

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Happiness in Hope

*"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."*

PSALM 146:5

The present day vocabulary teaches us clearly that man certainly is in need of help. The word *relief* is on the lips of all men. *Pensions* and *social security* remind us constantly that man is a helpless creature. He does not notice it so much when the sun of his life is still climbing to the zenith of his sky, but when his powers are on the wane, when his hair turns grey and his strength diminishes, then he is ready to listen to the magic words of relief and pensions.

And his trust is placed in the princes of this world.

However, it is wisdom to not put your trust in these princes of the world. Let not the dreams they weave before your longing eyes charm you to that extent that you place your trust in them. Because their breath goeth forth, they return to the earth and in that very day their thoughts perish. And you are left destitute in the cold. There is no help in men.

Over against this idle trust stands the cry of the Holy Ghost: Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Let the object of your trust be the God of Jacob.

Then and then alone you are safe for time and for eternity.

Because the God of Jacob is the Almighty God.

When the Bible repeatedly testifies regarding the God of Jacob, the meaning is first of all that this God stands over-against the various gods in Canaan. There were many gods in these days. Every tribe in Canaan, sometimes every individual family, ruled by its patriarch had its own god. And in time of war or drought, in all manner of calamities these poor people would turn to their gods and cry out their need of them: O help us, for the water has come over our

souls. It is pitiful to read some of the petitions that came down to us through the ages, testifying of their need of help and the efforts put forth to get it from the heathen gods.

Yet all was vain. These heathen gods were no gods, idle and helpless. Things with them went on just the same and these things were governed and ruled by Him Who dwells in the heavens.

The God of Jacob, however, was and is different. When Jacob went to that God with strong crying and tears, he was helped out of all his calamities. Never did this patriarch knock in vain on the doors of heaven. God heard him in that he was helped.

\* \* \* \*

Moreover, the God of Jacob became also the name of God among the descendants of Jacob. All the godfearing Israelites went to the God of Jacob for strength and help in time of trouble. And they also, like their father, were helped out of all their distresses. Take for instance the godfearing Hezekiah. When he was in dire need of help at the time the wicked were lying without the gates of Jerusalem, cursing the Name expressly and wantonly, and when they sent wicked letters to this pious king of the people of God, cursing and mocking the God of Jacob, he went to God and spread forth these letters before the Countenance. And his cry was heard: Now, therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord, even Thou only. Do you not notice that the God of Jacob was his help? Neither did he trust in vain. For this God of Jacob sent His angel and destroyed a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the wicked in one night. And so the name of the God of Jacob was to the nation of God's people the name of Him Who helped in time of need.

Why, even in our day you will notice that when God's people are in trouble they will cry to Jacob's God. The Holy Ghost leads us to do this. You may hear it in some little Dutch church of a Sabbath morning: O Jakob's God, geef mij gehoor! Jacob had a troublesome life. It seemed as though all things were against him. His father, his brother, his uncle, the elements. His sons also, for they robbed him

of his children. All these things are against me! Now we know that this was not so. We know that all things worked together for good unto Jacob. But Jacob did not know this. And therefore he spent his life in crying to God for help against his distresses. And God heard. From step to step the God of Jacob fought for him and delivered him.

Ah, yes, the God of Jacob is God, the Almighty, Who is willing and able to help His people who are in distress and trouble.

And the God of Jacob is all this because He is the Lord God.

\* \* \* \*

That has a wonderful significance.

The *Lord* God.

He is the Covenant God. Lord means: I am that I am. That is, I am the unchangeable One. I am the eternal One, the Immutable One. There is no shadow of turning with Me. Therefore He is also the ever faithful One. In His everlasting Counsel He saw Jacob, that is, Israel, that is, the Church of Jesus Christ, that is, the sum total of the elect of God, and seeing them He counselled peace and security for them in the Son of His love. And because He is the Lord, that is, the Unchangeable One, He keepeth truth for ever, He is the ever faithful Covenant God.

This Lord made promises. And what promises! I am your God and the God of your seed. I am coming to you, my darling children! I am going to come to you and I will come ever closer to you, until you shall be so everlasting close to Me that it may be said that I am all and in all.

And nothing can change this promise from its fulfilment.

God did come to His own Jacob in a picture. It was the first heaven and earth. Through omnipotent creation he weaved an image of the fulfilment of the promises, which is the reason that Gen. 1 and Rev. 22 seem so much alike.

When this first creation went down in the gloom of death and the curse, the Lord came closer through the altar and the blood of sacrificial animals. He taught His Jacob that this world which had fallen so low must be elevated, must be raised to new heights of glory. He came closer to Jacob, for He taught Adam and Abel to build an altar, that is, they must take some earth or stones and make a heap or two. It is the exalted and elevated world.

Later the Lord came closer. Listen to Stephan, just before his stoning: . . . David, who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. The Lord came ever closer. In splendour of gold of Ophir and the needlework of artists, God dwelled in the Holy of Holies and taught Jacob that He loved Him. And He shew His love in manifold tokens and signs and types and washings and sacrifices. God came closer to Jacob for his help for He accepted the token of blood once every year when the High Priest entered His abode. And the angels were very desirous to understand

this miracle of grace. They bent forward over the sprinkled blood on the mercy seat.

And the Lord came closer when Jesus was born.

For Jesus is Jacob fulfilled. God promised that He would come to Jacob and be his God. Well, this is fulfilled in Jesus. According to the flesh, Jesus is Jacob and God dwelled in Jesus in unity of the Person. Immanuel: God with us.

And with this Jesus the wonder of grace is manifested to angels also: now they may see it! Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace! Now we see it! This babe will take away all the sin of Jacob.

And with this Jesus the fallen world is elevated for He climbs the steep sides of the mountain of God's holiness. Climbing in his resurrection and ascension, He cries out: The glorious gates of righteousness, throw open unto Me!

And the Lord God came still closer to Jacob when the Holy Ghost was poured out on Pentecost. Now God dwells in the hearts and minds of all the Jacobs, both small and great. And now we all are temples of the Holy Ghost.

But the flesh is corrupt and the body is inclined to the dust. And in the night we hear the groaning of Jacob with strong crying and tears: O wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me out of the body of this death!

And God, the God of Jacob hears him, for He is the Lord God. He shall remember His covenant which He made from everlasting. The time is at hand that also the bodies of the Jacobs shall be made to conform to the most glorious body of Jesus. The lives of the souls of Jacobs were first fruits, but the harvest of the bodies is coming. He shall raise our mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwells in us. At the day of Jesus!

\* \* \* \*

And the God of Jacob shall come still closer. For a new commonwealth is coming. We expect according to His promises a new heaven and a new earth. And that new commonwealth shall be such that heaven and earth shall be united and in the midst of them shall descend the tabernacle of God out of heaven. Then God shall dwell with His people and shall be a Father unto them and they shall be His sons and daughters. And all the tears of Jacob shall be washed away.

Now, my brother, when you have all this, I think that you will agree with me that you have a strong Helper in the God of Jacob. And there is really no need to place your trust in the son of man.

What have these sons of man ever done for you? We are killed all the day long by them. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter by them.

Recall the history of Jacob. What did Jacob get for help out of Esau and Laban? None at all. But on the contrary: these two relatives brought him much sorrow and tears. And if it had not been for the help of the God of Jacob he would have been swallowed up alive. No thanks to Esau and Laban for the revival and survival of Jacob. These evil men

were as wild beasts around the turtledove of God. Ah, Jacob, thou hast all our sympathy!

But I hasten to add that Jacob was happy. For happy is the man who has the God of Jacob for his help. Whose trust is in the Lord his God.

Indeed! All things work together for his good. Even tears and suffering must serve to bring the promises to fulfilment. That is wonderfully shown in the Christ of God. That dark night cannot be spared in the scheme of things. The strong crying and tears of Jesus in everlasting agony are the foundation of all fulfilment of the promises. Without them we would cry in hell.

But blessed is that man! Blessed now for he wrestles with God and will not let Him go without the blessing of Jehovah God. And the blessing is remaining. All things testify of the love that cannot be measured.

And blessed anon in the land that is fairer than day. There we shall be so blessed, beloved reader, that we shall never sin any more. If there was no more revealed than just that: it would be sufficient to elicit my highest singing and praises of God. Not sin any more. Can you imagine anything sweeter?

Oh, even through the dimming tears, I see glory that cannot be uttered in the vale! Not sin anymore; nevermore to roam. Ah, blessedness unspeakable!

Let all of Jacob say: Amen, Hallelujah!

G.V.

"The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either:

1. All the sins of all men.
2. All the sins of some men.
3. Some of the sins of all men.

"In which case it may be said:

- a. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved.
- b. If the second case, then Christ, in their stead, suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world and this is the truth.
- c. But if the first case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins?

"You answer, because of unbelief. I ask, is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all of their sins."

—Dr. John Owen

"... there is nothing more desired by the human mind than soothing flatteries; and therefore, it listens with extreme credulity, to hear its excellences magnified."

*Calvin's Inst.*, Book II, Chapter I

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## EDITORIALS

### Based On Untruths

Before I proceed quoting Kok e.a. about Art. 31 of the Church Order, I would like to ask Meyering where he obtained what he alleges to be a certain literal quotation of mine. The alleged quotation is as follows:

“that the classis is the ruling body of the denomination and that it has jurisdiction over the consistory.”

Evidently, he cannot understand this quotation himself for when he translates it for his readers he makes of “denomination” *the church concerned*, which clearly refers to a local church rather than to the denomination: “dat de classis het regeerend lichaam is over de betrokken kerk, en dat ze rechtsbevoegdheid heeft over de kerkeraad.” Now surely *the church concerned* is not the same as “the denomination.” I surmise, therefore, that Meyering himself felt that there must be something wrong with the quotation, and that I could not possibly have said in court that the classis is the ruling body of the whole denomination! There would have been some sense, at least, in the statement that the synod is the ruling body of the denomination, although even such a statement I would never make and never did make in court. But that the classis is the ruling body in the denomination is, of course, sheer nonsense.

Hence, if Meyering reads this article, as he ought to read it, he will also read my earnest request to him to inform me of the source of this quotation. I cannot find it in the court records. Nor can he.

Now let me return to the interpretation of Art. 31 of the Church Order as offered by the opposition in court.

First of all, I quote again from the court records and the testimony of Kok. Vol. I, pp. 137, 138.

“As a delegate from one of your churches you have attended the meeting of Classis East?”

“Yes, I have attended practically all of the meetings.”

“And Classis East, in its deliberations, is bound by the Church Order as interpreted from time to time by classis and by the synod, is it not?”

“Would you repeat that, please?”

(Question read thereupon by the reporter).

“If that interpretation is agreeable to my conscience, yes.”

“You have always the reservation that your own conscience could overrule the Church Order, is not that true?”

“Not overrule the Church Order, but it could overrule any interpretations that classis or synod might give to the Church Order.”

“The Church Order itself, however, provides that you must prove it to be in violation to the Word of God, does it not?”

“That duty is placed upon me that I must make that attempt.”

“To whom does that proof go?”

“If it is my conscientious conviction that classis has made a decision contrary to the intents and meaning of the Church Order that proof would have to go to synod.”

“And synod would thereby decide whether your protest was proper or not?”

“They would decide the matter, but they would still leave me the freedom guaranteed by contract, that if I would be—if I would not be in agreement with the decision, and it would still not be in agreement with my conscientious conviction, they would still give me the guaranteed right to reject it.”

“But the decision as to whether the action that had been done either by classis or by consistory was in violation of the Word of God, would rest with the synod, would it not?”

“Formally yes, but in the last analysis, it would rest in my conscience.”

Let us stop here a moment.

Kok repeatedly speaks of a contract which, evidently, he is supposed to have with the Protestant Reformed Churches.

What is this so-called contract?

It is nothing but an obligation which the churches placed upon him and which he voluntarily assumed by solemn promise, that he would adhere to the Confessions and to the Church Order.

It is, therefore, a very strange and one-sided contract. He had nothing to do with its formulation; he could not have changed it; he could not change it now. That so-called contract of which Kok prefers to speak is nothing but a solemn promise which he made when he entered the ministry of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The second element that strikes us in Kok's testimony is that he repeatedly speaks of his conscience, of his conscientious conviction, and of the freedom the churches are supposed to give or to have given him to reject any and all decisions that are in conflict with his conscience or his conscientious conviction.

This is a very dangerous position and certainly is false.

We understand very well, of course, that Kok cannot and may not do anything against his conscience. We also realize that the churches may not force his conscience.

But, in the first place, never forget that one's conscience and conscientious conviction are subjective and individualistic, while the objective standards in the Protestant Reformed Churches are the Word of God, the Confessions, and the Church Order.

Secondly, it certainly is not true that the Protestant Reformed Churches gave Kok the right or freedom to reject any and all decisions that are in conflict with his conscientious conviction. The very opposite is true. As far as the churches are concerned they leave him no freedom outside of the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order and that, too, as they are interpreted, not by Kok's conscience, but by the churches themselves, ultimately by synod. If Kok and his conscience

will not be bound by these, he and his conscience may leave the churches or be deposed from office.

This is the truth.

And this truth Kok denied repeatedly in court.

If Visee, Meyering c.s. in the liberated churches of The Netherlands agree with Kok in this respect, I hereby let them know that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not and never did agree with them.

Now let us continue to quote from the record.

"But under the Formula of Subscription, if you did not agree with it, and act under it, you would no longer be a member of the ministry of the Protestant Reformed Churches, would you?"

"The Formula of Subscription has nothing to do with the decision of classis or synod."

"The Church Order itself, however, is the constitution of your church, is it not?"

"And the Church Order, Art. 31, allows, when it states that all decisions by majority vote shall be binding unless — that means unless in my conscience it is contrary to the Word of God and the Church Order, then it is not binding.

"Is the word 'conscience' in Art. 31?"

"That is our interpretation of Art. 31."

"Whose interpretation?"

"Rev. Ophoff."

"What is your interpretation?"

"The same as Professor Ophoff."

"What is the interpretation of your church?"

"I don't think we have any — let me look up Art. 31. (Referring to Church Order) Doesn't say anything about it."

"Now the use of the word 'proved' in that article has meaning, has it not?"

"Yes, do you want me to read from Professor Ophoff what it means?"

"No, I want you to answer my question."

"Yes, it has meaning."

"To whom is the proof given?"

"How?"

"To whom is that proof given under Article 31?"

"You must attempt to give that proof to either classis or synod."

"You must not only attempt, you must actually furnish the proof, must you not?"

"Not necessarily. If I do not actually furnish the proof that is satisfactory to synod or classis, I still have the right of my opinion."

"Under Article 31?"

"Under Article 31."

"You reserve the right to have your own opinion?"

"That is right."

"But action of synod or classis is binding on you?"

"It is not."

"You mean you can flaunt a decision of classis?"

"Yes, guaranteed me by contract."

"And still remain a minister of the gospel in the Protestant Reformed Church?"

"Of the Protestant Reformed Church, of a Protestant Reformed congregation, yes. Whether they want to put me out of the association, that is their privilege. They have the right to deny me the fellowship, but they have no right to touch my office as a minister of the Protestant Reformed Church of the congregation that I represent."

The meaning of all this is clear: It implies:

1. That Kok's individual conscience is supreme, even over the interpretation by classis or synod of the Confessions or the Church Order.

2. That "by contract" the churches have given him the right to flaunt any decision of classis or synod.

3. That, even if he should be declared, by classis or synod or both, to be outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches he would still be a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches and have a right to that name.

That was Kok's church polity in court.

Do you, Meyering, agree with it? We do not and never will.

H.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

On September 8 it pleased God to take unto his eternal home, our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

J. R. VANDER WAL

of Redlands, California, at the age of 76 years.

We are comforted in the knowledge that he is now with his Lord and Saviour.

Mrs. Clara Vander Wal  
Mr. and Mrs. M. Gaastra  
Four grandchildren  
Five great grandchildren

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Aid of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, wishes hereby to express its heartiest sympathy to the family of our departed brother in Christ,

MR. J. R. VANDER WAL

Bearing the bereaved ones up to the Throne of Grace, we commend them to the comforting presence of our God.

In name of the Society,

Rev. H. H. Kuiper, President  
Mrs. H. De Vries, Vice-President

#### Eastern Ladies League

The Eastern Ladies League meeting will be held in our Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church on Thursday, Oct. 20, 1955, at 8 p. m. Rev. H. H. Hoeksema will be our speaker for the evening. Ladies make your plans to join us in an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. Gerrit Pipe, Vice-Secretary.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 49

Chapter One

The Will of God

In the preceding paragraph we touched upon the distinction between the will of God's counsel, or the will of His decree, and the will of His command, or His ethical will. The same distinction is often expressed by the terms "secret and revealed will of God." God's decrees are called the secret will, while the will of God's command is designated as His revealed will. These terms, however, are not quite correct. And they are often the occasion of a serious misunderstanding. On the supposition that God's counsel is secret, the contention is often based that we are not at all concerned with it: the secret things are for the Lord our God, the revealed things are for us and our children. We know nothing about God's eternal counsel, and therefore we do well if we do not curiously inquire into its hidden depths. And surely, they are to be condemned as erring dangerously, who place the truth of God's eternal purpose in the foreground as a basis of doctrine, so they say. Clearly, however, this is not correct. It is undoubtedly true that there are secret things, which we do not know and cannot know, and certainly cannot fathom. We do not know the day of our death. Nor do we know the way which we must still travel before that day arrives. No one can possibly predict how long a certain war will last, nor what will be the outcome of such a war, or what is the purpose it must serve in God's plan. We know not what tomorrow will bring; and every day is sufficient unto the evil thereof. And we can know nothing of the will of God's counsel, except what is revealed of it in the Scriptures. But this does not mean that we may simply dismiss the truth of God's eternal purpose from our mind, and ignore it in our preaching and instruction. God revealed His counsel to us. The fact of the eternal good pleasure of God, as the sovereign and unchangeable purpose according to which He works all things in time, is certainly not hid, but clearly revealed. And it occupies an important and basic place in Scripture. And the general lines of that eternal counsel are clearly drawn in Scripture. God wants His people to know His counsel with respect to salvation and, with regard to all things, in order that they may speak of it and be witnesses of His wisdom and power and absolute sovereignty. And therefore, we prefer to speak of God's will

of His decree and the will of His command. God's decrees are His eternal and sovereign thoughts and determinations concerning us and concerning all things. It is the will which He Himself executes and realizes in the history of the world. His will of His command, however, declares what His moral creatures must be and will and do. It pleased God to create beings that have a will of their own, rational and moral creatures. They are creatures that are capable of knowing "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," Rom. 12:2, and that in all their acts consciously function in relation to that will. And the will of God's command reveals to these moral creatures, men and angels, what and how they shall think and will and desire and act so as to be in harmony with His own righteousness and the objects of His favor and delight.

That this is based upon Scripture it is hardly necessary to point out. On this will of God is based the doctrine of election and reprobation, which so many in our day reject. It is the will of God's decree which is revealed in Rom. 9:18: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The same, as regards the elect, is expressed in Rom. 8:29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." The same is expressed in Ephesians 1:9, 10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." And in the same epistle, 1:5, we read: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." And again in vs. 11 of the same chapter: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The same will of God is expressed in John 6:39, 40: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." To the same will, undoubtedly, Matt. 18:14 refers: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." That also the wicked acts of men are determined by the counsel of God from all eternity, and sovereignly, is plainly expressed in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." When the apostles Peter and John, after being released by the Jewish Council, return to the company of the church and report to them all their experience, the company of the



people of God that were assembled "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:24, ff. All these passages of Holy Writ, and numerous others, refer to the sovereign counsel of God, to His will as He determined it in all eternity and executes it sovereignly in time. And it is evident from these passages that the sovereign counsel of God concerns both good and evil, the wicked and the righteous alike, the elect and reprobate.

Very often however, the Scriptures speak of the will of God for His moral creatures, especially man. It is the will of God *for* man, the will which not God performs, but which man himself is called to execute. It is the moral, ethical will of God's command. Of this we read in Matt. 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Significant because of the context is Matt. 12:50. As the Lord was teaching in a certain house, His mother and His brethren stood outside. They evidently understood that by His teaching He provoked the hatred of the leaders of the people, and were afraid of the consequences. Hence, they wanted to take Him away from there, out of the reach of His enemies. It is then, and from that point of view, that the Lord repudiated His natural relationships and said: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." It was Jesus' meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. John 4:34. For He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. John 6:38. Spiritual knowledge of the truth and of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is inseparably connected with the desire to do the will of God. John 7:17. God does not hear sinners, but those that worship Him and do His will. John 9:31. The carnal Jews knew the will of God from the law, but they did not fulfill it. Rom. 2:18. The will of God is good and acceptable and perfect, and believers shall prove and taste the goodness of that will if they walk in the way of sanctification, and be not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind. Rom. 12:2. Believers are called to understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph. 5:17. Servants must be obedient to their masters, as servants of Christ, not with eyeservice as menpleasers, but doing the will of God from the heart. Eph. 6:6. Believers have need of patience in the midst of the world, in order that after they have done the will of God, they might receive the

promise. Heb. 10:36. They must stand in the midst of the world as being truly free, and as the servants of God, doing His will. For it is the will of God that with well-doing they may put to shame the ignorance of foolish men. The believer that has suffered in the flesh therein has a proof that he has ceased from sin, in order that he should no longer live in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. I Peter 4:1, 2. And, to quote no more: "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

It is evident, therefore, that not only the will of God's command, but also the will of His counsel is clearly revealed to us in Holy Writ. And whether or not we shall be able fully to understand the relation between those two wills, it is our calling to maintain both on the basis of Holy Writ.

## Chapter Two

### Prayer for Obedience and Submission

The question now arises: to what does the third petition refer? In it we are enjoined to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Does this petition refer to the will of God's decree, or to the will of His command, or, perhaps to both? Do we pray here that God's counsel may be realized, or that we may obey the will of His command? Or is it impossible to separate the two, and are both implied in this prayer?

It is rather usual to explain that in this petition of the Lord's Prayer the reference is exclusively to the will of God's command, so that the meaning is: "Give us grace, so that we may always do Thy will and keep Thy good commandments." This is also evidently the emphasis of the Heidelberg Catechism in its exposition of this prayer. It explains: ". . . grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring over thy will, which is only good; that so every one may attend to, and perform the duties of his station and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven." And thus is the common explanation that this petition refers only to the will of God's command. God's counsel He Himself performs; we do not. With it, it is claimed, we are really not concerned. God performs the will of His decree Himself, and that too, perfectly: His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His good pleasure. There is therefore no sense in praying that His will of decree may be done. Besides, the Lord adds to this petition: "on earth as it is in heaven," meaning evidently that as in heaven His will is perfectly obeyed, so it may also be done on earth. And therefore, it must be evident that this prayer has reference only to the will of God's command, and that the will of His counsel is not included in the scope of this petition.

There is truth in this contention. The main thought of this prayer is indeed that God's will may be perfectly obeyed. Only, it should be clear that in our actual life we can never separate the will of God's command from that of

His decree, and that, while obeying His will and keeping His precepts, we are constantly in contact with the execution of the will of His decree. In other words, if we obey the Lord our God and walk before Him according to His good commandments, we must constantly learn to will His will of decree as it is realized in our life. The will of God's decree so determines our whole life that we are not only called to will it, but also to walk accordingly. Suppose that God sends the cold hand of death into our home to snatch away a dear child. In doing so He executes His own eternal purpose. That child is torn away from our heart according to the will of God's decree. Of course, with the execution of this will of God's decree as such and concerning us we have nothing to do. In fact, for some time we do everything in our power to prevent the death of the child. We call the doctor, and give the child medicine. If necessary, we submit the child to an operation. And such, of course, is our calling. But if it is the will of God's decree that the child shall die, our own efforts avail nothing. God takes the child, and our will has nothing to do with it. And yet, in another sense it has a good deal to do with this revelation of the purpose of God to us in the death of our dear one. We certainly must walk in the way of the revelation of this will of God to us, and we must certainly learn to will the will of God in the death of the child. For there is in connection with this revelation of the will of God's decree a very special way in which we must walk, a very special calling which we must fulfill. We must surrender the child to the care of the undertaker. We must visit the funeral parlors. We must ultimately walk the way to the grave. Moreover, in all this we have the calling to submit ourselves to the will of God, yea, to blend our will with His, and to give Him glory and praise even in the midst of our own sorrow according to the flesh, and to confess that He does all things well. In this particular case the third petition of the Lord's prayer would mean: "Lord, give us grace that in this particular way in which Thou leadest us we may walk in complete surrender to Thy holy will, so that we may be able to say from the heart, 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" Job 1:21.

Thus it is with our whole life. Always we must find and obey our calling in the particular place in which God stations us, and in the way in which He leads us. The clearest and most profound illustration of this truth we have in the prayer of our Lord in Gethsemane, where He too sent this petition to the Father: "Thy will be done." He prayed then in the agony of His soul. The dark shadow of the cross stole over His soul. He was, as He told His disciples, exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He clearly anticipated the full horror of the way that stretched out before Him that night. Already He tasted the bitterness of the cup He had to drink in obedience to the Father, as the perfect Servant of Jehovah. He was sore amazed. So perplexed was He, that even in that extreme hour He conceived of the possibility of some other way of obedience than the one

into which He was about to descend. And He poured out His soul before the Face of the Father in that darkest of nights and prayed: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done." To be sure, the Lord Jesus here prayed that He might be obedient to the will of the Father even unto the very end. He would drink the cup His Father gave Him to drink. In that sense His prayer referred to the will of God's command, the command that He should lay down His life for His sheep, which the Father had given Him. Yet, how closely this obedience of the Savior was connected with the will of God's eternal counsel concerning Him. God had decreed the way of the cross, and all its horrors and sufferings, for His only begotten Son. And it was in the way of that counsel that the Lord had to become obedient even unto the end.

It is no different with us. To be sure, the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," emphasizes that we may do His will perfectly, as it is obeyed by the inhabitants of heaven, the perfected saints and the holy angels, with Christ in their midst and at their head. It would hallow all our earthly life, and consecrate it to the living God. It teaches us to consider the whole of our earthly life, in all its different phases and departments, as a calling, an office, a mandate, and ourselves as officebearers, servants of the living God. For the will of God concerns our whole life and walk, and every department of that life. And in all our life we, who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are His servants, called to do His will. We cannot divide life into two main departments, or spheres, so that we serve God in the one, but consider that the other lies wholly outside of the sphere of His will. All our life belongs to Him, and to Him it is to be consecrated. Always and everywhere we are in His service. Our whole existence is an office. With the life of our body and of our soul, with the life of our mind and of our desires, and in all the various relationships of life, in the family, in society, in shop or office, in church and state, we are called to serve Him. And always we must ask for that "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." And thus, all of our life is hallowed by this third petition. The minister in his pulpit, the elder in the oversight of his flock, the deacon in his work of mercy, but also the teacher before his class, the policeman on his beat, the shoemaker at his bench, the mother in the daily routine of her homely tasks, the father at the head of his family, the children in relation to their parents,—everyone, without exception, whatever his station in life, finds that the will of God governs his life, and must be obeyed. The prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," teaches us to look upon all of life as a calling of God, in which we must glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Yet we may not overlook that in thus seeking to know and to do the will of our Father in heaven we are, as it were, encompassed on every side by the sovereign will of God's decree. For our stations and calling, our way and



our circumstances, are not all alike. They vary greatly. The one is rich, and the other poor. The one is of high, the other of low estate. The one has received many talents and gifts from God, the other few; and there are those that receive but the one talent. And accordingly, our positions in life differ. This is true even in the angel world. Gabriel stands before God; Michael is a prince among the angels; and there are powers and principalities in heaven. And no less is this true on earth. Some hold an exalted place. Others perform the lower tasks of life. There are kings and rulers; and there are those that dig sewers and clean streets. In the church, some are ministers of the gospel; others are elders or deacons; still others are Sunday School teachers or leaders in the various societies; while the great majority functions simply in the office of believers. Now, whence comes this difference in gifts and talents, in station and calling? It comes from God, Who governs our entire life according to His eternal purpose and good pleasure. And in that particular station and calling which He assigns to us, we must be servants, and must walk in obedience to His good and perfect will. And so we see that in our entire life there is indeed a close relation between the will of God's counsel and the will of His command, and that somehow they are both included in the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This, it seems to me, is also implied in the very form of this petition. In it we do not simply pray that we may perform the will of God's command. The form is entirely general, and even in the passive: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

For what, then, do we pray in this third petition?

First of all, we are taught here to beseech our Father in heaven for grace that we may always accept our position in life as our particular assignment from Him, and our way as the way which He ordained for us, in order that in that position and in that way we may function as His servants and do His will. O, indeed, we need grace, we need much grace, grace every day, to assume that attitude. How inclined we are to divide life into separate spheres, a sphere of our religious life, in which we serve the Lord and clearly think to discern a calling and office, and another sphere of our every day life, which we may probably mix with some religious exercises, but in which we fail to consider ourselves servants of God, that must ask and do His will! In that case we look upon our daily work, whatever that may be, as something rather profane. We conduct our business in order to make a living, or to accumulate wealth. We look upon our work in the factory as a necessary evil. The housewife goes through the daily routine of her labors as a kind of drudgery. The teacher is glad when the toil of the day is over. We distinguish between a calling and a job. A minister of the gospel has a calling, but outside of that, most people simply have a job. That to work in the shop, or to dig sewers, to make tools, or to build a house, to bear children and to bring them up, to darn stockings and to wash dishes,

whatever may be the work that is awaiting us every day, also belongs to our calling from the Lord, and also is an office,—how many of us think of it and live accordingly? Yes, so it is. The Christian has been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and liberated from the slavery of sin, in order that with his entire life, in all its relationships, he might be taken into the service of his God. Hence, wherever he is stationed and in whatever way God leads him, there he must see his calling. And well may he daily ask for grace that he may accept his position without murmuring, and look upon it as a calling from his Father in heaven. "Thy will be done. Grant, O Father in heaven, that I may always and everywhere live as before Thy face, in Thy presence, and in the consciousness of my calling to be Thy servant."

Then, in the second place, in this petition we ask for grace that in that particular calling which is ours we may always be ready to do the Lord's will, even though this should mean that we have to renounce our own will. This is expressed in the exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism: ". . . grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring obey thy will, which is only good." Indeed, to do the will of God in our whole life means that we shall be diligent in our work, that we shall be honest in our business dealings, that we shall be kind and just to those that are in our employ, provide good working conditions for them, and pay them a fair wage, that we shall be in subjection to those that have the rule over us, obeying them not as menpleasers with eye-service, but as serving the Lord Christ. In short, it implies that we shall consecrate ourselves, with all our powers and possessions and means, unto the God of our salvation, and that we shall walk as children of light in the midst of a world that lieth in darkness, confessing the name of the Lord and glorifying our Father which is in heaven. It means that we fight sin within us, forsake the world, and walk in all good works, day by day and everywhere. For the prayer is that we here on earth may perform the will of God as faithfully and perfectly as the inhabitants of heaven do His will. The Lord directs our eyes to heaven here once more. There is Christ, the perfect Servant of the Lord. There are the saints that have gone before, and that are delivered from the last vestige of sin and corruption. There are the holy angels, that hearken to the Word of God's mouth, and are ever ready to execute His will. That so perfectly and so cheerfully and gladly we may do the will of our Father in heaven is the request of this third petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father in heaven, teach me Thy will to know, and from the heart Thy will to do."

We understand, of course, that this third petition presupposes that in our hearts we have the longing to do the will of God perfectly. We certainly cannot love sin and deliberately walk in it; we cannot even cherish any particular sin and hide it in our bosom, and utter this petition.

H.H.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

#### 2.

We now will continue to write our exposition of the first four Chapters of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth.

To properly understand the thrust of Paul's writing, even from the very first words of this letter, we must constantly keep in mind that Paul is going to refute the very great evils that had crept and were still creeping into the church at Corinth. It was the old leaven of sin which would work through until the whole meal be leavened and corrupted. Concretely, they were the sins of party-strife and schism, adultery, improper conduct at the Lord's Supper and the denial of the resurrection from the dead.

Surely the need of the hour was, that Paul should in Christ's Name bring the Word of God, which is profitable for instruction, reproof, correction in righteousness, so that the man of God, the spiritual man, be prepared into every good work!

We will be interested primarily, in these essays, in Paul's refutation of the saints in Corinth for their party-strife and schism, which was rooted in the puffed-up spirit, which is gendered by knowledge which is not seasoned with love. Compare I Cor. 8:1, 2. It is true, Paul is, in that passage, speaking of the question of the proper attitude toward that which has been offered to idols. Yet, the principle enunciated in the saying "For knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" is of a broader application. It accurately expresses the fundamental trouble with these "saints in Christ" who walked in party-strife and schism. We will interest ourselves in this aspect of Paul's letter in these first four (4) Chapters.

With the foregoing in mind, let us consider the verses 4-9 of this first Chapter of I Corinthians.

We here read as follows: *"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*

We would call your attention to the following elements in these verses: 1. That Paul here gives utterance to his constant thanksgiving to God for the grace which He had given to the church in Corinth. This church was emphatically the *church of God*. I Cor. 1:2. See also I Cor. 11:22 where Paul asks: "or despise ye the church of God." This latter reference surely has reference to the church of God

in Corinth, and not simply "the church" in the abstract form of a rhetorical question. Paul has good reason to give utterance to the church of his constant thanksgiving to God. That Paul gives thanks to God for what He has given the church in Corinth indicates that what he (Paul) will vouch for her is no empty boast and vain flattery, which would only aggravate the already too puffed up brethren, but rests upon solid and abiding considerations. And these considerations which form the ground of Paul's thanksgiving to God must bring these "saints in Christ" to spiritual sobriety; they must be brought to their senses!

Consider then the following Paul would say to these Corinthian schism-workers in the church of God:

a. That all that you are you are by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Such is the thrust of the phrase "for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus." Verse 4. It is a grace which is solely of God. And it is a grace which has been realized in Christ on the Cross of Calvary for you, and is now given to you by Christ, who is your Head, in whom the Spirit dwelleth as in the Head, and is given unto you as in the living members on His body, in which there may be no schism. For all the gifts of God in Christ were given to "profit withal" I Cor. 12:7. That such is the intent and thrust of this passage is evident from the addition: "given you!" The fact that it is the grace of God really implicitly states that all is *gift*. However, the fact that Paul adds that this grace is "given you" indicates that he would underscore most emphatically that this grace is once and for all gift. Such is the thrust, no doubt, of the aorist tense. (tee dothei-see) b. When we bear in mind that Paul, whenever he speaks of the grace of God, wishes to stop all flesh from boasting, we see the strong force of this word of Paul also here in our text. We have but to remember the word of Paul in Eph. 2:8, 9 where we read: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that is not of you but the gift of God; not out of works lest any man should boast!" Such is the thrust of Paul here in these verses toward these puffed up "saints in Christ," who are "fleshly"!

2. The fact that Paul *thus* thanks God *continually* for these Corinthians should put them in their place. And what a wonderful place it is to be "put in" when we are corrected of the Lord. Then we learn to boast in Him, and to abase ourself and hate all sinful pride.

Wonderful pedagogy on the part of Paul!

He will nurture them to a walk which is comely to "saints in Christ"!

Wherefore he will set forth a bit more minutely this "grace given" to this church so that they may see the horror of their present conduct, as this is set forth in the verses 10-17 following.

3. He sets the stage here for the concrete matters he will bring to their attention. Let no one spin the web of the fancy of his brain that the preacher, who thus views and addresses the church, has no addressibleness of the Gospel. Of course, not for "mankind in general!" For that is not

how the Bible is written. It is addressed to the saints in Christ, the church of God!

Well, then, let us notice the following:

a. The grace *given* to this Church of God in Christ is such that Paul can write: "Because in all things ye have been enriched in Him." This is a very general statement and must be left standing as it is. There was no grace in Christ which had not been conferred upon this church. They had received from Christ's fulness, grace for grace. John 1:16. God's grace is such that in its very nature it is rich. Thus we read in Eph. 1:7 "according to the riches of His grace." And, again, we read in Eph. 2:7 "that He might demonstrate in the ages to come the exceeding *riches* of His grace." And in Col. 2:2 we read "Being knit together in love, and into all the riches of the full assurance of knowledge, to know the Mystery of God." The church had indeed been lifted out of the poverty of the shame of sin, of guilt and corruption, and had come to the riches of the full assurance of Christ and all that this implied in them. And, let it not be forgotten, this was *wholly* gift of God.

b. More particularly this church had received from Christ, through the Holy spirit, Who dispenses gifts to each one as He wills, the riches of Christ in such a manner that they could speak of it to others, could be teachers. They lacked none of the charismatic gifts spoken of in I Cor. 12:4-11. Some had received the word of wisdom, others the word of knowledge, others again had received the gifts of healing, and again others the gift of working of miracles, not to forget the speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

c. Forsooth, this church stood behind none of all the churches, in the world, in these spiritual gifts. They stood out in importance in this respect. And Paul daily thanks God for these gifts in this church. These gifts must not be despised. There was absolutely nothing wrong and sinful in these gifts. Every good and perfect gift, also the charismatic gifts in the early church in the apostolic age, were of God. To Him alone the glory for all these gifts which are all wrought in the church by one and the self-same Spirit!

Such was this *gifted* (it is said advisedly) church in Corinth.

*Gifted* of God they were in Christ through the Spirit. Wherefore they could fundamentally understand spiritual things spiritually, and are therefore addressible by this word of Paul.

4. More still. This church has a living hope upon the revelation, the final return of Christ. That was her expectation since she had the Firstfruits of the Spirit. She had learned to understand from Paul reasoning from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. And she had learned to see that all the prophets spoke of the suffering to come upon Christ and the "glory to follow." She lived fundamentally with the loins of her mind girt up, looking for that revelation of the grace to be brought unto us in that day, when the church shall be perfect in one, and when no one will

anymore say: Know the Lord. Then all the charismatic gifts would be no more. Prophecy itself would then fail, be no more. See I Cor. 13:8-11. Such was the expectancy of this church, while she had these charismatic gifts, says Paul. Verse 7.

Surely this should make this Church see that fundamentally first things should remain first in their spiritual evaluation of them.

5. And Paul is certain that Christ will surely purify these Corinthians in such a way from all their schism, party-strife, adultery, error concerning the very hope of the resurrection, that they will stand without any reproach in the day of Christ! He will keep them to the end. And he will present this imperfect church without spot or blemish, as saints in the light in that day! See verse 8.

6. And this assurance of Paul is based upon solid considerations. It is based on the fact that "God is faithful!"

God's faithfulness is closely related to His truthfulness. Truthfulness is a matter of God's intellect, while "faithfulness" is a matter of God's will, His immutable determination to fulfill His promise to His own.

The beginning of this manifestation of God's faithfulness is revealed in that God efficaciously called the saints into the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, and from this "fellowship" this church will never be separated.

7. Why then does Paul still write them if they will be surely presented without spot or blemish in the fellowship of Christ in that day? He writes them, admonishes them, teaches them because every Scripture, inspired by God, is profitable exactly to teach, reprove, admonish in righteousness, because God *works grace* through His own means of grace! Wherefore Paul does here what he later tells Timothy to do when he says: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering."

Let us try to see how Paul does this, so that in our labors we may follow this great preacher's steps in feeding and ruling the flock of God.

G. L.

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"Therefore he afflicts us with ignominy, or poverty, or loss of relatives, or disease or other calamities; to the bearing of which being in ourselves unequal, we ere long sink under them. Thus being humbled, we learn to invoke his strength, which alone causes us to stand erect under a load of afflictions."

Book III, Chapter VIII

"The cross of Christ triumphs, in the hearts of believers, over the devil and the flesh, over sin and impious men, only when their eyes are directed to the power of the resurrection."

Book III, Chapter IX

Quotations from *Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion*

## IN HIS FEAR

### Speech That Manifests Fear

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

No man plucking an apple off the tree will conclude — if he be in his right mind — that this must indeed be an orange tree, for it bears apples.

By their fruits ye shall know all the trees of the field. But "By their fruits ye shall know them" Jesus also said in regard to men and their works. Ye shall know whether they are children of God or children of the devil by their works which are the fruit.

Man has fruits too!

On another occasion Jesus said "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man," Matthew 15:11.

And James says "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body . . . the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," James 3:2, 8.

Our speech is fruit. And it is fruit that reveals much. It manifests whether the fear of the Lord is in our hearts or not.

We are not concerned in this writing with the speech that manifests fear of the hydrogen and cobalt bombs, of another world war or of disaster and destruction. There is plenty of speech made today that exactly manifests such a fear. At the present moment all the speech about the hope of a passing of the cold war is nothing more than speech that manifests fear of it growing into a shooting war. Men speak of peace when there is no peace. And their speech reveals a fear, a terrifying fear of a world wide catastrophe. But at this moment we wish to write on speech that manifests the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of all wisdom. The principle of all wisdom is not in a fear of men and a fear that rules out the existence and divinity of God! Speech that manifests His fear, that acknowledges Him as the sovereign God that He is claims our attention at this time.

Speech is a wonderful gift. It is one of those abilities which we take for granted until we lose it temporarily or else seem to be in danger of losing it.

By means of speech we are able to convey to the hearts and minds of others what is in our own hearts and minds. By our speech we are able to teach others. By our speech we are able to confess our faith and sing God's praises. By our speech we can hand down from generation to generation the truth which we have learned. But by our speech we can also hand down to coming generations our sin and unbelief.

The infidel reveals himself by his speech. So does the heretic reveal his departure from the truth by his speech. By their fruits (speech) ye shall know them!

The child of God manifests his faith by his speech. The covenant parent transmits to the mind of his child the faith he has in God. The christian school teacher imparts to the child the truth that is embraced by the hearts and minds of the believers. By their speech ye shall know them.

God spoke in times past through the prophets in sundry places and in diverse manners and then brought it all to a glorious climax when He spoke also through His Son. By His speech He revealed to us His own eternal thoughts of salvation in the blood and Spirit of His Son. By His speech to us He conveyed to our sanctified and regenerated hearts and minds our place in His kingdom.

By His speech we know Him.

But a practical question continues to present itself: Does our speech manifest fear in Him? And it must be stated immediately that much of the speech uttered today by those who have their names enrolled upon the "books" of the various churches throughout the world leaves one wondering about the sharp line of distinction between church and world, between believer and unbeliever. Often an antithesis in speech is hard to detect. Often there is synthesis of speech; and the antithesis is not evident until in the inner closet confession is made of an evil tongue and a prayer arises "Let the words of my mouth . . . be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." By that fruit they are known to be children of God. But as James says about the tongue "therewith bless we God and therewith curse we men who are made after the similitude of God . . . My brethren, these things ought not so to be." James 3:9, 10.

By their speech ye shall know them. Indeed, but much of the speech uttered by those who confess to be children of God manifests the same unbelief that the ungodly display.

What is worse, those who claim—and by that claim seem to manifest themselves as children of God—to be the citizens of His kingdom utter the speech of unbelief so easily and so thoughtlessly. We, therefore, thought it profitable to call attention to a few of these in this and following articles.

Not at all uncommon is it to hear those who agree with you when you state that Scripture condemns all gambling themselves say things which manifest that same lack of the fear of the Lord and a gambling spirit. In fact these expressions of a gambling spirit are so loosely used and freely employed without thought given to their significance that it is not even strange or an unheard of thing to hear one who agrees with the statement in the form for the administration of Holy Communion as used in our churches that "we also according to the command of the Apostle Paul, admonish all those who are defiled with the following sins to keep themselves from the table of the Lord, and declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ; such as all idolaters, . . . robbers, *gamesters*, (*italic ours*) . . . and all who lead offensive lives;" it is not an unheard of thing to hear people who agree to that in the very next breath say

to you "Sure, but I'll bet that you will have a hard time proving that one is an idolater, a gamester and robber." Or else in reply to your statement that the Church should surely insist on such a strict keeping of the sacrament: "I agree, but I'll bet you that many who worship idols, gamble and steal do partake without the knowledge of the church that they walk in these sins."

I'll bet you that gambling is wrong!

Can you then not see the wickedness in the thing? I'll bet that all betting is wrong. I'll gamble with you that I can prove that all gambling is wrong. And betting is gambling. To state "I'll bet you" is to gamble. "All such while they continue in such sins," so reads the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, as based on Holy Writ, "shall abstain from this meat . . ."

In some of our churches that part of the form is read the week before the celebration of the Sacrament. Let all who read these lines examine themselves then according to it and take note of how often in the week between its reading and the celebration the phrase "I'll bet you" falls off their lips like water off a duck's back!

No, you do not specify a sum of money that you will bet. You do not bet your neck (your life). You do not say that if you are wrong the hangman may break your neck and take your life away. You simply say "I'll bet you" or perhaps "You betchah" and do not expect the man to whom you say that even to expect to collect anything from you should you be proven to be wrong.

But you bet, you gamble nevertheless.

Brought to the consciousness of this evil the child of God will search his soul and find that he really did not even intend to go through with the thing. He said "I'll bet you." But if the party to whom he has said it "takes him up" and says to him "put up your money" he would withdraw and say, "I really did not mean to gamble on this thing. I just said that to show you that I am thoroughly convinced of this thing of which I spoke and am sure that I can prove myself to be right."

You bet. And you gambled nevertheless.

If all we mean is "I am sure that I am right," say so! Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay, Jesus said "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Is it not just as easy to say "I think?" And if that is all that we mean, should we not say it that way? And your children, teach them also to say, "I think" or "I am sure;" but correct them, rebuke them when they say to each other "I'll bet you" and its partner "you betchah!"

And it is not simply a matter of being just as easy to say "I think" instead of "I'll bet you." It is not simply a matter of saying what you mean; that you mean "I am sure" and therefore ought not say "I'll bet" when you really did not mean and did not intend to bet anyway. It is a matter of the glory of God. It is a matter of so speaking that the fear of the Lord is manifest also in our speech.

It manifests no reverence, no childlike fear before Him to gamble with the things He has given to us as stewards here below of *His* goods. Shall we gamble with that which is not our own? Indeed, relatively I have things that are mine and not yours. But only in relation to men and creatures can I say that they are mine. The cattle on a thousand hills belonged to farmers who staked off those hills and called them their farms and their cattle. But God says that the cattle on a thousand hills are His, and when we "sacrifice" any bit of it — give up the use and the material benefit of it — we only "bring" to Him what is already His.

To bet and gamble with the things He has given us to employ in His service is to behave as though He is not God. It is the same as to declare yourself to be God and to claim these things to be yours instead of His; to use as you please and not as He wills.

He who fears God loves Him. And with his tongue he will praise Him. Notice this in Psalm 11:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have they that do His commandments: His *praise* (italics ours) endureth forever." But to gamble and to bet with His goods does not praise Him. It ignores Him, intellectually and ethically pushes Him outside of His own creation and behaves as though He has nothing to say or to do with that creation.

He who fears God stands in awe and reverence before Him. He sees Him and believes in Him as God. And you may be sure that neither the holy angels before His face in heavenly perfection today nor the saints in the New Creation in the perfect fear of the Lord shall bet and gamble with the things in that New Creation. There will be no need to emphasize and bolster words with bets. But there will be no desire either to gamble with His goods for selfish pride and self-vindication.

He who walks in His fear does not walk with a chip on his shoulder and is not ready to bet with you concerning all that he says. He who walks in His fear speaks the truth; and when it is doubted he leaves it to Him Whom He fears to judge. But he refuses to gamble and bet with God's goods to prove himself to be right. He who fears God would rather have others call him a liar than to deny God His glory and praise by his own gambling and betting.

You never meant it like that and that bad?

Then by all means stop this very moment using that gambling expression.

Let your speech manifest His fear.

As you guard your tongue and weigh your words when you are in the presence of some earthly dignitary, speak ALWAYS in His fear. For you are always in His presence.

Yea, even more than you guard your speech before an earthly dignitary, guard it before Him Who is God.

"Stand in awe and sin not."

J.A.H.

## 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 (by Philip Schaff).

To follow now the ecclesiastical legislation respecting this patriarchal oligarchy in chronological order (having discussed the rise of the organization of the hierarchy and the rise of the patriarchs, Philip Schaff now proceeds to discuss the synodical legislation on the patriarchal power and jurisdiction — H.V.):

The germs of it already lay in the ante-Nicene period, when the bishops of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, partly in virtue of the age and apostolic origin of their churches, partly on account of the political prominence of those three cities as the three capitals of the Roman empire, steadily asserted a position of preëminence. The apostolic origin of the churches of Rome and Antioch is evident from the New Testament: Alexandria traced its Christianity, at least indirectly through the evangelist Mark, to Peter, and was politically more important than Antioch; while Rome from the first had precedence of both in church and in state. This preëminence of the oldest and most powerful metropolitans acquired formal legislative validity and firm establishment through the ecumenical councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The first ecumenical council of Nice, in 325, as yet knew nothing of five patriarchs, but only the three metropolitans above named, confirming them in their traditional rights. In the much-canvassed sixth canon, probably on occasion of the Meletian schism in Egypt, and the attacks connected with it on the rights of the bishop of Alexandria, that council declared as follows: "The ancient custom, which has obtained in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, shall continue in force, viz.: that the bishop of Alexandria have rule over all these (provinces), since this also is customary with the bishop of Rome (that is, not in Egypt, but with reference to his own diocese). Likewise also at Antioch and in the other eparchies, the churches shall retain their prerogatives. Now, it is perfectly clear, that, if any one has been made bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, the great council does not allow him to be bishop."

The Nicene fathers passed this canon not as introducing anything new, but merely as confirming an existing relation on the basis of church tradition; and that, with special reference to Alexandria, on account of the troubles existing there. Rome was named only for illustration; and Antioch and all the other eparchies or provinces were secured their admitted rights. The bishoprics of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch were placed substantially on equal footing, yet in

such tone, that Antioch, as the third capital of the Roman empire, already stands as a stepping stone to the ordinary metropolitans. By the "other eparchies" of the canon are to be understood either all provinces, and therefore all metropolitan districts, or more probably, as in the second canon of the first council of Constantinople, only the three eparchies of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Ephesus, and Asia Minor, and Heraclea in Thrace, which, after Constantine's division of the East, possessed similar prerogatives, but were subsequently overshadowed and absorbed by Constantinople. In any case, however, this addition proves that at that time the rights and dignity of the patriarchs were not yet strictly distinguished from those of the other metropolitans. The bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch here appear in relation to the other bishops simply as *primi inter pares*, as metropolitans of the first rank, in whom the highest political eminence was joined with the highest ecclesiastical. Next to them, in the second rank, come the bishops of Ephesus in the Asiatic diocese of the empire, of Neo-Caesarea in the Pontic, and of Heraclea in the Thracian; while Constantinople, which was not founded till five years later, is wholly unnoticed in the Nicene council, and Jerusalem is mentioned only under the name of Aelia.

Between the first and second ecumenical councils arose the new patriarchate of Constantinople, or New Rome, built by Constantine in 330, and elevated to the rank of the imperial residence. The bishop of this city was not only the successor of the bishop of the ancient Byzantium, hitherto under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Heraclea, but, through the favor of the imperial court and the bishops who were always numerously assembled there, it placed itself in a few decennia among the first metropolitans of the East, and in the fifth century became the most powerful rival of the bishop of old Rome.

This new patriarchate was first officially recognized at the first ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 381, and was conceded "*the precedence in honor, next to the bishop of Rome,*" the second place among all bishops; and that, on the purely political consideration, that New Rome was the residence of the emperor. At the same time the imperial city and the diocese of Thrace (whose ecclesiastical metropolis hitherto had been Heraclea) were assigned as its district.

Many Greeks took this as a formal assertion of the equality of the bishop of Constantinople with the bishop of Rome, understanding "next" or "after" as referring only to time, not to rank. But it is more natural to regard this as conceding a primacy of honor, which the Roman see could claim on different grounds. The popes, as the subsequent protest of Leo shows, were not satisfied with this, because they were unwilling to be placed in the same category with the Constantinopolitan fledgling, and at the same time assumed a supremacy of jurisdiction over the whole church. On the other hand, this decree was unwelcome also to the patriarch of Alexandria, because this see had hitherto held



the second rank, and was now required to take the third. Hence the canon was not subscribed by Timotheus of Alexandria, and was regarded in Egypt as void. Afterward, however, the emperors prevailed with the Alexandrian patriarchs to yield this point.

After the council of 381, the bishop of Constantinople indulged in manifold encroachments on the rights of the metropolitans of Ephesus and Caesarea in Cappadocia, and even on the rights of the other patriarchs. In this extension of his authority he was favored by the fact that, in spite of the prohibition of the council of Sardica, the bishops of all the districts of the East continually resided in Constantinople, in order to present all kinds of interests to the emperor. These concerns of distant bishops were generally referred by the emperor to the bishop of Constantinople and his council, the council of the bishops resident in Constantinople, under his presidency. In this way his trespasses even upon the bounds of other patriarchs obtained the right of custom by consent of parties, if not the sanction of church legislation. Nectarius, who was not elected till after that council, claimed the presidency at a council in 394, over the two patriarchs who were present, Theophilus of Alexandria and Flavian of Antioch; decided the matter almost alone; and thus was the first to exercise the primacy over the entire East. Under his successor, Chrysostom, the compass of the see extended itself still farther, and, according to Theodoret, stretched over the capital, over all Thrace with its six provinces, over all Asia (Asia proconsularis) with eleven provinces, and over Pontus, which likewise embraced eleven provinces; thus covering twenty-eight provinces in all. In the year 400, Chrysostom went "by request to Ephesus," to ordain there Heraclides of Ephesus, and at the same time to institute six bishops in the places of others deposed for simony. His second successor, Atticus, about the year 421, procured from the younger Theodosius a law, that no bishop should be ordained in the neighboring dioceses without the consent of the bishop of Constantinople. This power still needed the solemn sanction of a general council, before it could have a firm legal foundation. It received this sanction at Chalcedon.

The fourth ecumenical council, held at Chalcedon in 451, confirmed and extended the power of the bishop of Constantinople, by ordaining in the celebrated twenty-eighth canon: "Following throughout the decrees of the holy fathers, and being acquainted with the recently read canon of the hundred and fifty bishops (i.e. the third canon of the second ecumenical council of 381), we also have determined and decreed the same in reference to the prerogatives of the most holy church of Constantinople or New Rome. For with reason did the fathers confer prerogatives on the throne (the episcopal chair) of ancient Rome, on account of her character as the imperial city; and, moved by the same consideration, the hundred and fifty bishops recognized the same prerogatives also in the most holy throne of New Rome; with good reason judging, that the city, which is honored with the imperial dignity and the senate (i.e. where the em-

peror and senate reside), and enjoys the same (municipal) privileges as the ancient imperial Rome, should also be equally elevated in ecclesiastical respects, and be the second after the same. And (we decree) that of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia (Asia proconsularis), and Thrace, only the metropolitans, but in such districts of those dioceses as are occupied by barbarians, also the (ordinary) bishops, be ordained by the most holy throne of the most holy church at Constantinople; while of course every metropolitan in those dioceses ordains the new bishops of a province in concurrence with the existing bishops of that province, as is directed in the divine canons. But the metropolitans of those dioceses, as already said, shall be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, after they shall have been unanimously elected in the usual way, and he (the archbishop of Constantinople) shall have been informed of it."

We have divided this celebrated Chalcedonian canon into two parts, though in the Greek text the parts are closely connected (the second part of this canon or decree begins with the words: "And (we decree) that of the dioceses of Pontus" — H.V.). The first part assigns to the bishop of Constantinople the second rank among the patriarchs, and is simply a repetition and confirmation of the third canon of the council of Constantinople; the second part goes farther, and sanctions the supremacy, already actually exercised by Chrysostom and his successors, of the patriarch of Constantinople, not only over the diocese of Thrace, but also over the dioceses of Asia Minor and Pontus, and gives him the exclusive right to ordain both the metropolitans of these three dioceses, and all the bishops of the barbarians within those bounds. This gave him a larger district than any other patriarch of the East. Subsequently an edict of the emperor Justinian, in 530, added to him the special prerogative of receiving appeals from the other patriarchs, and thus of governing the whole Orient.

The council of Chalcedon in this decree only followed consistently the oriental principle of politico-ecclesiastical division. Its intention was to make the new political capital also the ecclesiastical capital of the East, to advance its bishop over the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, and to make him as nearly as possible equal to the bishop of Rome. Thus was imposed a wholesome check on the ambition of the Alexandrian patriarch, who in various ways, as the affair of Theophilus and Dioscurus shows, had abused his power to the prejudice of the church.

H.V.

"He is prepared for a participation of the benefits of Divine mercy, who has wholly divested himself, I will not say of his righteousness, which is a mere nullity, but of the vain and airy phantom of righteousness; for as far as any man is satisfied with himself, so far he raises an impediment to the exercises of the grace of God."

Book III, Chapter XIII  
Quotation from *Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion*

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article VII. Who teach: That there is in this life no fruit and no consciousness of the unchangeable election to glory, nor any certainty, except that which depends on a changeable and uncertain condition. For not only is it absurd to speak of an uncertain certainty, but also contrary of the experience of the saints, who by virtue of the consciousness of their election rejoice with the Apostle and praise this favor of God, Eph. 1; who according to Christ's admonition rejoice with his disciples that their names are written in heaven, Luke 10:20; who also place the consciousness of their election over against the fiery darts of the devil, asking: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Rom. 8:33.

Just as the sixth article of the Rejection deals negatively with the same truth that is treated positively in Article 11 of Chapter 1, so the seventh article of the Rejection deals negatively with the same truth that is treated positively in Article 12 of Chapter 1, namely, the doctrine of the assurance and fruit of the unchangeable election to glory. The preceding article condemned the error of the Arminians whereby they took away all the objective ground and testimony of the surety and unchangeableness of election. The preceding article condemned the error of the Arminians whereby they deny all the subjective assurance and fruit of unchangeable election.

It may be well to analyze this error of the Arminians carefully.

And then, in the first place, let us state in what this error does *not* consist, lest there be misunderstanding as to what is the Reformed position. First of all, the Arminian error was *not* that they taught that faith's assurance of election could be and is present in various degrees and in different measures. The latter is sound Reformed doctrine. For not only do the vessels of mercy differ in size and capacity, so that some have a comparatively large measure of assurance, while others have a small measure thereof; but it is also true that assurance varies at different times and under various circumstances in the same Christian. The assurance of our election goes up and down according as the level of our spiritual life is high or low. And secondly, the error of the Arminians was *not* that they maintained that there is a very intimate and unbreakable connection between the assurance of election and the walk and life of the Chris-

tian in the midst of the world. It is certainly Reformed to teach that there is such a connection, so that, subjectively considered, the assurance of election arises out of the "infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God — such as a true faith in Christ, a filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc." If the above had been the teachings of the Remonstrants, they would have been justified on the Synod of Dordrecht without any doubt.

But this was not the case.

Their error was indeed an error.

And this error stands closely connected with the words "no fruit and no consciousness" in this article. As we explained more in detail under Article 12 of the positive section of this chapter, the assurance of election arises out of the fruits of election. If there are no fruits of election, then there is also no assurance, or consciousness, of our unchangeable election to glory. But there are such fruits. And furthermore, those fruits are infallible. They are unmistakably the fruits of election only; and they are the inevitable fruits of election. They are fruits that surely come to manifestation in every elect child of God. And hence, every elect child of God attains the assurance, or consciousness, of his election just as surely and inevitably as the infallible fruits of election are borne in him. The order, therefore, is this: 1) Sovereign, unchangeable election, as the fountain-head of all the blessings of salvation. 2) The infallible fruits of election mentioned in article 12, coming forth out of that fountain, and realized in all the elect. 3) The assurance, or consciousness, of election, attained in various degrees and different measures, and spontaneously achieved by the elect as they observe in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure the fruits pointed out in the Word of God. One more factor must be remembered: it is the element maintained in the preceding article, namely, that assurance of election is assurance of *unchangeable election unto glory*.

Now the significance of this is plain. Even though for a time I may fall deeply, may apparently fall away completely, even though there may be times when, because of a failure to live a sanctified life, my assurance of election grows very dim, yea, for a time fades completely away, yet, when I have that assurance, it is completely transcendent, victorious. It is an assurance of *unchangeable election unto glory*, an assurance, therefore, that though by my sins I forfeit the grace of election a thousand times over, that though in the future I may fall so horribly that no one would think me a Christian, and that though in the future I for a time completely lose all consciousness of my election through such a horrible falling into sin, that I am, have been from eternity, and forever shall remain the object of elective love, that therefore my myriad sins can never obliterate my election, yea, that that very elective love shall lift me up should I fall ever so deeply, and that that same elective love will restore unto me the joy of my salvation, should I lose that

assurance temporarily, and at last bring me infallibly into the glory of God's everlasting kingdom of peace.

All this the Arminian denies. And his doctrine is such that he necessarily teaches men to live in doubt until their very dying breath, and to live in dread fear of hell-fire all the days of their lives. For, first of all, as we have seen, the Remonstrant denies the *unchangeable* character of election, thereby removing the objective ground of assurance. Secondly, he denies that faith, holiness, godliness, etc., are the *fruits* of that unchangeable election, and that they are infallible fruits. And thirdly, he makes of faith and all the other Christian virtues changeable and uncertain conditions; and since even he must grant that assurance arises out of these Christian virtues, he can only absurdly speak of an "uncertain certainty." He denies all assurance, and all real possibility of assurance. He destroys the objective ground of assurance, namely, the Word of God concerning unchangeable election to glory, and substitutes for it the ground of faith as a condition foreseen as fulfilled by man, but even then not necessarily persevered in. Thus the Arminian destroys the whole divine order of election and salvation, fruits of election and realization of the blessings of salvation in us, and assurance of unchangeable election of the blessings of salvation in us, and assurance of unchangeable election and absolutely certain glory. It is no wonder that the fathers reduce this Arminian position to the absurdity of "an uncertain certainty." The Arminian's picture of the Christian indeed is the picture of a man who spiritually attempts to lift himself up by his own suspenders.

To the apostle's and the saints' expressions of joy (Eph. 1) at this certainty of predestinating grace the Arminian must shrug the shoulder in doubt. To the Lord's admonition to rejoice that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20) the Remonstrant must object that there is no reason for rejoicing in an uncertain certainty, that he can only rejoice *if, if, if* he finally arrives in the heavenly country and discovers that God did not erase his name. And the victorious challenge of Romans 8:33 he can never use as a sure protection over against the fiery darts of the devil.

Article VIII. Who teach: That God, simply by virtue of his righteous will, did not decide either to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation, or to pass anyone by in the communication of grace which is necessary for faith and conversion. For this is firmly decreed: "He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth," Rom. 9:18. And also this: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," Matt. 13:11. Likewise: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight," Matt. 11:25, 26.

This paragraph deals with the Arminian denial of rep-

robation, and is coordinate with Article 15 of the positive section of this chapter.

When we speak of the Arminian denial of reprobation, we do not have in mind the denial of the term as such, but the denial of the true concept *reprobation*, as it is set forth in this eighth article of the Rejection. Even though he might rather grudgingly, if at all, speak of reprobation, the Remonstrant in fact denied it.

And this stands to reason. Because he played *hocus-pocus* with election by introducing the element of conditionality, and by introducing the notion of all kinds of decrees of election, some indefinite and general, some definite and particular, some indecisive, incomplete, and conditional, and absolute, the Arminian was necessarily compelled to do with reprobation the very same thing. As general, indefinite, conditional, indecisive, and incomplete as election is, so must reprobation also be. And if the decisive, complete, and absolute election (of which the Arminians also spoke) was conditioned by foreseen perseverance unto the end, so also the decisive, complete, and absolute reprobation was conditioned by foreseen failure to persevere or foreseen perseverance in unbelief. The result is plain: reprobation, the reprobation of the Scriptures, is gone.

This article mentions two respects in which the Arminian denied reprobation.

In the first place, the Arminian denied that God decided to leave anyone in the fall of Adam. Concerning this let us note: 1) The Arminian had to deny this by reason of his conception of a general and indefinite decree of election, as well as by reason of his conditional teaching concerning what the Arminian called particular and definite election. These elements simply leave no room for a definite divine decision to leave some certain persons in the common state of sin and condemnation. 2) The Arminian would not even accept the "milder," infralapsarian presentation of reprobation which is expressed in the words "leave . . . in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation." 3) The Arminian offers as a ground for this denial God's righteousness. He claimed that God's righteousness required that if He were willing to save some sinners, He could not decide to "leave" any sinners. Intrinsic in this view is the idea that the sinner, any sinner, can have a claim on the Almighty, and that if God decides to save one sinner, another sinner has a claim on the same grace of salvation. In this connection, confer also Article 1 of the positive section of this chapter.

In the second place, the Arminian denied that God ever decided to pass anyone by in the communication of grace which is necessary for faith and conversion. Concerning this it may be observed: 1) Intrinsic in this view is the error that grace is not really grace. One must make himself worthy of the grace necessary for faith and conversion. Hence, the decision of reprobation is not God's, but man's. 2) Implied in this view is also the error of resistible grace. 3) In the words "pass anyone by" it is expressed again that the

Arminian does not even want the infralapsarian view of reprobation. 4) Also this view the Arminian sought to sustain on the ground of God's righteous will. He taught that it would be unfair on the part of God to make His grace available to some, but not all, sinners.

The Scripture passages cited clearly contradict this error. Rom. 9:18 speaks of a hardening *according to God's will*. Matt. 13:11 speaks of the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom as a matter of being *given* or *not being given*. And in Matt. 11:25, 26 the Lord Jesus gives thanks for a hiding and revealing that has its source in God's good pleasure. Striking, however, is the fact that the Scripture passages cited do not at all employ the infralapsarian and "mild" terminology of a "leaving" and a "passing by." They speak of an active "hardening" and "hiding."

Article IX. Who teach: That the reason why God sends the gospel to one people rather than to another is not merely and solely the good pleasure of God, but rather the fact that one people is better and worthier than another to whom the gospel is not communicated. For this Moses denies, addressing the people of Israel as follows: "Behold unto Jehovah thy God belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is therein. Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as at this day," Deut. 10:14, 15. And Christ said: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sack-cloth and ashes." Matt. 11:21.

This article stands as the counterpart of Article 3 in the positive section of this chapter, but it also stands in close connection with the Arminian denial of sovereign election and reprobation.

The Arminian wants man, not the Lord God, from beginning to end. Let alone election and reprobation, he cannot even tolerate it that the time and place of the proclamation of the gospel is a matter of God's will. Even this must be conditional: it is determined not by God's good pleasure, but by the worthiness or unworthiness of men. The very divine use of the means whereby the counsel of election and reprobation is worked out in time is, according to the Arminian, still dependent upon a sort of evangelical worthiness or unworthiness of men. If God foresees that they will in large part receive the gospel, or at least that they by the right use of the light of nature are receptive for the gospel, then He will send the gospel to them; otherwise not. By this means the Arminian is able also to deny the sovereign reprobation of the millions upon millions who never come into contact with the proclamation of the gospel, who never had a "chance" to believe, and who, thus the Remonstrant accuses the Calvinist, would be very unfairly treated if reprobation were sovereign. But now, so the Arminian says, the decision is all in their hands whether they will have

the gospel preached to them, or not; and so God's righteousness in the proclamation of the gospel is vindicated.

The fathers, however, contradict this error with two well-chosen Scripture passages. That from Deuteronomy 10 shows plainly that the reason why God chose Israel to be the only nation in the entire world to whom he would send the gospel in the old dispensation lay not in them, but solely in His own good pleasure: He had a delight in their fathers to love them. And the New Testament passage, from the "woes" of Matthew 11 upon the unrepentant generation of the Lord Jesus' time, who were like the contrary children of the marketplace, demonstrates that, if anything, Chorazin and Bethsaida, to whom the gospel *was* sent, were less worthy still than Tyre and Sidon, to whom the gospel *was not* sent.

\* \* \* \*

Thus the fathers of Dordrecht maintain that all, from beginning to end, is solely a matter of God's good pleasure. And they clearly demonstrate, with the Scriptures in hand, that every teaching repugnant to this fundamental truth is not the gospel of Christ, since it is contradicted, not supported, by the Scriptures.

And he who would be Reformed and true to the Scriptures must imitate these fathers in their godly and pious maintenance of the truth of sovereign predestination, but also, if he would be steadfast, in their persistent rejection of every error repugnant thereto.

H.C.H.

Quotes worth thinking about: — "Then man will be said to possess free will in this sense, not that he has an equally free election of good and evil, but because he does evil voluntarily, and not by constraint. That, indeed, is very true; but what end could it answer to decorate a thing so diminutive with a title so superb? Egregious liberty indeed, if man be not compelled to serve sin, but the fetters of sin. I really abominate contentions about words, which disturb the Church without producing any good effect; but I think that we ought religiously to avoid words which signify any absurdity, particularly when they lead to pernicious error. How few are there, pray, who, when they hear free will attributed to man, do not immediately conceive, that he has the sovereignty over his own will and mind, and is able by his innate power to incline himself to whatever he pleases? But it will be said, all danger from these expressions will be removed, if the people are carefully apprized of their signification. But on the contrary, the human mind is naturally so prone to falsehood, that it will sooner imbibe error from one single expression, than truth from a prolix oration; of which we have a more certain experiment than could be wished in this very word. For neglecting that explanation of the fathers, almost all their successors have been drawn into a fatal self-confidence, by adhering to the original and proper signification of the word."

*Calvin's Inst.*, Book II, Chapter II

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Election of Elders

#### D. *The Requirements for the Office of Elder*

The task of selecting men to serve in the offices of the church is a very serious matter. Calvin says that Paul mentions it in preference to everything else because in the spiritual building (the church) it nearly comes next to the doctrine. It is a labor that must be done with greatest discretion and much prayer. The church that ignores this will surely suffer dire consequences of ill-government for it is like a plague to the church when either unscrupulous or spiritually incompetent men control the presbytery. To avoid this as much as possible, the consistory and the congregation should punctiliously consider the requirements of the office *before* appointing men thereunto.

Likewise should those who aspire to the office consider seriously the magnitude of the office they seek as well as the rigid requirements of fulfilling the same. It is certainly true that "he who seeketh the office of a bishop, desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1, R.V.) but then it should also be noted that this passage speaks of *work* and this means, as Calvin writes: "that they who aim at this should carefully consider with themselves, whether or not they are able to bear so heavy a burden. Ignorance is always rash; and a mature knowledge of things makes a man modest. How comes it that they who have neither ability nor wisdom often aspire so confidently to hold the reigns of government, but because they rush forward with their eyes shut? On this subject Quintilian remarked, that the ignorant speak boldly, while the greatest orators tremble. For the purpose of restraining such rashness in desiring the office of a bishop, Paul states, first, that this is not an indolent rank, but a *work*; and next, that it is not any kind of work, but *excellent*, and, therefore, toilsome and full of difficulty, as it actually is. It is no light matter to be a representative of the Son of God, in discharging an office of such magnitude, the object of which is to erect and extend the kingdom of God, to procure the salvation of souls which the Lord Himself hath purchased with His own blood, and to govern the Church, which is God's inheritance."

It should be evident then that it does not belong to every individual to discharge the office of elder nor does the mere subjective desire alone qualify one for the office. This important role in the church can be performed only by those whom God Himself qualifies according to the requirements which are set forth in His Word. By all concerned these must never be ignored. Too often this is done to the serious detriment of the church.

On the other hand, our emphasis upon the requirements of the office must not be construed so as to frighten those who do possess gifts and abilities but who under the cloak

of a false modesty seek to be excused from duty. Such persons can often be found in the church. They always minimize their own ability. There are always others who, according to them, are much better qualified. Such persons have need to be pointed to their duties and obligation to employ whatever talents God has given unto them in the service of the church of Christ. To neglect that is sin. It is, of course, understood that all do not have the same qualities and that there is a wide diversity of gifts in the church. And every kind of gift is also needed. (I Cor. 12) When our fleshly modesty is inclined to cause us to shirk our spiritual duties, we ought to seriously consider the words of Scripture, "If any man minister (serve), let him do it as of the ability which God giveth that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom be praise and dominion forever." (I Peter 4:11)

In the pastoral epistles we find a clear definition of the requirements of elders. We wish to examine these passages rather closely and will, therefore, quote them here in their entirety. The first of these is I Timothy 3:1-7.

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

And almost parallel passage we find in Titus 1:5-9.

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee; If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

And, although I Peter 5:2, 3 speaks more of the duty of the elders than of the requirements of their office, it must nevertheless be pointed out that in this passage mention is made of the fact that the elder must be an example unto the flock. This is a fundamental requirement especially because, in the light of the context, the elder is characterized as a servant rather than a lord. Whoever lacks this one quality and is not able and willing to become the least and servant of all is at once disqualified, regardless of other abilities.

Before we now consider the detailed meaning of these passages, it is necessary that we point out two things in

general. First of all, when you read these passages casually, you are immediately in danger of committing a two-fold error. On the one hand there is the real possibility of drawing the wrong conclusion that whereas these requirements or qualifications are so rigid and stern that there is no one who can possibly meet them, it is quite impossible to even consider selecting men on this basis. Where, for example, will you find men who are blameless, just, holy, etc.? Have not and do not all sin every day and come short of the glory of God? Will not even the holiest of men admit their unworthiness to serve in the offices? Who then is sufficient unto these things?

In answer to this we must point to the words of Paul in II Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament." The qualifications for the offices of the church of Christ are *gifts of grace*. No one has any of them of himself. Both the natural and the spiritual powers to rightly function in the office of elder are Divinely bestowed. Without this all, without exception, are disqualified. If this is borne in mind there will be no danger of human boast but rather, "He that glorieth will glory only in the Lord."

On the other hand, there is the possibility of drawing the equally wrong conclusion that whereas the requirements enumerated in these Scriptural passages are humanly impossible, they do not have to be strictly applied. The practical result of this is that they are not applied at all. They are completely ignored when nominees for the office are considered and these are then selected according to fleshly standards. The name of a certain brother is considered as a possible nominee for elder. It may be pointed out that the brother lacks certain of the above requirements. Perhaps he does not rule his own house well or he has a reputation of being covetous, etc. These points are discussed and, finally; it is decided that whereas these passages of Scripture cannot be applied too stringently, the lack of the brother on one or two matters can be overlooked and the name is placed on the nomination. This conclusion is entirely unwarranted. The passages cited above belong to the inspired Word. They are given for our instruction and guidance. However difficult it may be to find suitable men for the office, we may never ignore them in order to uphold a brother in his fault. We may not push the Word of God aside at our convenience. All of our actions must be governed by the Word and certainly the important labors of the church in selecting men for the holy offices must be guided step by step by the Word. Only then can we have reason to expect a blessing upon our work. To neglect the Word and proceed in our own way will only result in misery and ill-consequences for the entire church.

In the second place, we should point out that these passages that speak of the requirements for the office of elders do not speak essentially for them alone. In a general way they apply to every member of the church. You must

never read them with the thought that they do not apply to you but are only for the elders and then perhaps, in your mind at least, brush them still further aside by telling yourself that you will never be an elder anyway. There are not two or three standards by which christian character and conduct is to be gauged. There is but one rule for the one people of God. For example, the texts do not mean that only elders must rule their houses well, be the husband of one wife, be no brawler or covetous, etc. Frequently those whose own house is in disorder and who are most guilty of these various things are the first and loudest in criticizing and condemning the least flaw of the elders. What was that which was said by Christ concerning the casting out of the beam in one's own eye before one can see to cast the mote out of the brother's? (Matt. 7:5) And which true child of God is there that would dare to deny that the things written here concerning the qualification of elders apply also to him or her? Indeed they do! In the general sense of the word this means that it is required of every member of the church that they meet the specifications of office bearers in the house of God for in a very real sense that is just what every true member of the church is. The christian is one who is partaker of the anointing of Christ, and, therefore, is prophet, priest and king. With this in mind, these passages will be of interest to us in a twofold way: (1) as they apply to those who are called to serve in the special offices of the church and, (2) as they apply to ourselves as we are called to serve God in the office of believers in the midst of His church.

In this light we shall examine them, D.V., next time!

G.V.D.B.

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"If, then, we are justified by the alone imputation of Christ's righteousness, it more evidently follows, that good works, on our part, are, in no sense, meritorious of heaven: neither as causes nor conditions; for, however plausible and innocent the word condition may sound: a condition is no more than a softer name for a cause; as being something on account of which something else is given or done. And that works can be neither causes, nor (Which amounts to the same thing) conditions of justification is clear; because the performance of a condition necessarily precedes the reception of a benefit suspended on that condition; whereas, good works do not go before, but follow after justification . . . . Therefore, to put good works before justification is like representing the fountain as flowing from the stream, instead of deducing the stream from the fountain."

— A. M. Toplady



## ALL AROUND US

*Note on Luke 2:14.*

Into my hand was placed a clipping from the Chicago Tribune dated Saturday, September 24, 1955 with the above title. We considered the article interesting enough to pass on to our readers.

It intends to clarify a problem concerning which there has been considerable debate among the textual critics as to the exact meaning of the text of Luke 2:14 relative to the last part of the text.

In the Greek original there are given two possible readings in respect to this last part. The translators have tried to reflect these differences in their renditions. The King James version translates: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The American Revised translation is: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Douay translates the last part this way: "And on earth peace to men of good will." We have always translated it this way: "And peace on earth in men of good pleasure." The question is: Is the last word of the original text in the nominative or in the genitive case? Is it *eudokia* or *eudokias*? It appears that the majority of manuscripts favor the genitive, the denial of this by Lenski notwithstanding. The Chicago Tribune, reflecting on a series of articles appearing in the Christian Century, has done us a favor in claiming evidence that sustains and verifies our translation. Here is the article:

"Christmas is now just three months ahead; this is, therefore, the right moment to announce that at last the old controversy over the proper translation of Luke 2:14, seems on the point of settlement. For this happy result we can thank the scholars who have been working over the recently discovered Dead Sea scrolls.

"The verse, as it is incorrectly carried in the minds of many thousands of good people, ends with the words, "Peace on earth, good will to men." When that formulation gets into the newspapers, as it usually does in the course of the Christmas season, the editor hears from his readers. He is reminded that the correct version reads, ". . . and on earth peace, good will to men."

"No sooner does he print this quotation from the King James version than he hears from his Catholic readers. They quote the Douay translation which with the change of only a preposition or two, arrives at the wholly different meaning: "And on earth peace to men of good will."

"Prof. Goodspeed, in his American translation of 1931, found both readings incorrect and offered the translation, "Peace to the men he favors." The scholars who prepared the Revised Standard version of 1952, now in use in many churches, accepted Dr. Goodspeed's idea but managed, with a little effort, to clothe it in more words: their reading is,

"... and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

"So now we come to the Dead Sea scrolls, or rather a series of articles on them which have been published in recent issues of the Christian Century. The author is Prof. Frank M. Cross, Jr. of the Mc Cormick Theological seminary of this city. On the basis of an ancient Essene psalm from which the words in Luke may have been quoted, he comes to the conclusion that Prof. Goodspeed was right; just to leave no doubt on the point, he offers the suggestion that the passage really means, peace "to those who, by God's gracious election, find themselves members of the eschatological community."

"That ought to settle it even tho there may be a little difficulty in setting these words to music." So far the article.

It surprises us that Prof. Cross will go so far to sustain the genitive rendition that he will say "to those who, by God's gracious election, find themselves members of the eschatological community." And yet that is certainly the idea of the text as well as of all Scripture. Those inclined to Pelagianism and Arminianism will surely be averse to this translation. They will favor the translation of Douay "and on earth peace to men of good will." They will do this simply because they would find some good, inherent good, in man which God recognizes. But how contrary this is to the first part of the text in which the angels ascribe all the glory of God. And in the light of the context as well as of all Scripture is it not the truth that man is corrupt and lost in himself, that salvation is impossible as far he is concerned? That God, to Whom all glory is due, through Immanuel, brings peace to those who are the objects of His good pleasure? Indeed, so it is!

### *As to Catechism Books.*

It is generally at this time of the year that we receive from the publishers: Eerdmans, Baker, and Zondervan, catalogues of the various catechism books and other related material which we are advised to order for use in the instruction of our covenant children in the catechism classes which again take up their work after a period of recess.

Since this material is written by men outside of our denomination and therefore includes doctrinal material we cannot nor desire to use, the publishers could probably save themselves considerable expense and effort by discontinuing this practise.

This does not mean, however, that we do not need catechism material. For it becomes increasingly evident that there is great need, and that too, for the very best possible. One or more of our churches expressed this need before a major assembly which body took action. As is well known, for years we had the use of catechism books written by our own men and approved by our major assemblies. These included the two books written by the Rev. H. Hoeksema,

namely, Essentials of Reformed Doctrine and The Heidelberg Catechism for Junior Catechumens, as well as five books written by the Rev. P. De Boer of a historical nature, namely, the Old and New Testament for Seniors, the Old and New Testament for Juniors, and Bible Stories for Beginners. Since the Rev. De Boer is no longer with us and since he had complete control over the supply of his books, it was thought that we would have to seek a new source of supply. I recall that Classis East, when faced with this problem, decided to ask the Rev. De Boer to continue to supply our churches with his books and First Church of Grand Rapids was authorized to procure them. Besides it was also decided to appoint a committee, composed of our own ministers, that would work on the production of new books.

We are happy with this decision, for it takes care of our immediate need, and fosters the hope that in the not too distant future we will have material that will be a vast improvement over the old.

When one looks over the vast amount of catechism material that has been produced in and outside of our churches, he might be inclined to say: Is there need of more catechism books? But when one is busily engaged in teaching our catechumens he soon discovers how essential it is to have the best. And the best is generally discovered after years of development and constructive criticism of the old material.

There has been much criticism of the old material we have used which is in our opinion wholly unwarranted. I have in mind especially the criticism of Rev. Hoeksema's book Essentials of Reformed Doctrine by men who have now departed from us. Several were the attempts by them to throw out this book by replacing it with productions under their own name. Not only do we consider their criticism unjustifiable, but their productions we do not consider to be any improvement. Rather it appears that theirs was an attempt to get for themselves a name. Striking it is that our churches have never asked for a revision or simplification of this book. This means of course that the book has met with acceptance by our people in general and our young people in particular. This does not mean to say that the book is perfect and that no revision is possible. But we have always found that it gives good guidance and leaves room for the teacher to expand in the class room. This is, we believe as it should be. To write catechism books is not every man's work.

The committee, therefore, will have important work to do. Much time and effort will be required of those who labor in this work to produce material that will faithfully express the truth of Scripture in question and answer form. Our churches may well remember this committee in their prayers that the Holy Spirit may guide them who serve to pen only that which is in harmony with His infallible Word, and which best expresses the truth as it is believed and confessed in our Protestant Reformed Churches. So we may believe, the Lord will preserve His truth in the future

generations of our believing seed. Important as the pure preaching of the gospel each Sabbath from the pulpit is the importance of sound catechetical instruction of our children in the days of the week. Let them not neglect it, nor those instructing minimize it.

Strictly speaking, I suppose, this part of my contribution does not properly belong to this rubric. ALL AROUND US is not WITHIN US. But it will have to stand for this time because I thought it necessary to say something about it that our people may be catechism-minded. M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### **The Promise of God is only to the elect, historically the Believers.\***

"The Gospel of the Promise" is the theme of this convention. The expression "Gospel of the Promise" is not found in the Scriptures. Nevertheless we may speak of the "Gospel of the Promise" certainly. According to the form of its words, the expression can have two meanings. It can mean: the Gospel, namely the Promise. If taken in this sense, the thought conveyed is, that the Promise and the Gospel are one and the same. But the expression can also be taken to mean: the Gospel, glad tiding *concerning* the Promise. But we need not choose between the two constructions, seeing that it is the *Promise* with which we here have to do, and upon which we shall have to concentrate.

The sub-theme that was given me is: "The recipients of the Gospel of the Promise." I have changed my subject somewhat so as to make it read: "The promise of God is only to the elect, historically the believers."

Let us see that this follows first, from the content of the promise; second, from the character of the promise; third, from what the people of God are. In the fourth place we shall discuss the objections that are being raised against this doctrine.

First then, that this follows from the content of the Promise. Our theme makes mention of *Promise* singular and not *Promises* plural. This is not incorrect for essentially there is but one Promise of God to His people. This one Promise was first revealed in Paradise immediately after the fall of man and is known as the Protevangel, "I will set enmity . . ." The relation of the Protevangel to the promises of God of subsequent ages and recorded in the Scripture must be understood. The promise of the Protevangel is, so to say, the seed-promise of all the promises of God given thereafter. That is to say, all the subsequent promises of God are the unfolding of the promise of the Protevangel. Through the ages God from time to time renewed the promise of the Protevangel and through each renewal, new promise, He shed always new and greater light upon the promise of the Protevangel, and the result was that

\*Address delivered before the Young People's Convention, Aug. 14.

it continued to unfold. Truly, there is but one promise essentially. That the Bible speaks also of promises can therefore only mean that the promise of the Protevangel is so many sided and includes a variety of riches—riches of His grace—so wonderful that, if it was to be fully comprehended by God's believing people, always more light had to be shed upon it. And this light was shed by the Lord speaking through the patriarchs and the prophets and symbol and type and finally through His own Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the fulfilment of the promise.

We submit that this one promise, and another promise there is not, was given only to the church of the elect, historically the believers. If it can be shown that this is true of the promise of the Protevangel, it shall have to be admitted that this is true of all the promises of God subsequently given, and this for the reason stated above.

The thing for us to do then, is to examine the promise of the Protevangel. Let us then get this promise before us. It reads, "And I will set enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; He shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush His heel." So reads the protevangel. What is its promise? It is this, that God will bring into being his fallen but elect people—the seed of the woman—a community of saints loving God and hating the devil and his brood; that in the insuing warfare Christ by His death, here indicated by the clause, "Thou shalt crush his heel," will save His people from all their sins and destroy the devil and his kingdom. Such is here the promise. And to whom was it given? Solely to the seed of the woman, Christ and His people. All that the Protevangel contains for satan and his brood is a prediction of doom and destruction, a doom by which this brood is to be overtaken in the way of its crushing the heel of the woman's seed, crucifying Christ, the Lord of glory. And certainly predictions of evil are not promises with regard to the one that is to be overtaken by the evil. A promise is a prediction, too. But it is more than that. Because of the good thing that it vows to its recipient—and this is always characteristic of a promise. It holds forth a thing that is good, that is considered to be good—a promise is always a glad tidings, good news.

That the promise of the Protevangel, better said, that the Protevangel as promise, is only unto Christ and the elect, is so plain that it can be denied by no one, and is being denied by no one of all that calls itself reformed. However to maintain themselves in their false position that the promise of God is also to the reprobated, the reprobated baptized ones as well as to the elect baptized, the Liberated distinguish between the prophecies, predictions of the Bible on the one hand and its promises on the other. The protevangel, they say, is prophecy, prediction and not promise, and they agree that it is glad tidings solely to the elect but that it is this as prophecy, prediction and not as promise.

But this whole conception according to which prophecy is one and the predictions of the Bible another, is wrong. Fact is, that all the prophecies, predictions of the Scriptures

are either directly or indirectly promises of salvation to the elect, tidings of joy to the believers and either directly or at bottom predictions of doom and destruction to the reprobated wicked.

If the Protevangel as promise is only to the elect, the same must be true of all the promises subsequently given, and this for reason already stated. Wherever it appears in the Scriptures, in whatever book of the Bible, on whatever page of the book, the promise is always unto the believers, and unto the believers only.

That the promise is to the believers only follows in the second place from the character of the promise. The promise, being God's promise is necessarily unconditional. The promise of a mere man is always of necessity conditional. This is so, because man is creature. Being creature, he is limited on every hand in countless ways. But to God's power there is no limit. He does all His goodpleasure. For in Him all things subsist, live, move and have their being. The hearts of kings are in His hands. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens. To say that the promise is conditional is to draw God down to the level of His creature. If the promise is unconditional it is only unto the elect, seeing that they alone are saved.

That the promise is only unto the believers follows from what the believers are.

First they are the elect of God. Let us consider that election is the supreme cause and fountain of the salvation of God's people as to its entire compass. It is the cause and fountain of the believers themselves as new creatures in Christ Jesus. And all that they are and ever will be by reason of their election, they are by reason of the promise, so that to say that they are children of the promise is at once to say that they are children of election. If so, it cannot be otherwise but that the promise of God is only unto them.

Further, that the promise of God is only unto the elect, historically the believers follows from the fact that they are the justified ones, and that they alone therefore have the right to the promise, that is to what is promised. God's people are justified, that is, God pronounced them guiltless and righteous not on the ground of their own good works, for they have none, but on the ground of the good works, the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ as imputed unto them. Being justified of God, they are as guiltless as they would be, had they never committed any sin, and as righteous as they would be, had they all the moments of their life themselves lived in perfect conformity to the law of God both as to their inward and outward man. This being true, God cast all their sins behind His back to remember them no more. "We then having been justified by faith," says the apostle (Rom. 5:1). And let us take notice of the pronoun "we" in the statement. It is indicative of the entire church of the elect, the body of Christ, of the total of believers of all the ages of the past, of the present, and of all the ages to come as long as the earth endureth, and this with respect to all the guilt of all the sins of this vast company, and ac-

cordingly with respect to all the guilt of all the sins of the individual believer—the sins of the past and the sins that, against his will, he is still going to commit in the days of his life that remain to him. For this whole vast mountain of moral debt Christ satisfied by His suffering and death upon the cross. Not a penny of it was left unpaid. The entire vast accumulation of guilt was covered by Christ's blood, blotted out, and accordingly God justified His people, that is, pronounced them guiltless and righteous in Christ.

Being justified of God, they are restored to the right of God's love and favor that they had forfeited in paradise through Adam's transgression and in addition through all their own sins. Restored to the right of God's love and favor, are His people, but to His love as now revealed in the face of Christ.

Not that God's attitude toward His people changed from that of hatred of them to that of love. God always loved His people in Christ. He never hated them. It was in His love of them that He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love, predestinating them unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus to Himself, according to the good-pleasure of His will, Eph. 1:5. And even while they were yet sinners, God commendeth His love toward them in that Christ died for them, Rom. 5:8. But being by nature children of wrath under condemnation, and this according to God's own justice, they had to be redeemed from their sins by Christ's blood and thereby restored to the right of His love, to the right to be delivered from all their sins and the power of the devil, and to the right to be conformed according to the image of His dear Son. That right had to be made theirs. God had to make it right for Himself to love them and to save them and to crown them with life in glory. In a word, He had to reconcile them to Himself.

And let us consider that the righteousness of Christ with which God clothes His people, is the meritorious basis of all the riches of His grace, of their regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification, and life with God in glory, so that, as justified, they, His people, and they alone, have the right to all the blessings of salvation. This being true, they and they alone have a right to God's promises, to the promised salvation. The reprobated have not this right. For they are not justified, and not being justified, they are under condemnation and the wrath of God abideth on them forever. Hence their only right is to be damned. How then can God promise such men salvation? How can He give them the promise, if to its content they have no right?

Let us consider that the content of the promise is Christ Himself with all the benefits of His cross as inseparately connected with His person,—forgiveness of sins, deliverance from God's wrath legally and actually, eternal life. If this is so, how can God promise such men salvation? How can God promise Christ, that is, to a people for whom Christ did not

die? How can God promise forgiveness of sins to a people for whose sins Christ did not atone? How can God promise deliverance from His wrath to a people from whom His wrath was not appeased? How can God promise reconciliation to a people whom He did not by the death of His Son reconcile to Himself? How can God promise everlasting life to a people for whom this life was not merited? Don't we see the impossibility of this? Don't we see the utter wrongness of the teaching that the promises of God are also to the reprobated? Certainly the promises of God are, can and may be only to the elect. Such are the plain teachings of Holy Writ and our Reformed Confessions as is so plain from our "Declaration of Principles" in which this is conclusively proved by copious quotations from the Confessions.

That the promises are unto the elect and to them only must follow from the fact that they and they alone were raised up together in Christ and made to sit together in Him in heavenly places that they might be made the actual possessors of the content of the promise. "But God," says Paul, "who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:3-5).

How can the promise be also to the reprobated if, what is stated in this scripture passage is true only of the elect?

Don't we see how utterly contrary to the Scriptures it is to teach that the promises are unto all soul for soul. This certainly is not the teaching of the Bible, but this, that the promise of God are only unto the elect.

That the promises of God are only to the elect must also follow from the fact that only the elect by faith have access to what is promised, namely to justification and all the right implicit therein and all the blessings of salvation that Christ merited for His people by His death. So we read in Rom. 5:2, "By whom," that is, by our Lord Jesus Christ, "we also have access to this grace." The pronoun "we" in this statement indicates certainly only the elect, the believers. They and they only can approach this grace, lay hold on it, appropriate it, which they do through Christ, that is, as brought under the conviction by Christ's Spirit that in themselves they are lost and undone, they hide themselves in Christ as their only hope and receive in their hearts the witness of Christ's Spirit that they are forgiven of God and are heirs of eternal life. That the promises are only to the believers must follow from the fact that the Spirit witnesses only with their spirits that they are children of God, that this they possess what is promised, life eternal. Certainly, the promise is God's unconditional oath to the elect only, historically the believers.

Let us now discuss with you the objections that are being raised against this true doctrine.

(to be continued)

G.M.O.