was of a spiritual, ethical nature. He not only lost the image of God, but the operation of that image was turned into reverse. Instead of standing in true knowledge, he became darkness and loved the lie. His righteousness turned into iniquity, and his holiness into consecration to the devil and sin. Instead of loving God, man became an ally of the devil. But even so, God by His almighty power and providence still upholds all things and governs them in their organic relationship to one another.

5. God is God, and He always fulfills His good pleasure. All the moments of history are eternally in His counsel. That counsel of God is never frustrated, but always realized. And that realization of His counsel runs in a straight line in history. All things, the devil, sin, the fall of man, and the

ungodly, must serve Him for the realization of His counsel. Not in a single moment, from the creation of the world to the parousia, is that counsel of God frustrated or changed. Hence, we cannot speak of the frustration of an original ordinance of creation, which in spite of sin and the devil is maintained by so-called "common grace." There never was another plan of the world than that which is now realized through the fall of man and the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

6. Although the fall was effected through the wanton disobedience of man, it nevertheless took place according to the counsel of God. According to that counsel, God had provided from all eternity some better thing for us. The final rest was not attained through the rest of the seventh day. It was only an image of the eternal rest, which shall be attained in the eternal tabernacle of God with men in the new creation, in which all things in heaven and on earth shall be united and have their center in the heart of Christ forever. For he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, and the firstborn from the dead, the head of the body, the beginning, in order that He might have in all things the preeminence. All things are created in Him and for Him, and it is the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell. Col. 1:15-20. Hence, immediately after the fall God maintains His covenant in spite of Satan and sin, but now as that covenant is eternally established in Christ. Christ stands behind Adam, and Adam falls on Christ. Through the maintenance and realization of God's eternal covenant of friendship, the alliance of fallen man with the devil is put to nought; and by the operation of grace enmity against Satan is wrought in the heart of man.

7. This operation of grace, however, does not concern all men, but follows the line of election and reprobation. Election is the eternal counsel of God according to which He determined from before the foundation of the world to save and glorify the new humanity, the body of Christ, in which all the individual elect have a place, and that too, in connection with God's kosmos, the new creation, of which Christ shall be the Head over all, and in which He, as the firstborn of every creature, shall have the preeminence. It is God's kosmos that is saved in Christ. John 3:16. And the counsel of reprobation, which is the very antithesis of election, is the eternal determination of God to lead the vessels of wrath unto everlasting desolation. Rom. 9:13-23. Not all the children of Adam, therefore, are ordained to enter into the eternal covenant of God's friendship. Grace runs along the line of election. The kernel, or pit, only is touched by grace. The shell is rejected. It is through this counsel of God and its realization that the antithesis enters into the world. For also now, after the fall and after the entrance of sin and grace into the world, the creatures remain in their temporal, organic relationship. Even grace, no more than sin, does not bring an essential change in the temporal existence of all things. There is, therefore, no dualism. Nature and grace are no opposites. But through the entrance of sin into the world

and the operation of grace in Christ Jesus from the beginning the antithesis of sin and grace is called into being.

8. Grace is never common. The term *grace* as it occurs in Holy Scripture has many different connotations. Its basic notion, from which all the other meanings may be derived, is that of gracefulness, pleasantness, attractiveness. The Hebrew word *chen* is derived from the verb *chanan*, which means "to incline," and in piel signifies "to make fair, pleasant, gracious." Cf. Prov. 22:11: "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." Grace here evidently has the meaning of pleasantness. The man of a pure heart speaks pleasant words. His speech is graceful, so that for its sake the king delights to have him around and commune with him. Secondly, this passage also informs us that this pleasantness and gracefulness of speech is not a superficial beauty, but the pleasantness and attractiveness of ethical goodness and purity. Cf. also Ps. 45:3; Prov. 31:30. The New Testament word corresponding to the Hebrew *chen* is *charis*. It is derived from *chairein*, which means "to rejoice, to be glad." Accordingly, *charis* denotes that which affords joy and delight, charm, loveliness, gracefulness, pleasantness. Of the Lord we read that all bore Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Lu. 4:22. In Col. 4:6 the apostle admonishes believers that their speech must always be with grace, seasoned with salt, in order that they may know how they ought to answer every man. Cf. also Eph. 4:29; I Pe. 2:20. And secondly, the word grace is used in Scripture in the subjective sense, to denote an attitude of gracefulness or pleasantness, a gracious disposition, a friendly inclination of the heart which one may reveal toward another. This is no doubt the meaning of the expression frequently occurring in Scripture, "to find grace in the eyes of someone." This is also the meaning of the term in Lu. 1:30: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." Cf. also Acts 7:46, 14:26; Rom. 5:15. It is easy to see how from this meaning of the word *grace* the idea is derived of "undeserved, or forfeited, favor." Still the term has the meaning of friendly, or favorable, or gracious disposition, the attitude of grace God assumes toward His people; but now the freedom and sovereignty of the grace of God appears and is emphasized by the state and condition of the objects of this grace and the subjects that receive and experience this favor of God. Thus in Rom. 4:4; 3:24; 11:6; Eph. 1:7. Grace in this sense is such a favorable disposition or friendly attitude of God as is revealed even to those that are wholly undeserving in themselves, yea, who have wholly forfeited His kindness and favor, and are worthy of wrath and damnation. Fourthly, the term *grace* is used in Scripture to denote the power of God whereby the sinner is actually saved and delivered from the bondage of sin and corruption, and made pleasant in the sight of God. Important in this connection is the passage in I Pe. 5:10, where the term *grace* is used in its all-comprehensive sense: "But the God of all grace, who hath

called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." God is the God of all grace. He is gracious in Himself. He is the source and author of all grace. Apart from Him there is no grace. He works it and bestows it as a manifestation of His own gracefulness. Cf. also Eph. 2:8; I Cor. 15:10, I Pe. 1:13. And thus we can understand, finally, that the word *grace* in Scripture also has the meaning of "thanks." Rom. 6:17; II Cor. 2:14; 9:15; II Tim. 1:3. The meaning is most probably that grace is ascribed to God by those that are the objects of, and have experienced the power of His grace, in order that thus He may receive the praise as the God of all grace.

9. That this grace is never common, but is only for and upon the elect in Christ Jesus is testified by all Scripture. By common grace, no matter in what sense the term is used, and no matter what other terms may be used instead (love, lovingkindness, goodness, mercy, etc.), is always meant a gracious disposition in God toward, and a gracious operation of God upon the elect and reprobate, the righteous and wicked alike and in common. That this is never the testimony of Scripture, but that the very opposite is true, is abundantly evident from the following passages: Rom. 9:13, ff.; Mal. 1:2-4; Ps. 1:1-6; Ps. 2:4, 5, 9; Ps. 5:5-7, 10, 11; Ps. 10:2-18; Ps. 11:5; Ps. 14:2-5; Ps. 16:4; Ps. 17:13; Ps. 18:27, 28; Ps. 21:9-13; Ps. 28:5; Ps. 32:10; Ps. 34:17; Ps. 35:1-9; Ps. 37:12, 13, 35, 36; Ps. 52:3-7; Ps. 55:24; Ps. 58:4, 7-12; Ps. 59:6-16; Ps. 64:8; Ps. 68:1, 2, 7, 22; Ps. 69:23-28. Confer also Ps. 73, 78, 79, 83, 89, 91, 92, 94, 97, 101, 105, 109, 118, 119, 136, 139, 144, 145, 147, 149. Prov. 3:32, 33; Prov. 10:2, 3, 24-32; Prov. 6:20; Prov. 11:31; Prov. 12:21; Prov. 13:25; Prov. 15:9, 29; Prov. 16:5; Isa. 57:20; Isa. 57:21; Nahum 1, 2; John 3:36; Rom. 1:18, ff.; Rom. 9:18; I Pe. 5:5 etc. The current teaching of Scripture, therefore, is that God is gracious to His people in Christ Jesus, whom He has chosen from before the foundation of the world, and that He hates the reprobate wicked, in time and eternity.

10. The grace of God is not to be understood in an individualistic, particularistic sense, but is directed to the organic whole of the church in Christ as her Head, and, in connection with this, with the organic whole of all creatures of the whole kosmos. Only, the reprobate ungodly is never object of this grace, whether it is understood in the sense of a disposition in God or of an operation of God upon the ungodly. But just as there is an operation of God's drawing, saving, and glorifying grace directed to the elect kernel of the kosmos, so there is also an operation of God's reprobating and rejecting wrath directed to the reprobate shell.

11. The preaching of the gospel is as such neither blessing nor a curse. It addresses man as a rational, moral creature that is responsible to God. God, however, uses this preaching of the gospel to the execution of His counsel, the counsel of predestination, both of election and reprobation, so that He, without encroaching upon the moral nature of man and his responsibility, calls the one unto salvation and hardens

the other. The preaching of the gospel, therefore, is no grace for the reprobate; nor is it ever meant to be grace for him. Cf. Rom. 9:18; II Cor. 2:15-17, etc.

12. All things of this present time, rain and sunshine, food and gladness, gifts and talents, house and possessions, name, position, and power, etc., are means which God uses, but which also man, as rational, moral creature, employs. Because God uses them, they serve Him in the execution of His counsel, both in regard to the wicked and to the righteous. And because man uses the same means, they are gifts to him whereby he is called and obliged to serve and give thanks to God. But in themselves they are no grace, nor a blessing. Men have all things in common, except the grace of God.

13. The covenant of Noah is not a covenant of friendship based upon "common grace" and established with the sinful world as such and outside of Christ, but is a revelation of the one covenant of God's friendship in Christ Jesus as it embraces the entire kosmos, and as it is symbolized in the rainbow. For the present time the entire creation bears the curse. But presently also the brute creature shall participate in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. 8:19-22.

14. Man, according to our confessions, has some remnants of natural light, not of his original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The latter are not only entirely lost, but also subverted into their very opposite. It is for this reason that the natural man entirely pollutes this natural light, and keeps it under in unrighteousness.

15. There is no operation of "common grace" through the Holy Spirit, whereby the natural man, apart from the grace of regeneration, is morally improved, or whereby the process of sin is restrained. On the contrary, bound up with the organic development of the human race, and directed by the bridle of God's all-overruling providence, the power of sin develops as quickly as possible, also through an operation of God's wrath upon the sinful lusts of men. In that organic development every man bears the fruit of the root sin of Adam in harmony with his time and place in history, circumstances, means, inclination, and character. Cf. Rom. 1:18-32.

16. So-called civic righteousness is an attempt of the natural and sinful man, who by his natural light observes the relations and laws established by God in the kosmos, and seeing the usefulness for himself of these laws and relations, to direct his life, as much as possible and for his own good, according to those laws of God in an external sense of the word. If he succeeds in these attempts, God, Who always binds Himself to His own ordinances and laws, gives him success. But success is no blessing. In the way of his success the ungodly becomes ever greater, becomes ever more responsible, and, under the wrath of God, aggravates his own judgment.

17. In addition, and in conclusion, let me state that the Reformed Confessions certainly do not speak of "common

(Continued on page 469)

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 48

Chapter I

The Idea of the Kingdom of God

No one can ever dethrone Him, or even for a moment successfully dispute His sovereign power and authority. He guides the sun and moon and stars in their courses. He causes the heavens to be covered with clouds, and the rain to satisfy the thirsty ground. He clothes the forest with foliage green, and gives to the lily its garments more beautiful than Solomon's raiment. The lightning and the winds, the rivers in their course and the meandering brooks, the wild beasts of the forest and all cattle, the cry of the young ravens and the song of the lark,—all alike are under the sway of His sovereign scepter, and obey His divine will.

Nay more, He is also the sole Governor of those creatures that have a will and mind of their own and that consciously choose their own way, men and angels and devils. For even the demons and all the wicked of the earth, though they rage furiously and though they imagine a vain thing against the Lord of all, can but execute His will and serve the purpose of the realization of His good pleasure. God is sovereign forever and ever. He rules by His power over all creation, and all creatures must serve His purpose and be in submission to Him.

But this is not the dominion that is meant in the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." In this kingdom He rules not by force, but by grace. He is enthroned not merely in the heavens, but in the hearts of His subjects. In that kingdom His law is not merely an external rule of life, to which the subjects indeed must conform themselves, which they are obliged to obey, but which they also can and actually do violate. But it is written in the hearts of the subjects, so that they love to do His will, and have a delight in obeying His precepts. The King of this kingdom has a covenant with His subjects. He is their Friend, Who is known and loved by all the citizens of the kingdom, who find their greatest delight in keeping His Word.

Such is the kingdom of God referred to in the second petition.

This kingdom of God, however, is also called the kingdom of Christ.

Christ, the Son of God in human nature, Who died for our sins on the accursed tree, and was raised for our justification, Who is exalted at the right hand of God the Father, and Who will come again in glory, was anointed from before the foundation of the world to be the only visible representative of the invisible God, the chief Servant of the Lord, as well as the Lord of all in the name of God, and thus to be the Viceroy, the King under God, in His kingdom.

In the heart of Christ is the spiritual center of this kingdom of God. And through the Spirit of Christ this glorious dominion of God is realized in the hearts of all the people of God. The kingdom of Christ, therefore, is God's rule through Christ by His Spirit and Word. In and through Christ God laid the foundations of His kingdom in righteousness. Through Christ He makes Himself known to the subjects of this kingdom in all the glory of His grace. Through the Spirit of Christ He bestows upon the subjects of His kingdom all the spiritual graces necessary to enter into and to function in the kingdom of heaven. For this reason the kingdom of God does not extend any farther than the spiritual rule of Christ, which means that it is realized in the church.

There is a close relation between the church and the kingdom of God, though there are also points of difference between the two conceptions.

The church is the spiritual body of Christ into which all the elect are in due time ingrafted by faith as members of His body. The kingdom of God is the commonwealth over which Christ rules in the name of God and under Him. The church represents the house of God, His temple, in which God dwells with His people in most intimate covenant relationship. The Kingdom emphasizes the idea of the servant-king relationship, in which God rules over us, we delight to do His will, and as priest-kings in the name of Christ rule over all the works of God's hands. With relation to the church, Christ is the Bridegroom and the church is the bride. With relation to the kingdom, Christ is the King under God, and while doing His will we reign with Him as kings. The church, as the bride of Christ, is also the new Jerusalem, the everlasting capital of the kingdom of heaven. And the church instituted on earth serves the cause of the kingdom of God, especially through the preaching of the Word, the instruction of its members as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and the gathering of all the citizens of the kingdom of God through the extension of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Nevertheless, the church and the kingdom are closely related. The members of the church are also the citizens of the kingdom. They are the elect, the believers in Christ. And the life of the kingdom becomes manifest only through the members of the body of Christ. They have their unity in the same Christ, the King of the church and the Head of the body. Moreover, they imply the same spiritual blessings of grace, righteousness and everlasting life. Hence, the Catechism is certainly correct when it interprets this second petition as meaning: "preserve and increase thy church; destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word." For in the preservation of the church and in the destruction of the devil and the bringing to nought of all wicked counsels devised against the gospel, the kingdom of God and its coming is being realized.

Christ, therefore, is King in the kingdom of heaven.

It is through Christ as the King that God increases His church and that He preserves her unto the end.

Christ as the exalted Lord, the King of His church, to Whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, increases His church by gathering all the elect from the four winds of heaven. He does this by His divine, efficacious calling, through the preaching of the gospel. For Christ is the Son of God in the flesh, Who revealed the Father, Who merited for His church all the blessings of salvation, Who is exalted at the right hand of God, Who has received the promise of the Holy Spirit. And it is by His divine and powerful Word, through His Spirit, that He increases His church and gathers her out of the corrupt human race. Only when He speaks His Word to the sinner does he hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, gathering the sheep which His Father gave Him. His is the mighty Word of God unto salvation, whereby the sinner is called out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of the natural fellowship of the guilty and sinful human race into the fellowship of His body, the communion of saints, the church of the living God. And this divine and powerful Word reaches the sinner through the preaching of the gospel. This does not imply that through this preaching the increase and gathering of the church becomes the work of man. For we may literally say that the gospel is Christ. And in the preaching of the gospel it is always He that speaks through it. And the gathering of the church does not become the work of man when the Lord commissions and calls the preachers of the gospel and institutes His church and gives unto her pastors and teachers, that through them the church may proclaim the gospel unto all nations. For without the King of the kingdom of heaven, there could be no preachers. It is He that calls and prepares the preachers. It is He that sends them whithersoever He will. And it is He that speaks through their preaching by His Spirit to gather His church. Even though it be through the instrumentality of the preaching, therefore, the church is always increased and gathered not by men, but by Christ, the Son of God, through His Spirit and Word. And therefore we pray in this second petition of the Lord's Prayer: "O God of our salvation: gather and increase Thy church through Jesus Christ, Who is exalted at Thy right hand."

But it is also Christ that preserves His church, and defends her against all the powers of darkness.

Christ is King over all things in the whole world. All power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth at His exaltation at the right hand of God. By Him God governs all things in heaven and on earth. He rules over the brute creation, as well as over all the affairs of men. He governs and directs all matters of war and peace, of business and industry, of social and national and international relationships. He even rules over the secret intents of the hearts of men, and controls all their plans and counsels. He is King over all the powers of darkness, the devil and all his demons and all their secret devices. And this power He employs to

defend and to preserve His church over against all her enemies.

Many enemies the church has in the world and throughout all the history of it. And these enemies of the church are powerful. And they are able to use many means to reach their purpose. Theirs are usually the wisdom and the power, the riches and the resources, the might and dominion of this world. It is by way of exception that God's people are found in high places. The world is in power. It is in a position to employ various means and methods to seek the destruction of the church and the destruction of the kingdom of heaven. Not only does the world attempt to entangle believers in their false doctrine, to lead them astray from the way of truth and righteousness. But they also make the place of the faithful very narrow, take away their name and their job, their place and their very bread, and fill them with reproach, persecute them, leave them no standing room in the world, and kill them all the day long. Thus the world seeks to destroy the kingdom of God and the church of Christ Jesus our Lord. But she shall never succeed. The Lord of the church, the King of the kingdom of God, Who loved and gave Himself for her, is Lord also of the world. He defends and preserves His church against all her enemies. The enemies cannot possibly touch them, but by His will and direction. To be sure, it is the will of the Lord that believers shall suffer with Him, and that they fill the measure of His suffering. But this defensive and preserving power of Christ nevertheless keeps them in the midst of all tribulation and suffering. The elect shall never be deceived and finally fall away. The wicked world can attack and can realize its wicked devices to destroy the church only under the direction of Christ the Lord. Even, as Scripture instructs us, when toward the very end the world will unite for a while under one head, and the man of sin appears, and under him the forces of darkness will unitedly attack the true believers, the power of Christ preserves the faithful even unto the end. And also this is implied in the prayer of the second petition: "Thy kingdom come."

The same kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of Christ, is also called the kingdom of heaven. In the very beginning of His ministry Jesus preached: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17. And with the same message He sent out His twelve disciples. Matt. 10:7. In the beatitudes He blessed the poor in spirit because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5:3. And again, He blesses them that are reviled and persecuted for righteousness' sake because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5:10. And in verse 19 of the same chapter, the Lord teaches: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

H.H.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 19:10-12

Evil men and scoffers always contradicted Jesus. They do this in spite of the fact that they are all convinced that Jesus is no common teacher, but that he speaks as one having authority. Legion are the times that the scoffers and unbelievers of Jesus' day attempted to ensnare Him in His words. They do not really intend to wield the Sword of the Spirit by rightly dividing the Word. Rather they are constantly engaged in a battle of words, in "Worter-krieg." They do not come with the "thus saith the Lord," neither do they bow before the Word of the Lord. They are only interested in their attempt at self-justification. Luke 16:15.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, never engages in mere battle of words. He fights the battle of *the Word*. He wields the Sword of the Spirit unerringly. And he lays all the secret, evil thoughts of men bare. And His word is sharper than any two-edged sword and passes through to the dividing asunder of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hear him say: "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15.

Underneath the attempt to ensnare Jesus in His Words is the desire and futile purpose of breaking the bands of Christ's Word as He convicts of sin, righteousness and of judgment. Hence, they wrest all of the Scriptures to their own destruction, and would stop the mouth of the chief Prophet who came to reveal unto us the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption.

That was true of these false prophets along the whole line of the law of God as the rule for christian thankfulness. But this was, in the case of our Scripture passage, particularly true when it came to the matter of the question of giving a wife a writing of divorcement. Then the "hardness of your hearts" certainly revealed itself with equal force and intensity to that of the stiff-necked fathers in the wilderness. And when the Word of God is maintained by Christ, when the original ordinance of God is maintained by Christ, then even the "flesh" in the disciples of Christ manifests itself so that they say: "If the case of a man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." They argue that they would then rather play the safe side and not be married at all.

It is at this point that Jesus comes with the seeming dark saying as recorded in Matthew 19:10-12, which reads: "*Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are Eunuchs that were so born from their mother's womb: and there be Eunuchs that were made Eunuchs by men; and there be Eunuchs that made themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it.*"

This saying of Jesus seems to belong to the very dark

sayings of the Bible. To receive it and understand its meaning is a gift of God. Surely that this is a gift of God does not imply that only a few of God's children understand its spiritual import. The church has received the Holy Spirit, and principally understands all things. Therefore when we interpret this Word you who are Spiritually minded and not simply natural man, you will say: that is the way I really always understood this passage even though I did not always see this thus clearly from this Scripture passage. Hence, they to whom it is given to understand this passage are not a gifted few amongst the children of God, but all of God's children, enlightened by the Spirit of Christ, understand. Hence, not a few of a higher "spiritual order" as is the interpretation of Romanism.

Because God's people understand, the spiritual minded will understand, we will try to interpret God's Word here without fear or favor. We will not help evil men justify themselves in the hardness of their hearts, but will listen to the infallible exegesis of Jesus of the Scriptures of this point, to His fearless application to life, laying low all the evil inventions of men. For what has become the accepted customs of men in regard to marriage and divorce in the Courts of our land and in the "popular" thinking is an abomination before God! And when church counsels begin to write very learned(?) reports of this question and set aside the simple teaching of the text, evidencing that it is not given to them to understand this word, then that refined learning is too an abomination unto the Lord!

For the Word stands: What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder! Matt. 19:6.

And so we stand before the task of interpreting this Scripture passage; nay, better still, we must simply listen to Jesus' interpretation of the Scriptures, bowing our neck under the easy yoke and light burden of Christ.

* * * *

The disciples present a certain question of exegesis and of ethical importance to Jesus. They ask the very clear-cut question whether it is "permissible" for a man to put away his wife for every cause. They bring up this question not because they have put off all malice and envy and evil speaking, and thus hunger for the pure milk of the word to grow thereby, but rather to catch Jesus in His Words.

This was a very evil question. Its formulation reminds us of the first evil question that was ever directed to man on earth by the Serpant in Paradise. He said: may you not eat of any trees at all. He said this to tempt Eve. And so it is here. May we put away our wives for any cause? Those who ask the question seem deeply concerned about the evil of "lightly putting away of a man's wife." They are the orthodox, they are the men who take the law of God seriously! Oh, they are not opposed to putting away of a wife — if the reason is good. But they do not will to do this for every cause. Very righteous men these are, one would say! They must be sure about the meaning of the text.

What text?

They have in mind the word of God through Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 where we read: "When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her (uncleanness) that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of this house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die who took her to be his wife; her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled, for that is abomination before Jehovah: and thou shall not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

There were really two known and accepted interpretations of this passage at the time of Jesus.

There was the school of Hillel. These held that the phrase "if she find no favor in his eyes" referred to the fact that if later a man found that wife was not as pretty as she used to be, or if she had burned his biscuits, he could give her a bill of divorcement. This was the liberal school. Of course, such was not the interpretation of the pharisees.

These was also the school of Shammai. This was the more orthodox school. They were more exact with the text in Deut. 24:1 and insisted that Moses only has reference to adultery when he spoke of a man finding something displeasing in his wife. Surely Jesus would have to agree with them, one would think. One might still argue in a casuistic way as to what really constitutes adultery, where the very act begins on a pharisaic basis, yet they were, one would think, on the right track. And, incidently, experience teaches us that there be many of these "pharisees," orthodox sticklers for the correct rendering of the text in Deut. 24:1, in God's church even today. Divorcing a man's wife—well only in the case of adultery! And then that is the final and only consideration—and men justify themselves with this word of Moses.

However, Christ brings up another consideration from the Word of God as the chief Prophet, who reveals unto us the full Counsel of God concerning our redemption. The Word of God to which Christ refers is an earlier Word of the Lord spoken already to Adam and Eve in Paradise in the "beginning." It is the passage recorded in Genesis 2:23, 24, where we read: "And Jehovah caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a women and brought her unto the man. And the man said: this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of the man. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh.*"

Mark you well, dear reader. Two Scriptures passages;

an earlier and a all-determining passage, "grundleggund" in character and a later passage which Moses gave as the *law-giver*!

This latter passage was given not as something constructive and normative in the life of the Christian in a normal world and life, but it was given for the sake of the "hardness of your hearts!" This provision in Deut. 24:1 is a indictment, it is a accusation. Forsooth, it belongs to that part of the Scriptures which is a "handwriting against us." One must always say where one sees a writing of divorce: here was and is the callousness of heart, and insensibility for the things of the Spirit and of the kingdom of heaven.

The former passage is the norm of the perfect life of the regenerate child of God. And that is to be the norm of our life. Here there is not accusation against us. It was not given for the sake of the hardness of the heart, but rather it was given as the inner law of the Spirit of life in the marriage tie. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away then that one jot or tittle of this fundamental ordinance would even pass away.

We will write more about this in a future article. In the meantime, dear reader, think about this question: Did Jesus come into the world to make Deut. 24:1 a reality? Or is the reality of Deut. 24:1 such that it all was a handwriting which Christ must nail to the Cross with His own blood, in order that we as the church might in thankfulness to God once more live according to Gen. 2:24?

He that is able to understand this let him answer!

G.I.

QUESTION BOX.

P.K. of Grand Rapids, Mich. asks:

Is it principally and fundamentally wrong to have a sermon recording in divine worship if it is impossible to obtain either a minister, candidate or student for divine worship?

Answer:

"Principally and fundamentally wrong." That is strong language. It leaves the impression as if there was a debate about this question and some maintained that there is, indeed, something "fundamentally and principally wrong" with recording a sermon in divine worship. Hence, I wish that the questioner had produced the arguments against it. As it is now, I cannot see the wrong of it, provided the sermon recorded is by one of our own ministers and the preaching of it proceeds from the consistory. The chief question is: will and can Christ speak His own Word to the assembled congregation through a sermon that is either preached, read, or recorded? And this question I answer positively. The sermons that are "preached" over the radio are also mostly recorded. And I can see no difference between this and recording a sermon in divine worship.

H.H.

IN HIS FEAR

A Snare for Our Children

(2)

A Roman Catholic, given the opportunity to teach your children, will instruct them in Roman Catholicism.

There can be no doubt about that.

A Protestant, hired to teach your children, will give instruction that reveals the Protestant position.

And he will do so in opposition to the Roman Catholic position.

An unbeliever, having your children before him for instruction, will transmit to them instruction that is colored by his unbelief.

He will do so in opposition both to the Roman Catholic and to the Protestant position. He will oppose all the "faiths" in his teaching.

These are cold, hard facts. Psychologically, even, it is extremely difficult, if not even impossible, for a man to give instruction from a different viewpoint than that of his own faith or unbelief.

It is, therefore, and amazing phenomenon when a Protestant, who sees the snare for his children in exposing them to Roman Catholic doctrine and teaching, dares to expose them to the teachings of unbelief. A false belief that advocates image worship frightens him. But unbelief, that denies the cross of Christ and presents it as nothing more than a martyr's death, he considers safe for his children.

If it were true in the past — and it was ever since the fall of man in Paradise — it is even more so true today that to give your children over to the world for instruction five days a week in the philosophies of Atheism, Evolutionism, Modernism and the like is laying a snare for your children. Unbelief is rooted in the same evil principle that image worship is: Jehovah is not God!

Whether you say that by setting up an idol to worship in His place; or whether you say that by ruling Him out of all things and out of your life, it makes no difference. You lay the same snare for your children. You set a trap for them to turn their backs upon Him and condemn a walk *in His fear*.

Because by nature we are children of our age, we easily lose the perspective. And today our life is such a mad rush that we hardly find time to look back and compare the past with the present. But the Scriptures are still there to remind us and teach us that always from the sowing of the seed of sin in Paradise, thru all time and until the man of sin appears, there is a continual development of sin. Our present age IS more evil than the preceding one. There can be no doubt about that either.

One little observation from life today will suffice to show that. We make bold to state — by personal observation and

experience — that there are mothers and fathers living today who, having punished their children severely for attending the movie, today can hardly be torn away from their television sets when the films of these *same* movies and of even more corrupt ones are shown today. The entertainment of the movie house was condemned. The same entertainment thru the medium of television is eagerly sought.

Grandma and Grandpa, who were so strict about these things for their own children, now set a snare for their grandchildren by taking them into the movie house of their living room with its television set!

But to return to our line of thought. The tree of sin which was sown in Paradise is bringing forth more and more corrupt fruit; and the fruit is becoming more poisonous and spiritually bitter as time rushes past us.

In a little more than one thousand years sin had developed so fast that it was ready for the judgment of the flood. And thru the flood God delivered His church from that corrupt **world that sin had produced**. That sin had developed so fast is undoubtedly due to a great part to the fact that men lived to be as much as nine hundred years old before they died. They were able to teach their evil "tricks" and sinful practices not only to their children and grandchildren; they were able to teach the grandchildren of their great-grandchildren! They were able to lay a snare not only for their immediate offspring but to draw the net tight for several generations that their offspring would beget.

Principally the case is the same today. Men do not live to the ripe old age of nine hundred years anymore. But the influence of ungodly men, of false teachers, of heretics and of the servants of the devil is becoming increasingly wider in its scope. Today the means of propagating the lie, of spreading it far and wide are so highly developed. Today evil practices may so quickly and easily be taught to the whole world. The printing press, the radio, the television not only serve in this evil propagating of sin, vice, false doctrines and the like but the means of transportation which make the world so small also serve in the development of sin.

The idols of the world — not simply of the land in which we are citizens but of the whole world — are dangled before the eyes of our children in countless number of ways.

And shall we approve of them by sending our children to the schools of the ungodly to be taught further in regard to these things? Do we dare to send our children to the world that the *mental* images of their antichristian philosophies may be made still more alluring to them?

Would we dare, then, tell the All-wise and Sovereign God that we do this in order to bring up our children *in His fear*?

The civil courts in our land would take hold of parents who mixed poison with the food which they served their children. They will also hold guilty those parents who sent their children to others to be poisoned by them. Will the Holy One of Israel, then, approve of our action of sending our children to those who can do nothing else but poison the

minds of our children in regard to His sovereignty, justice? They simply do not believe these truths of His sovereignty, justice, grace and glory themselves. How can they give any instruction other than according to their own unbelief which is spiritual poison to the minds of the child of God.

The world simply repeats in word of instruction and in deed the words of godless Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" That principle permeates all the teaching of the world even tho it may allow (but never demands and advocates) a little Bible reading and prayer in the school room.

Its books and its instruction does not present Him as the God of history. Christ does not come to His own in the history class of the schools of the world; even tho this is called a Christian nation. A few words may be devoted to that period of history of the Roman Empire when Christ lived, died and rose again the third day. However that resurrection, you may be sure, will not be presented as a historical fact and as the firstfruits of them that sleep. It will not receive the emphasis that it deserves as one of the most important historical events that this world has seen. The discovery of America will outshine it. The invention of the steam engine, the cotton gin, electricity, the atomic bomb will in that instruction overshadow this event that signifies for the church of Jesus Christ her justification before God and pledge of eternal glory.

Kingdoms, their rise and fall, their rulers and traitors, their victories and defeats will receive much attention. But Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who now "has dominion over land and sea" and His kingdom are brushed aside as so much mythology. Christ does *not* come to His own except in a *Christian* School. And the school that does not so present history so that Christ comes to His own is not a Christian School.

We will not take the time to show the difference between the Christian School instruction and the schools of the world in the other subjects that are taught. We simply want to emphasize that the school wherein Christ does not come to His own is an antichristian school. What is not for God and His Christ is against Him and His Christ. The schools of the world are not neutral when they fail to teach Him and show the importance of His birth, cross and resurrection for the history of this world. They are not neutral when they ignore Him. They are positively antichristian and their teaching is and must be in the service of the rearing up of the antichrist. It is, therefore, also becoming increasingly plain that the schools of the world are going to instruct their children (God forbid that they do so Zion's children) as to the position and worth of the godless unions (and presently the justifiability of the mark of the beast).

Let us not forget that the kingdom of the antichrist will be part of the history of this world. Let us likewise remember that he comes as the product of the developments of the several kingdoms that have been and now are in the

world. The beast in Rev. 13 had seven heads and ten horns. Five of these heads were; one is and the seventh—the antichrist—still cometh. To that kingdom of the antichrist all history is leading. His kingdom will be the climax of all the kingdoms of this earth; borrowing the strongest points of each and for a brief time overcoming all the weaknesses of those that served to bring it forth.

To present the history of this world apart from Christ and His kingdom, apart from His birth, death, resurrection and ascension to receive power in heaven and earth over ALL things is to give antichristian instruction.

Shall we enroll our children in the schools of the antichrist?

Shall we lay a snare for them to be entrapped in philosophies that cry for his appearance and defend him as the saviour of this world? Especially today, when man fears that he has the power to wipe out civilization with his hydrogen and cobalt bombs, the world begins to cry for a saviour of mankind. And the schools of the world will strive to inculcate into your children the need and the glory of such a man.

Christ, the Prince of Peace, will more and more be presented as a dismal failure. No, not in so many words. That is the devilishness and the antichristianity of it. The children of the world (and yours, if you send them there) will be taught the need of someone else: the antichrist.

Shall we strive to defend that snare for our children? Shall we throw down this article in disgust and defend the antichristian snare? Shall we philosophize that a little poison will not kill them?

Let us walk in His fear.

And walking in His fear let us take our children by the hand and bring them where Christ is properly recognized and taught as the Lord of Lord's and king of kings, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of His Church.

J.A.H.

OF GRACE

(Continued from page 463)

grace," except in the Arminian sense of the word, and that therefore the Synod of the Chr. Ref. Churches in 1924 erred and began to sail into Arminian waters, when they nevertheless tried to prove from the Confessions that the theory of common grace is Reformed.

I would have liked to develop these several propositions a little more elaborately. But I am afraid that already I occupy too much space in *Torch and Trumpet*. And therefore, with thanks for the opportunity offered me, I will now close, and sign myself

Yours for the development and preservation
of the Reformed Truth,

H. Hoeksema

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

THE PAPACY.

We concluded our preceding article with the observation that the bishop of Rome began to occupy the leading position in the whole Church, and that this was not difficult to understand. Various circumstances united to bring this to pass. It is now our purpose to trace this amazing phenomenon, the rise and development of the papacy, as set forth by Philip Schaff in his *History of the Christian Church*. However, before we begin with this a few general observations may be in order which will throw considerable light upon this amazing development.

It is understandable that the bishops of big churches in the large cities should be regarded as of higher rank than the bishops of smaller churches. These bishops of the larger churches came to be called *metropolitan bishops*. In the course of time the churches of five of the cities came to be regarded as having very special importance. These cities were Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. The bishops in these cities came to be called *patriarchs*. And it happened that the bishop of Rome gradually began to have more influence than the other four.

The church in Jerusalem was naturally held in high esteem. In Jerusalem Christ had been crucified, had risen again, and had ascended to heaven. In Jerusalem the Holy Spirit had been poured out into the Church on Pentecost. Jerusalem was, historically, the beginning of the Church of God as it developed in the New Dispensation. It was the mother church. And the mother church is always held in high esteem.

The case of the church at Antioch was entirely different. In Antioch the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. There, as well as in Jerusalem, Paul had labored. There the work of missions among the gentiles had its beginning. Antioch is known as the first missionary church. Hence, the church at Antioch occupied a tremendously important position as far as its relation to the gentiles is concerned. It is the mother church of a multitude of churches in Asia Minor and in Greece. It had many notable bishops, and it had also become the seat of an important school of theological thought. Besides, next to Alexandria Antioch was the largest and most important city in the East, and the third city in size and importance in the entire Roman Empire. It is not difficult to understand why the patriarch of Antioch should be regarded with tremendously high esteem.

The church at Alexandria also occupied an important

position. It could not claim apostolic origin. However, tradition relates that the evangelist, Mark, was active in its founding. Besides, it was the second largest city in the Empire, the greatest seat of learning and culture, and for centuries far more splendid than Rome itself. There, too, flourished a famous theological school, in which Origen, the greatest scholar of the Church up to that time, had taught. Hence, Alexandria's position and background enable us to understand the strategic importance of its bishop or patriarch.

Another church which was held in high esteem was the church in Constantinople. This city had been founded as a Greek colony. Constantine the Great, the first "Christian" emperor, had changed his residence from Rome to this city. This explains why the town was renamed in his honour and called Constantinople, it previously having been known as Byzantium. Constantinople owed its importance solely to the fact that in it was located the residence of the emperor. However, this constituted a sufficient reason why its bishop should occupy a commanding position in the Church.

Last, but hardly least, is Rome. Rome was the first city in the Empire. Not only is it true that Paul had labored there, but tradition has it that the church at Rome was founded by the apostle Peter (this tradition is unfounded). To that apostle, it is claimed, Christ had entrusted the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Peter had transmitted the power of the keys of the Kingdom to the bishop of Rome. In almost every controversy the churches, in the east, as well as in the west, had appealed to the bishop of Rome. In the great controversies about the person and nature of Christ, orthodoxy had gained the victory because of the influence of the West under the leadership of the bishop of Rome. Jerusalem was no longer a leader among the churches, and its voice bore no weight in the controversies. There was always the keenest rivalry between the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople for supremacy, and none of them was willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the bishop of Rome. However, in their struggle for supremacy they often sought the support of the bishop of Rome. The same Council of Chalcedon which permanently crippled the power of the patriarch of Alexandria, adopted a canon which declared the patriarch of Constantinople to be of the same dignity as the bishop at Rome. This proves indeed that the bishop of Rome was not viewed as the supreme bishop. In fact, we may say that against the canon of the Council of Chalcedon, which declared the patriarch of Constantinople to be of equal dignity with the bishop of Rome, Pope Leo I vainly protested. This Leo I died in 461. Is it not remarkable that, at this late date, he should protest in vain? The Roman Catholic Church can derive little comfort from this.

We know, I am sure, the Scriptural claims which the Roman Catholic Church advances in support of the papacy. The belief grew that the church at Rome had been founded by the apostle Peter. Had not Christ said to him: "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs"? Had the apostle, therefore, not

been put in charge of the entire flock? Moreover, to Peter had been entrusted the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Consequently, that Peter was first in importance among the apostles was generally believed at that time, and the idea grew that the bishops of Rome were the successors of Peter, who was fabled to have been the first pope.

Moreover, the position of the Pope at Rome was strengthened by the course of history. Circumstances in a very remarkable way favored the growth of the papal power. The whole chain of historical events of that time seemed to lead to a gathering of authority in the bishopric at Rome. Let us briefly review these steps.

First, the barbarians who invaded Italy had come under the spell of Rome. Rome finally fell in the year, 476, although it had been invaded and plundered already some sixty five years earlier. These barbarians had embraced Christianity and stood in awe of the bishops of Rome. We must bear in mind that when the emperor had been unable to protect the people from the barbarian invaders, the unarmed bishop of Rome had been able to shield them to a certain extent from the worst excesses of the barbarians. Pope Leo I had been able to restrain, in a measure at least, the fierce Attila and the wrath of the Vandal chief. Rome's difficulties and troubles certainly served, therefore, to strengthen the position of the bishop of Rome in the eyes and esteem of the people. And we may rest assured that these bishops were not negligent in their efforts to take full advantage of this.

Secondly, the destruction of the Roman Empire by the barbarians gave another tremendous boost to papal authority. This is not difficult to understand. There was no longer an emperor in Rome to overshadow the bishop. His competition no longer existed. The pope now stood alone. The bishop of Rome now held the most important office in the entire West. The destruction of the Empire (Rome finally fell in 476) certainly aided the bishop of Rome tremendously in his quest for power.

Thirdly, another important factor which strengthened the position of the Pope at Rome was the work of the missionaries who were sent out from Rome. Churches were founded among many tribes in the northern part of Europe. And these missionaries were sent out from Rome. The great missionary, Boniface (he was killed in the year, 754, by the Frisians in what is now the little city of Dokkum, at the age of 73), the Apostle of Germany, had stood in very close relation to the bishop of Rome, and had carried on his mission work in his name. And it is not difficult to understand how this served to increase the strength and prestige of the bishop at Rome. A person who is convicted by God under the preaching of a certain pastor will always regard that pastor very highly. The churches which had been founded through the labors of the Roman missionaries naturally regarded with gratitude amounting to veneration the head of the church in Rome, which had sent these missionaries to them.

Fourthly, the position of the bishop at Rome was greatly affected by the Mohammedan conquests. This series of Mohammedan conquests was finally concluded at Tours, France, in 732. Prior to this date, however, these barbarians had swept in from the East and nothing had been able to resist them. They had swept through Syria, Palestina, and Egypt, and had removed forever the patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria as rivals to the bishop of Rome. This Mohammedan conquest had swept through North Africa and removed the bishop of Carthage as a possible rival in the West to the bishop of Rome. It crossed over into Europe at the Straits of Gibraltar and swept through Spain. This mighty invader crossed the Pyrennees into France and was finally halted at Tours, France, in the year, 732. The Mohammedans finally retreated into North Africa, leaving ruin and destruction in their wake. But, removing forever the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria (Constantinople was the sole exception), they had greatly increased the power of the bishop of Rome.

One more factor contributed heavily toward the establishment of the papacy. This amazing phenomenon was also aided by deceit. Documents known as the "Donation of Constantine" and the "Isidorian Decretals" greatly aided the Pope at Rome. The former was a document, issued by Constantine the Great, in which, upon leaving Rome, he ordered all office-holders in the Church to be subject to the pope and his successors upon the papal throne, and, furthermore, he also transferred to the popes the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts, and cities of Italy and of the western regions. The "Isidorian Decretals" purposed to show that all the rights claimed by the popes in the ninth century had been exercised by the popes from the earliest times. We need not discuss these documents at this time. They will be discussed, the Lord willing, when we discuss the following period of the history of doctrine. We may remark at this time that both documents are false. They have been proven to be false. Greater frauds than these documents are hardly conceivable. But, people accepted them as true for many centuries. And they certainly contributed heavily to the position of the popes in the midst of the Church. The Lord willing, we purpose to trace this amazing development of the papacy in several subsequent articles as set forth by Philip Schaff in his History of the Christian Church.

H.V.

Announcement

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will, the Lord willing, resume its sessions on September 14, 1955.

The Rector.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

REJECTIONS OF ERRORS

Article II (continued)

When one reads this description of the Arminian doctrine of election, it is not difficult to understand that the fathers felt constrained to add to their positive presentation of the truth a negative section. For the treacherous part of the Arminian position consisted exactly in this, that while they retained the *word* "election," they did not at all retain the Scriptural and Reformed *concept* of election; and thus they were able to deceive and to confuse people. Their false doctrine, therefore, stood, and still stands, in need of being exposed.

The fundamental error mentioned in this article of rejection is that the Arminians taught a manifold election. The result of this teaching of various kinds of election was ambiguity, of course. Whenever the Arminian spoke of election, it was necessary to inquire whether he really meant that one was chosen unto everlasting life and glory, or whether he merely mouthed the term, meanwhile reducing the idea of divine election to nothing, or less than nothing. For, you understand too, the Arminian would not present a nicely outlined scheme of his doctrine of election such as the fathers present here in the Rejection of Errors. Then, of course, there would have been little difficulty in discerning their error. But the scheme which the fathers here outline, though frequently left unexpressed by the Arminian heretic, was nevertheless in his mind when he spoke so freely of election, and it was the scheme which logically enabled him to present the error of freewillism and conditional salvation. You can imagine the confusion and difficulty which this caused. People would hear a Reformed preacher denounce the Arminians for their denial of election. And then, probably from the same pulpit even, they would hear an Arminian preacher freely speak of election. And, not comprehending the clever and intricate scheme of a manifold election which lay behind the Arminian preaching, people would be greatly troubled, and would begin to wonder whether the Arminians were not being falsely accused, and perhaps they would even be inclined to sympathize with those "poor, misunderstood men." For after all, what heretic worthy of mention ever comes "wearing wooden shoes?"

But now notice all that is involved when the Arminian speaks of election. First of all, he might have in mind a "general and indefinite" election. You would have to ask

him, of course, to discover his meaning. This general and indefinite election had no reference to certain definite persons, but concerned men in general and certain indefinite persons, even though it did not mention men at all, but consisted in an election of certain conditions. We will give more detailed attention to this in connection with Article III. The insidious character of this error, however, was that it allowed the Arminian to say that God's election was *sure*. He would mean, of course, "sure" in the sense that the reward of eternal life was surely attached to the fulfillment of the necessary conditions. In the second place, the Arminian might also have in mind a "particular and definite" election. Again, you would have to ask him in order to discover his meaning. Under this "kind" of election he could even speak of God choosing certain definite persons in distinction from others, so that, unless you investigated his real meaning, you might be deceived into thinking he was Reformed. Of these things the fourth and fifth articles of rejection speak, as well as the sixth; and we shall note the details at the proper time. These certain definite persons were those, of course, whom God foresaw as meeting the conditions of salvation. But wait a moment! The Arminian conception of election is well-nigh a doctrinal maze, through which one finds his way only with difficulty. Even this particular and definite election, though in some cases it may be complete (ending in eternal life), irrevocable (not being recalled and revoked at the last moment), decisive (so that it definitely means that you are of God's saved ones), and absolute (not uncertain and conditional, that is, after the last condition has been met at least), might, on the other hand, be incomplete (so that you never reach the goal), revocable (so that you end a reprobate), non-decisive (so that it determines nothing at all concerning your final state), and conditional (so that the decision still remains in your hands). To be sure, the Arminian does not explain how in any real sense such an election can be particular and definite. He does not, because he cannot. For in last instance, the only kind of election that he really knows is one that is general and indefinite, and which is for that very reason no election whatsoever. And thus, finally, with the above scheme the Arminian is able to speak also of one election unto faith, which has a Reformed sound, but of another election, that is, an election of a different sort, unto salvation. The result is that he could play such doctrinal "hocus-pocus" that he would actually end by maintaining that though a man was chosen unto justifying faith, that is, faith by which we are judged righteous before God in Christ, nevertheless that did not necessarily mean that he would be among the saved on the day of judgment. It would then be an election unto justifying faith without being a decisive election unto salvation.

By this time one may well say that any resemblance between the above and the Scriptural teaching of election is strictly coincidental. So thoroughly did the Arminians corrupt the true doctrine of election in this scheme that it is

neither necessary nor, I would almost say, possible to quote Scripture to refute them. One is well-nigh at a loss as to where he must begin his criticism. Evidently the fathers felt this, and saw, moreover, that once this clever scheme is set forth in plain language, it is so evidently false that no argument is necessary. They condemn it as "a fancy of men's minds." They make bold to say that it is invented "regardless of the Scriptures,"—thought up outside the bounds of Scripture, as the Dutch has it. In other words, when the Arminian corruption of the doctrine of election is preached, or underlies the preaching, you hear not the Word of God, but the word of man! In our day this boldness of the fathers to call an error by its correct name is almost unknown. Instead error is excused and covered up by the sickly claim that the proponents of this false doctrine are "sincere and pious students of the Scriptures, who put many a Reformed man to shame." But let him who claims to be Reformed, who claims to be a Calvinist, yea, who claims to acknowledge the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, imitate the fathers of Dordt, then, and condemn that which is invented "regardless of the Scriptures."

Nor, mark you well, is all this without practical significance as far as the people of God are concerned. The fathers point this out when they accuse the Arminians here of breaking the golden chain of our salvation, that is, the chain which inseparably links predestination and glorification, through calling and justification, with eternally and divinely forged links. Actually, of course, that chain cannot be broken. Doctrinal and conceptually however, the Arminians do break it by corrupting the truth of election. And when this is done in the preaching, the child of God is cut adrift as far as his assurance is concerned. This the Reformed fathers discerned, and about it they were concerned at the Great Synod. And, practically viewed, this is always at stake in the Reformed controversy against the Arminians.

In conclusion, we emphasize our opening remark under this second article: who has a simple gospel,—the Arminian, with his error of various kinds of election, or the Reformed man, with his Scriptural teaching that there is but one decree of election?

Article III. Who teach: That the good pleasure and purpose of God, of which Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election, does not consist in this, that God chose certain persons rather than others, but in this, that he chose out of all possible conditions (among which are also the works of the law), or out of the whole order of things, the act of faith which from its very nature is undeserving, as well as its incomplete obedience, as a condition of salvation, and that he would graciously consider this in itself as a complete obedience and count it worthy of the reward of eternal life. For by this injurious error the pleasure of God and the merits of Christ are made of none elect, and men are drawn away by useless questions from the truth of gracious justification and from the simplicity of Scripture, and this declaration of the Apostle is charged as untrue: "Who

saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal." II Tim. 1:9.

In this third article of rejection the fathers elaborate on the Arminian heresy of a "general and indefinite" election, already rejected in Article II. By way of distinguishing, we may say that the present article rejects the error of *conditional salvation*, while the next article rejects the error of *conditional election*. As we have had occasion to remark before, the two errors are logically inseparable. It is simply impossible that the fathers could combat conditional election without combatting conditional salvation, even though the contrary has been alleged also in our own recent controversy. Logically, since salvation has its source in election, if salvation is conditional, then election must needs also be conditional; and if election is unconditional, then salvation must also be unconditional. This consequence cannot be avoided. That this is true is very evident in the present article. For while it rejects the idea that the act of faith, as well as its incomplete obedience, is a condition of salvation, on the ground that it enervates the merits of Christ and the grace of justification, it at the same time speaks of the good pleasure and purpose of God. And it insists that also his truth is denied, and the good pleasure of God made of none effect.

The error that is here rejected is not difficult to understand. It contains the following elements:

1) God indeed has a good pleasure and a purpose. Again, let it be noted, we have to do here with Scriptural terms, which the Arminians could not very well ignore, lest their heretical tendencies should be too obvious. The fathers also point to this in the words, "of which Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election."

2) This good pleasure and purpose of God, however, does not consist in an election of certain persons rather than others. Here the idea of a general and indefinite election is negatively introduced. In this part of the Arminian doctrine, therefore, one could not speak of elect *persons* and reprobate *persons*.

3) When establishing His elective purpose and good pleasure, God was faced by a choice of all possible conditions unto salvation. There was the condition of perfect obedience, the condition of the works of the law, the condition of the act of faith, the condition of the imperfect obedience of faith. And thus there was "the whole order of things" from which God could make a choice in establishing a condition unto salvation. God's good pleasure, therefore, consists in choosing one condition rather than another. And whoever fits into that conditional scheme, or rather fits himself into it, shall be elect; whoever does not shall be reprobate. No one does God call by name from eternity. He merely determines upon the condition of salvation.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

To The Utmost Of Your Power

In our previous articles, dealing with the subject matter of the Twenty-first Article of our Church Order, we have attempted to make clear the following: (a) The origin and history of this article, (b) That *good* christian schools are those that thoroughly furnish the child of God unto every good work, (c) That requisite to the establishment of such schools and, therefore, the *basic* problem of christian education, is the capable and properly trained instructor, (d) That the consistory is obliged to do its utmost to procure such teachers for the instruction of the youth of the church as well as see to it that the parents use the best possible means available for the instruction of their children.

In connection with this last-mentioned matter, we will discuss this time the responsibility of believing parents to provide christian education for their children and, more particularly, the duty of Protestant Reformed parents to establish and maintain schools for their children wherein they are instructed in harmony with the principles of the Protestant Reformed faith. Failure to realize this responsibility will give justification to the cry of our children who, with the prophet Jeremiah, will say, "Our fathers have sinned and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." (Lamentations 5:7)

That the duty to educate rests firstly and principally with the parents is evident from all Scripture. It was once correctly said, "Parents feel duty bound to feed, to clothe, and to provide shelter for their own offspring. We believe that the upbringing of the children intellectually and spiritually (as well as their upbuilding physically) is a *divinely imposed* parental responsibility. Unfaithfulness in the discharge of this our God-given duty is unfaithfulness toward God Who ordained it thus." And another said, "Let us always remember that the duties of parents to children are two-fold: They must give them both physical and spiritual nourishment. Tell me how a parent divides his money, his time, and his effort in the discharge of these two parental duties, and I'll tell you what his personal interest is in the Kingdom!"

The seriousness of this matter lies in that we have to do with GOD, THE LORD, before Whose eyes all things are open and naked. If it were a matter of personal choice or even of conflicting opinions of individuals as to whether we should or should not sacrifice and struggle to provide our children with a daily training that is commensurate to our faith, we might ignore the whole matter with impunity but never is this so when we deal with God. We are confronted with His Holy Word and then it is not a matter for us to decide for HE HAS DECIDED IT FOR US! His word is never retractable simply because Jehovah is the immutable One. He speaks and for us it is either obedience in the

way of which we enjoy His blessing and favor or rebellion which invokes His just displeasure and wrath. And He speaks to us with unmistakable clarity:

"And thou shalt teach them *diligently* unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)

"Train up a child *in the way he should go*; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

"And ye fathers . . . *nurture* them in the *chastening* and *admonition* of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

To these other passages can still be added but this is sufficient to place us directly before the express Word of God. Whether the Lord says it once or a hundred times does not alter the fact that is so strikingly evident from the passages quoted. The command is "teach them diligently . . . train them in the way they should go . . . bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Pious parents will understand that the realization of this high calling of God necessitates a complete system of education and training that is based upon sound and pure principles of faith . . . the truth of the Word of God. So important a matter may not be entrusted to those who do not confess the truth. We would not think of asking a physician without surgical knowledge and experience to perform an operation upon our child nor would we have those who know nothing of dentistry look after their teeth. Why then do many of us persist in having those who do not confess the truth train our children? Are we unaware of the serious ill-consequences such practices inevitably bring forth? Let us be consistent! We confess the truth and that truth we strive to live by in our worship in our churches, in our homes, in our manifestation of life in the world of business and labor, in our recreation and pleasure! And the truth is the Protestant Reformed faith! Indeed so! Let us then also be Protestant Reformed in the rearing and instructing of our children!

In this way our vow before God, made in the baptism of our children, comes to its more perfect fulfillment. Believing parents are reminded that "baptism is not a custom or superstition but an ordinance of God." Using this ordinance they are urged to answer *sincerely* this question: "Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein to the utmost of your power?" To this, we who have our children baptized, answer sincerely, "Yes!"

Before God we answer, "Yes!" Before His church, in the presence of many witnesses, we answer, "Yes!" Further that "Yes" is *sincere*!

Two things are of special importance in connection with this answer. Before we speak of these, we wish to freely translate a few lines of the writing of Rev. B. Wielenga in, "Ons Doops Formulier." (Our Baptism Form). He writes in connection with the third question of baptism:

"There we read further: 'to the utmost of your power to

instruct or to be instructed'. In these words the principle (beginself) of CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION is expressed. The father, ordained of God, is the instructor and the mother is the natural instructor of their seed. But where they themselves evidently cannot do this, because of time or ability, an agreeable organization must be set up where the baptized children are instructed in agreement with the foresaid doctrine.

Such an establishment is first of all the Christian School which, on the basis of the baptism promise, may not proceed from the state or some other organization apart from the state or some other organization apart from the parents but must be established and maintained by the parents themselves.

The founding and maintaining of the school with the Scriptures is the giving of instruction to which parents, with an oath, have obliged themselves. Unnecessary it is to say how great in the light of the doctrine of baptism and the promise of baptism, is the sin of parents who entrust their children to a school which in practice honors atheism and brings up children in unbelief.

But, from the promise to instruct, also follows the task of parents to work with the ministers of the Word who give official ecclesiastical instruction to the baptized children of the church and to support him in this task with all the means at their disposal. Parents must consider that the catechetical instruction of the minister, in part at least, is the fulfilling of their baptismal promise. They are obliged, therefore, to work with the minister and at home to exercise careful control over when and how the children perform their assigned tasks.

May it be that also in this respect the proper significance of the baptism promise be somewhat more felt by us 'Reformed people'. How much more pleasant and agreeable for our teachers and ministers would then their difficult and now so often unappreciated task become.

But notice also that it says, 'TO THE UTMOST OF YOUR POWER to instruct or be instructed'. Two things we note here. The moral sluggard who is always ready to let it fall upon someone else instead of himself is herein condemned. On the other hand, herein is a duty laid upon christians to lend a helping hand to those parents for whom it is manifestly impossible to have their children instructed 'in the aforesaid doctrine'. For the hearer, who has enough on a half-word, it lies in this baptism-promise that the church has the duty through a 'Supply or Charity Fund' to help needy parents attain christian training."

It is evident then that in the third baptismal question, we firstly promise to bring up our children, to instruct them "in the aforesaid doctrine." The aforesaid doctrine is the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of our christian faith *as taught* (interpreted, maintained) in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This doctrine is the Reformed Truth, the Reformed way of life. It stands opposed not only to the atheistic way of life

promulgated by the ungodly and unbelieving and to the many religious views that are not considered under the nominal heading of 'Reformed' but also to those views which are generally regarded to be historically Reformed but *in actual fact are not*. In that doctrine we promise to instruct our children.

Secondly, we promise to do this "to the utmost of our power." We will go to every possible limitation. We will endure every necessary hardship, to say nothing yet of a few minor inconveniences which we frequently complain about. We will forgo luxury and pleasure. We will sacrifice all things that our children may be instructed in this doctrine. Nothing that we can possibly do will be left undone in the realization of this task for we promise "to the *utmost* of our power." Just as our baptism form speaks of our part in the covenant of God as consisting in this, "that we love the Lord our God with ALL our hearts, with ALL our souls, with ALL our strength," so do we promise to use *ALL* our power in the realization of our calling to properly educate our children.

Do we?

Are we not rather inclined to exert but little effort and when that meets with the least obstacle, we become discouraged and doing nothing try to convince ourselves that the Lord requires of us the impossible? That is our sin! To be sure we must understand that *we* cannot educate our children as we ought in *our* power but the "utmost of our power" is equal to "the utmost of our faith" and faith is not a power of us but of God. By faith we can! By it the seemingly impossible and insurmountable obstacles are conquered for faith is victorious. It stops for nothing until complete triumph has been attained. Mountains which appear impossible will appear before us!

But, then, do not the Scriptures speak of removing mountains by faith?

Lord, increase our faith!

G.V.D.B.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of one of its faithful members,

MRS. ANNA BUTER

who passed away during the early morn of July 23, 1955.

Expressing our sympathy with the husband and children who remain, we find our comfort in the words of I Thess. 4:13, 14, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

The Ladies Society of the

Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church

Mrs. C. Haak, Vice-President

Mrs. R. Hoving, Ass't Sec.-Treas.

ALL AROUND US

The Unbelief of Barthianism.

That is the title of a little booklet a friend sent to me to peruse. Its contents is an address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Bible League by the Rev. W. J. Grier, B.A., and published by the Evangelical Book Shop whose address is 15, College Square East, Belfast. It purposes to be "A Criticism of the Views of Doctors Barth and Brunner."

For one who knows little or nothing about the theology of Barth or Brunner and he would like with little effort to find out what they teach, here is a pamphlet of twelve pages that you can digest in 15 or 20 minutes and have a fair idea.

In the opening paragraphs Rev. Grier writes: "The names of Dr. Karl Barth and Dr. Emil Brunner are widely known. They are extremely able men, and are forces to be reckoned with in the theological world today. They have written many books, and lectured in various lands; their followers among clergy and theological students may be numbered by tens of thousands. Their teaching is variously known as 'Dialectical theology', the 'theology of crisis' or 'neo-orthodoxy'."

"What is the nature of their views? Are they in line with the historic Christian faith, or do they constitute a serious challenge to it? Are Doctors Barth and Brunner the true successors of the Reformers, as they sometimes claim, or are they the foes of almost all that the Reformers held dear? Or does their true position lie somewhere between these two extremes?"

In what follows, Rev. Grier, under three separate headings, tenders valuable criticism of the theology of these men. Under "Their Views on Inspiration" the writer, using several quotations from the writings of both Barth and Brunner, shows that they deny the fundamental truth of the infallible and complete inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Naturally, if this truth is denied all the rest of their theological argument will be pure philosophy. Evidently this is also Rev. Grier's conclusion since he begins his criticism with the treatment of this subject.

Writes Rev. Grier: "Let us first examine their attitude to the Holy Scriptures. That they reject the doctrine of their plenary inspiration and accept the conclusions of the modernist higher critics is plain beyond doubt. There may be details of their teaching that are puzzling to the average Christian, but here at least the issue is clear."

Then follow several quotations to prove this. "In his *Theology of Crisis* Dr. Brunner makes the following statement: 'Lest we open the door to misunderstanding, let me say that I myself am an adherent of a rather radical school of Biblical criticism which, for example, does not accept the Gospel of John as an historical source and which finds legends in many parts of the Synoptic Gospels' (p. 41) In the second volume of his *Dogmatics*, issued in England in

1952, he avows, on the first page of the preface, that he accepts what he calls 'the results of Biblical criticism'. In the same volume he ridicules those who hold that 'the whole Bible is God's infallible oracle' (p. 213). In his latest book *Eternal Hope*, published in Zurich in 1953 and in Britain in 1954, he has a section on 'Mythological Elements in the New Testament Message' (pp. 114-120) and does not hesitate to say that Jesus was mistaken (pp. 127-129).

"There are others who contend that while Brunner's teaching is too much like that of the old liberals or modernists, that of Barth is far truer to the evangelical faith. The truth is that in this matter Barth stands where Brunner stands. He, too, ridicules the historic Christian doctrine of plenary inspiration, declaring that it substitutes a self-sufficient paper pope for a living pope (Otto Weber's *Introductory Report on Barth's Church Dogmatics*, p. 61). He scoffs at the idea of 'the Bible affording a divine infallible history.' He says, 'The Bible is God's Word so far as God lets it be His Word, so far as God speaks through it'. (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 123)

"But Doctors Barth and Brunner go further. According to them it is not only that there is no direct or complete revelation of God; they deny that any such revelation is possible. They hold that revelation must always be God in action, God speaking to man. They declare that a direct and finished revelation would fetter God; that it would limit his freedom." Rev. Grier concludes this part of his pamphlet with this sentence: "It is clear that in this matter of the Scriptures, 'their rock is not our rock.'"

Under the sub-title: "Their Views on other Christian Doctrines", Rev. Grier challenges the teachings of these men on such doctrines as the Virgin Birth, the Bodily Resurrection, the Second Coming, the Trinity, etc.

And under the sub-title: "The Foundational Error of the 'Dialectical Theology'" Rev. Grier admits that "what has been said thus far reaches only to the fringe of the subject. It leaves untouched a diagnosis of the root error of the 'dialectical theology' of Barth and Brunner. Quotations from their writings are often found in the pages of undoubted Evangelicals. Is it right for them to be found there? To answer this question another must be asked. When these dialectical theologians speak of Sin and Atonement, for example, do they mean what historic Christian doctrine means? The answer is that they do not. They use the terms as 'limiting concepts', not as 'constitutive concepts', that is to say, not as constituting the truth, but as pointing to the truth. Their philosophy seems to be that thought cannot grasp reality, and that therefore its validity is only relative."

Further, Rev. Grier points out how Barth and Brunner deny the historical fact of atonement as well as the fact that that atonement is a once for all transaction. In beclouded language these men speak of the atonement as a fact that can be known only by faith, not as an historical fact; and as to atonement as a once for all transaction, a finished work,

Barth rather speaks of the atonement as belonging to "super-history." Grier points out that essentially this is double-talk, philosophy, which is bent on confusing the issues as well as the minds of men who are interested in these subjects. Rev. Grier writes: respecting the subject of the atonement as seen through the eyes of Barth and Brunner as a Divine Act of the Atonement. "In other words, it is and it isn't; it is yes and no. The dialectical theology places the student on a whirling wheel, and he scarcely knows whether he is coming or going."

On the subject of election Barth teaches: "All men are loved and elect and called and made God's possession in Christ from all eternity (Dogmatics Outline, p. 91). Divine election, according to him, is not 'quantitative', that is, that certain individuals are being saved and that certain individuals are being lost; it is 'qualitative', and found within the individual. Each man is both a Jacob and a Esau. All are lost; yet all are saved."

And so the little booklet of Rev. Grier goes on to show up the philosophy of world-renowned theologians. Though we had read several books produced by these men just to see for ourselves what they taught, after reading the little booklet we now consider all that reading a waste of time. We could have read it all in twenty minutes in this little booklet and come to the same conclusions. How much non-sense and devilry can roam around in big brains! And, how many little brains with little in them can be attracted to such big brains with so much non-sense and devilry in them, we find hard to figure out. But that's the way it is in the world, also the world of Theology.

Know Yourself.

Such is the title of a radio sermon delivered recently on the Back to God radio program of the Christian Reformed Church by the Rev. Harold Dekker and sent to me by an aggrieved listener.

The Reverend began his radio speech by calling attention to the reference in II Kings 8:7-15, to Hazeal, a chief officer and advisor of Benhadad, King of Syria. The gist of the story was that Hazeal did not know what potential acts of depravity lay hidden in his breast. As friend and advisor of the King he did not know that he was capable of murdering him as he later actually did according to "the word of Elisha."

The Reverend Dekker goes on to say that the doctrine of man's total depravity, taught throughout Scripture, concerns a reality actually existing in every man's nature. And this is not the assertion of Scripture and "of some pessimistic writer" or preacher, but this is also openly admitted by such a non-Christian scholar and scientific philosopher as Sigmund Freud. Mr. Dekker uses several illustrations taken from life and recorded in newspaper and radio news casts to show up this universal depravity. "How bad can ordinary people become?" such is the question he repeatedly asks. And the answer is: "We have a common nature and it's a

badly depraved one. The best of us are but a step away from the worst." So far, so good. We approved of the message thus far simply because it spoke the language of Scripture and our experience.

But when you come to page 7 of this recorded message, you find a different tone, with which we certainly cannot agree and one, we believe, which simply destroys what he presented in the preceding. As Grier said in respect to Barthianism: "In other words, it is and it isn't; it is yes and no," so we would say of Dekker's presentation of depravity: It is and it isn't; it is yes and no. He believes in total depravity, and he doesn't. Man is totally depraved and he isn't. Said Rev. Dekker: "This brings us to a very important question. Why is it that some people are worse and some are better? Why is one lawless and the other law-abiding? One a criminal and the other a solid citizen? One a traitor and the other a patriot? One immoral and the other decent? This question is answered in different ways." He then proceeds to mention these different explanations such as, heredity, environment, emotional complexes, and social groupings. And he says though these are important, and worthy of study, they do not give a satisfactory answer.

"The answer", he says, "to this momentous question was once given by Richard Baxter He was watching a condemned man go to the gallows. Reflecting for a moment on this dire event, with great feeling he said, 'There, but for the grace of God, goes Richard Baxter!' That's it. The grace of God"

"Now what do we mean by grace?" And after explaining that it is unmerited favor, he continues by saying we must distinguish between two kinds of grace, common and special. The first is to all men in general, the latter to those who are saved by a true faith in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the speech is an excited appraisal of common grace according to which we are to thank God that He so restrains sin that all men are not as bad as they might become. True, he says, common grace does not save you or remove your guilt. And between Peter and Judas, who both had remorse, there is quite a difference. But, oh that common grace, that is simply wonderful!

No proof from Scripture is given to sustain this philosophy of common grace. It is only philosophy. Does not Rev. Dekker know that God is in His heavens and He rules by His providence even in the hearts of men and devils, and they do His will? That God takes care of His world and so governs all things, even the wicked, that they serve to realize His Church, the election of grace, and ultimately His own glory? That when the wicked is restrained sin is not checked, but that it develops in other directions, and that ultimately the wicked with all his "common grace" goes to hell? What grace is that? The lion, though he purrs like a kitten in his cage and is fed everyday his meat, is still the ferocious beast that will tear you to pieces given an opportunity. Is that grace that he is locked in his cage? Or is man different than the beast which perishes? M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Lest we forget:

These remarks by the board of the R.F.P.A. are only for those who appreciate *The Standard Bearer* as a witness of the Reformed truth.

At the annual meeting of the R.F.P.A., held September, 1945, our editor in a speech gave the following answer to the question: "But what do we mean, when in this connection, we speak of the Reformed truth and of witnessing for it through *The Standard Bearer*? To be sure, by Reformed truth we mean the truth of Scripture as it is briefly and officially expressed in the Reformed Standards, particularly in the Three Forms of Unity: the Netherland Confession; the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht. *The Standard Bearer* intends to be confessionally Reformed. However, this is not to be understood in the sense of a dead Orthodoxy, that is perfectly satisfied with what our fathers developed and expressed of the truth, and proceeds from the assumption that they have said the last word about it. Such an attitude would be the expression of a conservatism without life and love of the truth such as our Reformed fathers certainly would have condemned. No, we do not intend merely to repeat, and rise in defense of, what has been officially laid down in our Standards. But taking our stand on the basis of those Confessions, we make it our aim to continue in the direction plainly indicated by them, to criticize much that is offered as Reformed truth, and is not, and, always endeavoring to maintain the very heart of the Reformed faith as our starting point, to advance to a purer and richer development and expression of the truth as such, and its application to every phase of the life of the believer in this present world.

The Standard Bearer wants to send forth a trumpet blast of no uncertain sound.

It purposes to send forth a testimony that is very specifically Reformed.

With regard to this specifically Reformed truth, we may assert that its very heart is found in the idea of the covenant of God. It is true that, in order to give a truly Reformed testimony, this truth concerning the covenant of God dare not be divorced from the doctrine of sovereign predestination. Election has rightly been called the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the Church. And yet, fundamental though this truth may be, and though its heart-beat must be discernible in every part of the doctrine proclaimed by one that lays claim to being Reformed, it is not the most peculiar, not the most distinctive of Reformed principles. There are other denominations, besides those of the Reformed persuasion, that adhere to the truth of God's sovereign predestination. But the doctrine of the covenant of God is a distinctively Reformed heritage. The reason for this fact, that it was in

Calvinistic circles alone that the truth concerning God's covenant was developed and given a central place in the system of doctrine, is that in those circles more than in any other strong emphasis was placed on the glory of God as the sole purpose of all the work of God, both in creation and in re-creation, and that this glory is realized in the highest possible degree in the revelation of God's covenant. Especially is this true if the very essence of that covenant is found, not in the idea of a pact or agreement, or in a way of salvation, but in the fellowship of God's friendship, the highest revelation of the covenant-life of the Triune Himself. When, therefore, we say that it is the purpose of *The Standard Bearer* to send forth a specifically Reformed testimony, we mean especially that it purposes to witness concerning the covenant of God, as He Himself realizes it through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to His sovereign good pleasure, in the way of sin and grace, and along the antithetical lines of election and reprobation; and that, too, in connection with the organic development of all things. Of this truth *The Standard Bearer* means to be a witness."

Who could have foreseen, at the time these words were spoken that the church must needs experience the unrest and upheaval which it did before 10 years had elapsed. We may thank the Lord that *The Standard Bearer*, throughout this history of heresy and schism remained true to its calling to witness for the Reformed truth.

History teaches us that Geneva in Calvin's day when it was the stronghold of Reformed truth was also at the same time the hot bed of heresy. This shows that where the truth is faithfully proclaimed, there too, you will find the greatest reaction: it is there that the devil will do his utmost to destroy. It is just there, where the decisive battles of the church are waged.

Now the part that *The Standard Bearer* has played in keeping its readers informed, with regard to the heresy and schism in our churches and the certain sound which it has trumpeted also in the past ten years certainly cannot be over-emphasized.

Again, let us humbly thank the Lord that it pleased Him to use *The Standard Bearer* to battle for the truth against all that sought to destroy the truth and the church.

The Reformed Free Publishing Ass'n. need not be ashamed of *The Standard Bearer's* part in this battle. Neither need any member of our churches be ashamed of the battle, for it is the Lord's battle. Really this battle is waged continuously and will continue to wage till the judgment day. And because it is the Lord's battle therefore lovers of the truth never tire reading accounts of it.

Think of 1924: who does not love to read of that important engagement and the wonderful way God preserved His truth and how the Lord caused to be born our Protestant Reformed churches in order to maintain that truth. To us that is a glorious history. The exponents of common

grace would like to skip over this history or forget it if possible, for the Lord put them to shame.

The same can be said of the church's recent engagement, when the exponents of conditional theology with their heresy and mutiny sought to destroy the truth and the church. The Lord's wonderful preservation of His truth and church in this recent engagement should again fill us with thanksgiving.

It was the Lord and His truth that again put the adversary to shame. To us a glorious history. A history that schismatics would like to forget or at least minimize. This is very evident from their dis-interest in the court records, for example.

This goes to show, whether we like it or not (and we don't, our flesh militates against it) that the struggle is between the truth and the lie: between the church and that which calls itself and pretends to be church.

The board of the R.F.P.A. feels that members of the association and readers of *The Standard Bearer* should encourage our young people, also more of our young married people to subscribe to *The Standard Bearer* and to read it.

It is important that our young people are informed as to the issues of the "Battle of the Ages" as it is being fought in our own life time.

The Standard Bearer provides a running account of this never ending struggle.

We urge our readers to preserve each issue by having them bound every year. This the board will do for you at a cost of \$3.50 per volume. God grant that *The Standard Bearer* may serve as a pillar of remembrance for His wonderful work in preserving the truth of His word.

Finally the board wishes to extend to all members of the R.F.P.A. a word of advice and encouragement: the same words which ended the above quoted speech ten years ago. "Let us marvel with a grateful heart that our God gave to so small an organ of so small a group as we are, such a wide place.

And considering what God has done for us in the past let us not grow weary, but continue, advance, and work while it is day ere the night cometh in which no man can work."

The privilege is yours.

The Board of the R.F.P.A.

ANNIVERSARY

On September 10, 1955, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. BERT KETT,

hope to commemorate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to our God for having spared them for each other and for us. Our prayer is that God may continue to bless them in the future as he has thus far and may they always experience that God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Talsma
Two grandchildren

Missionary Notes

The undersigned was going to write concerning his labors in Loveland, Colorado in this issue, but this will have to wait till the next issue of our periodical. At this time the writer of these lines is enjoying a few days of relaxation at home in as far as that is possible at a time when the entire family is busy with the activities of the Young People's Convention held in Hudsonville, and also in the celebration of our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Our many thanks to all who have sent us their well-wishes and prayed God's blessing upon our family life. So much in passing. One can understand that our life of relaxation is still that of the busy man.

Just today we received a copy of a notice which a certain "Consistory" sent to a brother who requested the use of the church-building whenever they would have one of our ministers present, be this week-day or on Sunday evening.

Evidently the following is the reply which they received verbatim:

"That we grant C. Vander Molen the use of the building for any two specified Sunday evenings each of August and September, with this reservation:

1. That the building be not used to slander the congregation which meets there every Sunday, nor that propaganda be made which is destructively divisive.

2. And, that, in granting the building we hold him responsible to use the building for the advancement of the Holy Catholic church."

Now what shall we say about this?

In the first place that we heartily endorse the proposition in arabic 1 that the "building is not to be used to slander the Congregation that meets there every Sunday." Slander is always wrong, sinful and belongs to the very works of the devil. Surely also the pulpit is to be devoted also to the christian calling to promote as much as possible the good character of our neighbor and so fulfil the law of Christ. So this I'm quite certain Mr. Vander Molen can and does quite heartily endorse. And so do I by the mercy of God,

However I do have an objection against that proposition. It is this: it is too limited. It limits and prohibits the church for use to slander the congregation which meets there each Sunday. That is too limited. It is the limitation of a commandment which is of broader application.

I have searched my heart and wondered why such a "condition" for the usage of the building could be sent to Mr. Vander Molen. Has the undersigned at any time during the 17 times that he preached the Word in Pella either in the American Legion Hall or in the homes slandered the congregation? Or has he done so in the letters that he sent to the homes of the brethren and sisters when he pointed out the *sin* of the "Consistory" of Pella? If I have slandered, uttered a false report with the malicious intent of injuring the reputation of the "congregation" of Pella, let it be pointed out to me either in private letter or publicly. But let it not be insinuated, let not the covert suggestion be made

that the intent of the usage of the *building* is for the purpose of publicly slandering the congregation. The Lord forbid that I should thus desecrate the place where for seven happy years I might break the bread of life in Pella.

We also most heartily concur with the sentiment which reads as follows: "nor that propaganda be made which is *destructively* divisive." I like this "condition" because now I may preach in such a way that it is *constructively* divisive! That former, the conduct and speech which is *destructively* divisive surely belongs to those who speak *the lie*, whether outright or covertly. However, where the truth is spoken in love, and sins are *pointed* out, also concrete demonstrable sins of a "Consistory," there a *constructive* work is being performed. When Paul resists Peter to his face in Antioch (Gal. 2) he is working a "division" indeed; but the divisiveness of the Cross which separates the goats from the sheep. And that is constructive. When a man goes to see his neighbor and with good admonitions corrects him and fails to gain his brother he has worked divisive, only it was a constructive work in the Church even when he must count him as a heathen and as a publican. I trust that the point of comparison will not be misjudged.

Personally I have no need of pointing out the sins of the "Consistory" in Pella from the pulpit. I have done so to them face to face and also in letters. The Spirit does not always strive, and neither do I have to continually ploy and harrow what has been sufficiently belabored. God is wiser than the folly of such conduct. However, I am interested that the sheep in Pella receive sound words of doctrine so that they may not have a warped life and world view and may not go bowed under burdens which Christ did not place upon his Church. Liberty without license is our blessed inheritance! If such preaching makes division between the sons of liberty and those of the flesh — it is sufficient to me with a sufficiency that is of God! For that is not destructively divisive, but is the building of the Church upon the foundation besides which there is none other.

Frankly, I also agree most heartily with the final demand placed upon the shoulders of brother Vander Molen! And I believe that it is a responsibility that he most tremblingly assumes. No, not in a cringing fear before the dictates of a "consistory" who speaks of seeking the advancement of the Holy Catholic church, but will not as much as touch it with their own finger, but with a fear that trembles before the Mighty God of Jacob, and says: "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not . . . How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven!" Gen. 28:16, 17.

Let not a "consistory" speak so sanctimoniously about a church-building, and express so grave concern about the "advancement of the Holy Catholic Church" which has rent the church of Christ in two by parliamentary decision, and that on the alleged ground that others had rent the church, or rather had left it!

In conclusion let it be remembered: it is more important that the truth in Christ be proclaimed than that the faithful brethren in Pella ever again use the building which is their rightful possession!

G.L.

Quoted from Toplady:

The world is a sea of glass; affliction scatters our path with sand, and ashes, and gravel in order to keep our feet from sliding.

The old Arminians, mentioned in Scripture, are blamed for thinking wickedly, that God was such an one as themselves; but our new Arminians out-sin their predecessors, and actually represent God as a being in many respects considerably inferior to themselves. They suppose him both to form his schemes with less wisdom, and to execute them with less power, spirit, and success, than a prime minister of common sense forms and executes his. They dare ascribe to God, such impotence, blunders, imperfections, and disappointments, as they would blush to ascribe to a Ximenes, or a Sully.

Grace finds us beggars, and always leaves us debtors.

Scripture can be savingly understood, only in and by the inward illumination of the Holy Ghost. The gospel is a picture of God's free grace to sinners. Were we in a room, hung with the finest paintings, and adorned with the most exquisite statues, we could not see one of them, if all light was excluded. Now, the blessed Spirit's irradiation is the same to the mind, that outward light is to the bodily eyes.

Mere reformation differs just as much from regeneration, as white-washing an old, rotten house differs from taking it down and building it anew.

For wolves to devour sheep is no wonder; but for sheep to devour one another, is monstrous and astonishing.

IN MEMORIAM

The School Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education in Oak Lawn, Illinois expresses its deepest sympathy to its Vice-President, Mr. John Buiter, Sr., and family in the loss and departure of their faithful wife and mother,

MRS. ANNA BUITER

Her confession in the hour of her departure, and that, too, is our consolation, was: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

The Board

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, President
Mrs. S. Schaafsma, Secretary

**Rev. H. Hoeksema's
40th Anniversary
in the Ministry of the Word.**

On Friday, September 16, the Lord willing, we hope to celebrate, with Rev. Hoeksema, this occasion in praise and thanksgiving unto our God who has so richly bestowed His blessings upon us through his ministry.

The date and place were selected that as many as possible of our people from our sister congregations might share this day with us.

The Place: The Christian Reformed Conference Grounds. See map for Route directions.

**THE PROGRAM
AFTERNOON AT 2:00 O'CLOCK**

Afternoon Speakers:

Rev. G. M. Ophoff

Rev. C. Hanko

EVENING

Elder J. M. Faber

Rev. G. Vos

Voice from the West: Rev. H. Veldman

Rev. H. Hoeksema



Playground facilities for children — Canteen

