

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### ANOTHER COMFORTER

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." John 14:16

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:1-4

There is a sharp contrast between the behaviour of Christ's disciples before and after Pentecost.

Before Pentecost, and especially the last night of Jesus' presence among them, their hearts are troubled.

And it is not difficult to know the reason why their hearts are troubled.

They looked upon Christ as the God-given Deliverer from the Roman yoke of oppression. Any day now, Jesus will take the government upon His shoulders and usher in a reign that shall vie with the reign of King Solomon.

But how disappointing was Jesus' behaviour that last day He was among His disciples!

Acting like a common slave, He had risen from the supper, laying aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself, and pouring water into a basin, He washed the disciples' feet. (A beautiful picture of His subsequent work on the Cross!)

Moreover, He had prophesied that one of their number would betray Him; another would deny Him; and all of them would be offended in Him.

But most of all, the announcement that He would leave them, had troubled their hearts.

And especially, when He told them how the rulers would take Him, crucify Him, and kill Him.

Oh yes, they were troubled in their hearts.

But now look at them at the day of Pentecost!

They are with one accord in one place. They are filled with the Holy Ghost. They are full of the quietness and the confidence of faith. And they prophesy. Oh, how they prophesy!

Within the space of less than two months they understand the Holy Scriptures. Attend to the sermon of Peter on the New Testament Pentecostal day. Everything is clear to them. They are not troubled in their hearts anymore. They are thoroughly comforted, although Jesus is departed from them.

They are thoroughly comforted, even though they must suffer stripes for Jesus' sake. Far from being troubled, when they return from such scourging, they rejoice greatly that they are counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus.

\* \* \* \*

No, Jesus is not with them anymore. He comforted their hearts while He was among them.

But another Comforter had come: the Holy Ghost.

And He had come as the fulfilment of prophecy. Christ had promised them in John 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

Comforter! That name is significant. In the original Greek it means one who is called alongside in order to defend: an advocate, a lawyer for the defense.

And it tells us in what sense the Holy Spirit is the Comforter of God's people.

Christ is still our Comforter, but He is in heaven. And there He is our Advocate with the Father. He has entered in the heavenly tabernacle, behind the veil, and there He applies His great work of redemption.

And He does so on the basis of the Cross, His substitutional work of salvation for all those that are the given of the Father.

But the Holy Ghost represents the cause of God and of Christ with us. Christ had said that He would not leave us comfortless, and hence, He had sent the Holy Spirit in our

hearts, so that He could plead the cause of God before the court of our conscience.

Already in the Old Testament He had done so in the objective sense of the word. The entire Old Testament Scriptures is the product of the Holy Spirit. It is the revelation of the Cause of God in Christ. And in the New Testament we find the completed image of Christ through the Apostles' testimony.

But the Holy Spirit also does this subjectively in our hearts.

By nature we never embrace this cause of God in Christ: we are enemies of it.

But when the Holy Spirit comes with this testimony we needs must submit to it: it is irresistible. And we are regenerated by it; we are recipients of new eyes, ears, understanding, in short, we receive spiritual sense organs by which we are able to lay hold of the entire cause of God in Christ, and are wonderfully comforted.

\* \* \* \*

The Comforter!

How does He comfort us?

First, by presenting to our sight the enormity of sin, guilt and death.

Second, by presenting before our wondering eyes the riches of Christ, and how those riches fit our poor and bitter need.

Third, by placing before the eyes of the Church the wonderful victory, where the very enemies of the Christian must needs help to bring us to everlasting glory in the bosom of the Father.

That is the work of the other Comforter who came on that first New Testament Pentecost.

\* \* \* \*

All these glories became history on Pentecost.

Yes, they were all with one accord in one place. We do not know for sure where that place was, and it makes no difference. It was in Jerusalem, and that was proper. Salvation is from the Jews. Jerusalem is destined to be broadened into all the nations of the earth.

And suddenly there came from heaven the sound as of a rushing mighty wind.

How beautifully significant!

The Holy Spirit's name is "wind" in the Hebrew. And Jesus had told His church why the Spirit is likened unto the wind in the night when Nicodemus visited Him. We hear the sound thereof, but we do not know whence He cometh or whither He goeth. It is the irresistible Force, the mysterious and the compelling.

And then that rushing Power!

When the moment in the counsel came that the Church would live henceforth through her Head, God was in a hurry. He rushed to the earth in order to bathe the Church

in the love of God. For does not Paul say that hope maketh not ashamed for that the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost that is given unto us?

And then came the sign of the cloven tongues as of fire which sat upon each of them.

Fire is the sign of cleansing, sanctifying, purifying, but also to the consuming wrath of God for the wicked.

In the present application it refers to the fact that from henceforth the Holy Spirit shall inhabit the church universal in order to sanctify her and make her clean within.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

That was different from the Old Testament times.

In the Old Testament there were dispensations of the Spirit, but only in the manner of drops. But now this Spirit came as a flood. Then there were some prophets, priests and kings who were bathed in that Spirit, while in the New Testament it would bathe the whole constituency of the Church, including the slaves, the children, the old men and women, and the youth.

And they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Babel is healed. Then the tongues made confusion; now these tongues breed unity and harmony. Then they tended to drive men apart; now they unite men in the praises of God.

Praises of God, for we read that the one topic of the day is "the wonderful works of God." Verse 11.

And what are these works? They are the work of salvation for the elect: they are united in their Head through the Holy Spirit; and the rejection of the reprobate: they say with a sneer: These men are full of new wine. Horrors!

But the Church is comforted.

Through the Holy Ghost.

\* \* \* \*

And all this glory came through Jesus who would pray the Father.

You understand that the human nature of Christ is placed on the foreground here, for the Son of God never prays to the Father.

And "Father" here means the Triune God, the Son included.

Well, He prayed to His Father in Heaven, and He heard His prayer.

Pentecost is the result.

And in and through this Holy Ghost, Christ and His Church are united. He in the bosom of the Father, receiving all the benefits and blessings of His labors, but sending them to the church on earth through the Holy Spirit who leads us in all the truths of salvation.

\* \* \* \*

And the great purpose of this all is that He, that is, the Father, may abide with you, that is, the Father, may abide with you, that is, the Church, forever.

And that, my dear friends, is the Covenant of God.

To abide is a rich term. It specifies a place where you feel at home, where you may rest and be comfortable.

And this is the Gospel of God: He is pleased to make our hearts, our souls, our spirits and our bodies a sanctuary for His glorious Name. Jehovah with us for evermore.

*With* us.

That preposition in the Greek denotes a rich relationship. It means to go towards. There always will be that wonderful tendency in the Godhead to go towards us, to draw near to us, to ever approximate us in the house of God with its many mansions.

*With* specifies harmony and agreement.

Do *we* not say often: "Are you *with* me?" And you know what depth of thought is in that question?

Well, God is *with* us, dear reader.

Pentecost is the blessed proof.

Proof of His rest in our hearts. The enjoyment of the heavenly, eternal Sabbath.

G.V.

## CALL TO SYNOD

Pursuant to the decision of the last Synod, the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, hereby notifies the churches that the 1956 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene on Wednesday, June 6, D.V., at 9 a. m. in the above-mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, June 5, at 7:30 p.m., in the South Holland Church. The Rev. C. Hanko, president of the previous synod, is scheduled to preach at this service.

Synodical delegates are requested to gather with the Consistory before the service.

Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church  
of South Holland, Illinois,

H. C. Hoeksema, President  
Wm. T. Terpstra, Clerk

## NOTICE!

The Editorial Staff of the *Standard Bearer* will meet, the Lord willing, in South Holland, Illinois, at the home of Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, on Thursday evening, June 7, 1956. The members of the staff will please view this announcement as an official notice.

Rev. H. Veldman, Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### Election and Assurance

Although Dr. Berkouwer repeatedly speaks of the relation between the truth of election and the assurance of salvation, he never properly explains this relation. Always he makes a false distinction between the doctrine of election and accepting the promise of God. The preaching of the promise is a general offer of salvation to all that hear the gospel, but the preaching of election stands alongside of, or even opposed to, to this offer of the general promise of salvation. The promise of salvation belongs to the things that are revealed to all, the doctrine of election belongs to the hidden things. This with an appeal to Deut. 29:29.

He cannot explain the proper relation between assurance and election because he does not understand that also this assurance is the fruit of election, the work of God in the elect wrought in the hearts of the elect through His Spirit and Word.

In this entire work on God's election he does not once refer to the work of the Holy Spirit as the author of the application of election to the hearts of the elect.

This is a fatal mistake.

It may be true, as Dr. Berkouwer repeatedly suggests, that there are so-called Reformed preachers that present a caricature of the doctrine of election, caricatures which he characterizes as passivism, determinism, and fatalism. But if so, this can only be true because those preachers do not understand that election is not the work of certain Mohammedan Allah but of the triune covenant God. And Dr. Berkouwer with his mistaken appeal to Deut. 29:29, with his false contrast between the promise as a general offer of salvation and the truth of election, and with his omission of the work of the Holy Spirit as the applier of sovereign grace, presents another caricature of this doctrine of election which is also prevalent, very prevalent, indeed, in Reformed churches. I refer to the very prevalent custom of not *consistently* preaching the doctrine of election (even without always mentioning it) and of sovereign grace, but of preaching a dualism, so that, on the one hand, they try to present the Reformed truth of election and, on the other hand, preach the Pelagian and Arminian error of free will and salvation for all on condition that they accept the offer. Frequently, they attempt to do this by preaching a Reformed sermon with an Arminian application.

It is this caricature which Berkouwer presents in his book.

His fundamental error, as I have already remarked, is that he does not understand that election is the work of the triune covenant God, that he fails to emphasize or even mention that grace is sovereignly applied to the hearts of the elect, and that, therefore, he tries to base the assurance of salvation

on a general offer of grace and salvation which is, of course, conditional, rather than on the application of election by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of all the elect through the Word of God.

This is also the root of his very unjust and mistaken criticism of my views, to which I will refer later.

It stands to reason that, by not consistently teaching the truth of election, Berkouwer can never lead the people of God to the full assurance of faith.

The Reformed Confessions teach something quite different.

The Heidelberg Catechism mentions the doctrine of election expressly only once, but this is in the significant connection with the doctrine of the church and also with the truth concerning our salvation. We read in question and answer 54: "What believest thou concerning the holy catholic church of Christ? That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am and forever shall remain a living member thereof."

Notice: 1. That in this answer of the Catechism the doctrine of election is presented as the "cor ecclesiae" the heart of the church: the Son of God gathers to himself a church chosen to everlasting life. 2. That the gathering of this church is sovereignly the work of the Son of God: it is He that forms His church and preserves her. 3. That the Son of God, not only gathers, but also defends and preserves His elect church by His Spirit and Word. 4. And that is exactly for this reason that the elect Christian may be assured of His salvation: "that I am and forever shall remain a living member thereof."

The same note is struck by the Canons I, 12: "The elect in due time, though in various degrees and in different measures attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election, not by inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God, but by observing in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God — such as true faith in Christ, filial fear, godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc."

Note here, too: 1. That the Canons speak of the fruits of election that are infallible and which the elect may observe within themselves. 2. That these fruits of election are all spiritual, some of which are mentioned by name. 3. That all these fruits are wrought by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

It is this, and not the accepting of a conditional and general offer of the gospel, that can lead the elect unto the assurance of salvation. It is this that belongs to a consistent preaching of the truth of election. And it is this that is lacking in the book of Berkouwer. He does not consistently teach the doctrine of election.

This is also beautifully taught in Canons II, 8: "For this

was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly unto salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen unto salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever."

Next time, D. V., I will continue this.

H. H.

### As to Conscientious Objectorship

The chief question that concerns us in regard to the position of a conscientious objector in a union shop or factory is, evidently, whether he is, in any sense of the word, a member of the union and regarded as such by the union. If he is he cannot be a member of one of our churches; if he is not there can be no objection to his membership as far as his conscientious objectorship is concerned.

This, therefore, is the chief question.

Now, the very term "conscientious objector" ought to prove to us that he is not and does not want to be a union-member. What is the meaning of this term?

It means, of course, that one to whom this term is applied objects to something for conscience' sake. That to which he objects, in the case now under discussion, is membership in the union.

The conscience in this case is the conscience of a Christian.

The term conscience appears several times in Scripture, thirty times in the New Testament only. And also in the Old Testament, though the word itself does not occur there, the idea is expressed rather frequently.

The conscience of man is not a separate faculty next to his intellect and will. It is his moral judgment passed upon his actions as a rational moral creature. The actions are first, whether they are only conceived in the mind or already actually accomplished, and the voice of conscience or the moral judgment.

The word that is used in the original for conscience, in the New Testament is significant. It is the word *suneidesis* which is rather literally translated by our word *conscience*, which is derived from the Latin *conscientia*. It is composed of the preposition *con* which means *with* and the Latin word

for knowledge: *scientia*. The term conscience, therefore, means a *knowing together with someone else*. The question, therefore, is: with whom together does one that passes moral judgment upon any action, whether it is already actually accomplished or only conceived in the mind, know that the action is right or wrong?

We must remember that in case of a conscientious objector to membership in the union, we deal, not with conscience in general, but with the conscience of a Christian, of a believing child of God. To be sure, also the natural man, according to Scripture, has a conscience. This is evident, for instance, from Rom. 2:14-16: "For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another: In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." But in their case, the conscience is guided by the remnants of natural light. But we are not dealing here with the natural man but with the conscience of the Christian. And the conscience is always a knowing together with God, definitely and consciously. And how does a child of God know what is the mind and the will of God? The answer is that he knows this, not by any subjective experience or mystical feeling which is always deceptive, but the objective revelation of the Word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures. Hence, the conscience of the child of God is enlightened and motivated by the desire to live and act according to the will of God revealed in Holy Writ.

Now to what does the "conscientious objector" in this particular case object? The answer is that he objects and clearly expresses his objection and lives accordingly to the ungodly principles and practices of the worldly union. He is convinced in his conscience that the Word of God is opposed to those principles and practices and, therefore, he refuses to become a member of the union. By word and deed, therefore, i. e., by refusing to be a member of the union and by living and acting accordingly, even though he works in a union shop, he is a living testimony in the midst of the world. He openly proclaims, in word and deed, that the principles of the union are ungodly because they are contrary to the Word of God. He is willing to suffer for conscience's sake. If he must lose his position in a certain factory because of his stand over against the union, he is willing to quit. If, however, he is allowed to keep his job, to which he certainly has a right, he is willing to remain, even though he must suffer ridicule, shame and reproach from the rest of the workers in the same factory. For it is a well-known fact that the conscientious objector is an object of hatred.

But you say, and correctly so, in an otherwise closed shop a conscientious objector may work only on condition that he signs what is known as the "charity card."

This is correct. But this we hope to discuss in the next issue, the Lord willing.

H.H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### CHAPTER I

##### *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

In the first place, we may call attention to the fact, that the expression "revelation of Jesus Christ" usually, if not always, has this sense in Scripture. In Cor. 1:7 we read: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (R. V. The authorized version has erroneously "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ). It is evident that the meaning here is: "waiting for the day when our Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed." The genitive, therefore, is objective. The same is true of the expression in II Thess. 1:7: "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus." (R. V.). The authorized version gives the sense correctly: "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed." And again the same expression, and in the same sense, i. e., with reference to the second coming of the Lord, occurs in I Pet. 1:7: "unto praise and honor and glory at the revelation (the authorized version has "appearing") of Jesus Christ." And even in II Cor. 12:1, where the expression is somewhat different in form (the plural "revelations" is used) the objective sense is by no means impossible. And this is the meaning of the genitive in similar expressions such as "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. 2:5; "the revelation of the sons of God" Rom. 8:19; "the revelation of the mystery," Rom. 16:25. In all these instances the genitive can only be understood in the objective sense. The analogy of Scripture, then, is decidedly in favor of the view that also in Rev. 1:1 the expression "revelation of Jesus Christ" must be understood as indicating that in this last book of Scripture Jesus Christ is the One that is revealed. In the second place, not Christ, but God is the Author of all revelation, even though this revelation takes place through Jesus Christ and is concentrated in Him. God is the revealer; Christ is God revealed unto us. In fact, this is even plainly stated in the words of our text: God gave this revelation unto Christ. And, in the third place, this is exactly what we have in this book: a revelation that reveals Jesus Christ to us. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the central and all important theme of this prophecy. For all these reasons, then, we understand the phrase "revelation of Jesus Christ." in the objective sense.

Now, this is of importance with a view to the proper interpretation of the book of revelation. We should constantly bear in mind that this prophecy purposes to be a revelation of Jesus Christ. It may be said, of course, that all Scripture is a revelation of the Lord. He it is that is revealed in the protevangel of Gen. 3:15. And all through

the Old Testament, in direct prophecies as well as in types and shadows, the revelation of Jesus Christ is the main theme. Centrally we have the revelation of Jesus Christ in the fulness of time; in His incarnation, public ministry, word and work, death and resurrection, ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God the revelation of Jesus Christ, to which all the prophets and shadows of the old dispensation pointed forward, is become an accomplished fact. And it is that accomplished revelation that is interpreted to us by the Spirit of Christ through the authors of the New Testament Scriptures. And yet, the revelation of Jesus Christ is not finished. He appeared from heaven, came in the flesh, died and rose and departed again to the Father. We saw Him for a while, but we see Him no more. He dwelled among us, performed His work upon the stage of this world, but He disappeared again without changing the stage on which He was revealed and accomplished His work. Although He is with us now by His grace and Spirit, yet He is hid from us. His revelation, therefore, is not finished. For, in this world we see Him not. And yet, even now, even throughout this dispensation He is operating in this world of our present experience. For, He has all power in heaven and on earth, He is even now King of kings and Lord of lords, and He controls all things and governs them unto the perfection of His Church and His final appearance in glory. Then, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall be revealed in glory never to be hid again, when He shall appear never to disappear again, shall His revelation be perfected. Of this final revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that is connected with it, all that leads up to it in this dispensation, this last prophecy of Holy Writ speaks. That is its theme. How the Lord is related to the things that come to pass throughout this dispensation, how through them He is coming all the time, and how He will ultimately come in all the glory the Father hath given unto Him, is disclosed to us in this "revelation of Jesus Christ." This we must remember in our interpretation of the book. It would show us the things that must come to pass in a new light. We can only perceive them from an earthly viewpoint, as mere "history." And from this viewpoint the picture is rather a gloomy and hopeless one. We see wars and hear of more wars, widening ever in scope and increasing in intensity; we see vanity and death, earthquakes and destruction, a creature that is subject to vanity. But this last book of Scripture would show us these same things in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are asked to look at the history of this dispensation as it were from above. Bearing this in mind we will not approach this book with the purpose of satisfying our idle curiosity, to inquire just what may be the course of events in the history of this world. Why should we be anxious to know the future course of worldly events? What consolation would there be in such knowledge? Did not the Lord teach us that we should take no thought even for tomorrow? Nay, but we shall approach the book of Revelation in the expectation that it will instruct us with respect



to the significance of this present history in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and that it will give us an answer to the question: how must all things lead to the final revelation of our Lord in glory? And if we succeed in thus interpreting the book that "we see Jesus" in all the events of this present time, we shall not fail to receive the blessing that is promised to them that read and hear the words of this prophecy!

In the light of the foregoing it will also be possible correctly to understand the text when it informs us, that God gave this revelation to Jesus Christ in order to "show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. "To show" these things does not merely mean to lift the veil that hides the future from our view. If this were the meaning, the book of Revelation would really present us with a history of this entire dispensation written beforehand. We would then be able to trace the fulfillment of this prophecy step by step in the consecutive events of this present time more or less accurately, and to determine approximately if not exactly what time it is on the world-clock. It would follow that we would also be in a position to predict "the day and the hour" of the coming of the Lord. This view really underlies the church-historical method of interpretation of this book. The various visions of this book are directly applied to certain definite historical events that are supposed to be clearly predicted here. The very fact, however, that interpreters of this class differ widely in their choice of the events to which these visions are supposed to refer, is sufficient to condemn this method. Besides, as we said before, it is not necessary for the believer thus to be able to foretell the future. To be sure, the book of Revelation shows us in general outlines what will be the course of events in this dispensation with a view to the coming of the Lord and the perfection of His kingdom, but not in the sense that this prophecy is a history written before hand. "To show" the things that must shortly come to pass means to reveal them to us in a new light, in their real significance, as a part of God's own program, as a revelation of the coming Lord! We must "see Jesus" even in the events of the present world. We must have sufficient light to "hold fast that which we have," even in the midst of the confusion and darkness and gloom of the picture presented by the history of the world, and of the church in the world. To enable us to see the events of this present time in the light of Christ's coming, — that is the purpose of this book. Hence, the things that must shortly come to pass must be shown to Christ's servants. By the term "servants" is meant, not a special class or group of believers, such as the apostles; but all the believers in their relation to Christ as their Lord. They are His servants. They were liberated from the dominion of sin and the slavery of the devil in order to serve Christ with a new obedience. His Spirit dwells in them. In Him they are new creatures. His Word they possess and love. They are His friends, because they do whatsoever He commanded them. And let us note that only His servants

can receive the words of this prophecy, and that they alone have need of them. Nay more, it is only in the measure that we are faithful to the Lord in the midst of the present world and walk as His servants, that the light of this Revelation of Jesus Christ can possibly brighten our pathway. Then, indeed, we shall have tribulation. For, as they have hated Him, so they will hate His servants. And the servant is not greater than his Lord. Then the things that are below and the events of this present time shall have no comfort for us, until we see all things in the light of this prophecy. But seeing them in this light, we shall be of good cheer, being confident that our Lord hath overcome the world!

Two details we must still consider in connection with these things that come to pass: they *must* come to pass; and they will come to pass *shortly*. It is good for us to know, as we look about us in the world, that the things that take place *must* come to pass. This *must* expresses the necessity of all the events of this present time from a twofold aspect. First of all it points us to the eternal and perfect and all-wise counsel of the Almighty as the ultimate reason and ground of this necessity. All things are but the unfolding of the eternal good pleasure of the Most High. They are, indeed, determined. All things are determined, large and small, good and evil. But they are determined not by cruel fate or blind force, but by the counsel of the allwise Creator of all things. When we accept the Word of God and believe that all things *must* come to pass, our hearts find rest, because they find rest in Him! And, secondly, this *must* points to the end, the *telos*, the final destination of all things, the perfected kingdom of heaven and its revelation in the day of Christ. This second aspect of the *must* is, of course, inseparably connected with the first. Just because all things have their ultimate reason and necessity in the counsel of God, therefore they must come to pass in order to realize the divine end of all things: the tabernacle of God with men! We may express the same thought thus: all things come to pass because Christ is coming! What a glorious assurance of hope even in the darkest moments of history! Let us declare this truth as His witnesses in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation!

And these things must come to pass *shortly*. This expression cannot be used to sustain the view that practically the entire contents of the book of Revelation must be considered as being fulfilled with the destruction of the Roman empire. For the idea that all things that must become history before the final coming again of the Lord will be realized shortly is not at all foreign to the New Testament. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," the apostle Paul writes to the church in Rome. Rom. 13:12. And the apostle Peter exhorts us: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer." I Pe. 4:7. To the church of Philadelphia the Lord Himself declares: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Rev. 3:11. And again in Rev. 22:1 we read: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth

the sayings of the prophecy of this book;" and in vs. 12 of the same chapter: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." In the last three passages the word translated "quickly" is the same as that which is rendered "shortly" in 1:1. And this is, indeed, the meaning. The Lord comes quickly. He does not tarry. He is not slack concerning the promise. And this implies that the things which must come to pass before that final coming and in the process of that coming must also come to pass shortly or quickly. This may not appear so to us. Centuries have elapsed since these words were written, and still they have not been fulfilled. Nineteen centuries to us seems a long time, hardly to be denoted by the term "shortly." But we must remember, not only that God's measure of time differs from ours, but also that tremendous things must come to pass before the end shall be. The whole church must be gathered, the fulness of the Gentiles and of the Jews; the measure of iniquity must be filled; Antichrist must reach his culmination and have his day; God and Magog must play their own part in the things that must come to pass. If we consider the nature of the things that must come to pass, we begin to see that they do, indeed, occur with astounding rapidity, especially in our own day. However this may be, the Scriptures teach that all things come to pass quickly; there is no delay; so that also the view that God restrains the progress of sin is contrary to this Scriptural teaching. All things hasten unto the end!

This revelation, then, of which Jesus Christ Himself is the object, God gave unto Him, the text informs us. Of all revelation, and therefore also of this part of it, God is the sole Author. We must think here, of course, of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and not merely of the Father as the first Person of the Holy Trinity. We must make a distinction, therefore, between God and Christ as the Mediator in His human nature. Scripture, although clearly teaching that Christ is the eternal Son of God, very God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, nevertheless makes this distinction. This is very evident from those passages that speak of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is the God also of Christ, the Mediator according to His human nature. And this God is the Author of all revelation. Hence, we read here: "which God gave unto him." It is a thoroughly Biblical conception that also Christ in His human nature receives all revelation from God. In proof of this we refer you to the texts mentioned in the exegetical notes preceding this chapter. There is, of course, a difference between Christ and us with respect to the way in which God's revelation is received. We can receive the revelation of God only indirectly, through Christ, through the "apostles and prophets," through the Scriptures; while Christ, because He is the Son of God in human nature, received that revelation directly and immediately, without the intermediation of other agencies. But this does not alter the fact as such that also Christ receives all revelation from His "God and Father." God gave this revelation to Him. And

this particular revelation was given to Christ after His exaltation. It is wholly in harmony with His position at the right hand of God, according to which He has all power in heaven and on earth, stands at the very pinnacle of all creation, that God gave this revelation to Him. For, to a position of supreme power and authority belongs the possession of all knowledge and wisdom. Later in the book of Revelation (ch. V) somewhat the same thought is presented symbolically in the vision of Christ's taking the book with its seven seals from the hand of Him that sitteth on the throne. But this we hope to explain in the proper place.

Having received this revelation from God, Christ communicated it to His servants. He did so by "signifying" it to His servant John through the mediation of "his angel." The original is somewhat difficult to translate. Instead of: "and he sent and signified it by his angel," we read: "and he signified, sending or having sent through an angel." The aorist participle (*aposteilas*) of the Greek verb for "to send" is used, and for this we have no exact equivalent in the English language. Let me just say this about it, that the aorist in Greek stresses the act as such rather than any time element. The idea, therefore, is plain enough. The text emphasizes two elements. In the first place, it gives us to understand that when Christ communicated the revelation He received from God to His servant John, He "signified" it. This means that He cast it into the form of signs and symbols derived from our earthly life and experience. The book of Revelation is a book of visions, full of signs and symbols. And this "signifying" must have been necessary. It seems to imply that the form in which Christ imparted this revelation to His servant John differs from the form in which Christ Himself received it from God. Christ is heavenly, the Lord of heaven, the resurrected Lord in glory. He is able to receive the revelation of heavenly things directly, in heavenly form. But we are still earthy, in our humiliated body. And we cannot receive the revelation of heavenly things in other than earthly forms, signs and symbols. This, then, is one of the truths that must constantly be born in mind if we would interpret the book of Revelation, though it is also one of the principles of interpretation that is very frequently violated by many commentators. Christ "signified" the revelation He had received from God, to His servant John. And this signification took place through the meditation of "his angel." It appears from the rest of the book, that different angels were employed to bring these visions to the perception and mind of John. Yet, it is not improbable that one particular angel served as the "interpreting angel," and the reference here is to this angel particularly. It is Christ's angel, because the Lord is exalted far above all powers and principalities, and above every name that is named. The angels, too, are His messengers, sent out in His service. Nor is it strange that an angel here mediates to communicate and signify this revelation to John.

H.H.



## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Zechariah

#### THE CROWN UPON JOSHUA'S HEAD

Chapter 6:9-15.

9. *And the word of Jehovah came to me saying, 10. Take from the exiles, from Cheldai, from Tobijah, and from Jedaiah, and go thou on the same day, go thou into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah whither they have come from Babylon; 11. and take silver and gold and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest; 12. and speak to him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold a man, Branch his name; and from his place he shall grow up, and build the temple of Jehovah. 13. Even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. 14. And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of Jehovah. 15. And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts has sent me to you. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently obey the voice of Jehovah your God.*

9. *And the word of Jehovah came to me*—What is here related is not a vision. How the Lord communicated this His word to the prophet is not explained. With Moses the Lord spake mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches. Him the Lord knew face to face, and the likeness of the Lord he beheld. But Moses was an exception in this respect. To the other prophets the Lord made Himself known in a vision, or spoke to them in a dream, Numbers 12:6-8.

10. *The exiles*—Ezra used this term as a name for the returned captives (6:1, 6:19). But in this section the reference is to the exiles who at the time were still residing in Babylon. To the great majority of these Jews, which of course was also the case with the returned exiles, Babylon was the land of their nativity. Here, with the exception of the very aged among them, they had been born. Here their fathers had lived and died, at least the most of them. Here in Babylon, during the seventy years, they had acquired a name and a place, and in this place they were established and not doing too badly in a material sense. All this can explain why so few of them, comparatively speaking, had responded to the exhortation of Cyrus that they return to Jerusalem to build the Lord a temple. Why go to Jerusalem, a city in ruins, if they had it so good in Babylon.

Yet also among these Jews, of course, God had His people. Despite the fact that for some carnal reason or other,

they abode in Babylon, their hearts were with God's people in Jerusalem, and went out to the God of Israel who dwelt in His holy temple in process of being built. As this section discloses, they were wont to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to learn about her welfare, and to worship in the temple. And they came not empty handed but as supplied with silver and gold for the Lord's house.

To this people—believers in voluntary exile—Cheldai and his two companions belonged. For they came from Babylon their permanent place of residence. They were in Jerusalem only on a visit. They were come as supplied with silver and gold for God's house. Perhaps a good share of this treasure had been donated by the like-minded brethren of their community in Babylon and that by these brethren they had been commissioned. The visitors received from the prophet as the organ of Jehovah a wonderful revelation regarding Branch; for their benefit a new light was shed upon the promise. It shows that they were living by the promise as looking forward to its fulfilment. It shows, in a word, that they were true worshippers. *On the same day*—On the very day that the revelation came. On this day the prophet was sent to the house of one Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where the visitors were lodging. Here the prophet was to meet them.

11. *Take silver and gold*—The prophet was to take from the visitors the gifts of silver and gold which they had brought and cause to be made of these metals crowns. Since only one person is crowned, the plural indicates that the crowns were to be composed of two circlets, one of gold and one of silver, so as to form one piece or crown. This was to be placed upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the highpriest. By this action with the crown Joshua was not made king. The action rather implied that he was king, ruler, as priest. It must be remembered that in Israel the rule was divided between the civil ruler and the highpriest. The latter only had custody over the temple and over all things in it including the people in their capacity of worshippers in the temple. It is, therefore, proper to speak also of the throne of the highpriest. This being true, Joshua could be made to typify Christ also in His kingly office without replacing Zerubbabel as governor over the post-exilic community. That the crown was placed upon the head of Joshua creates no problem therefore.

There is another explanation of the action with the crown. It is this, namely, that with the crown resting upon his head Joshua for the moment resembled both a king and a priest and that, therefore, as to his outward appearance he for the moment typified Christ both in His kingly and priestly office.

12. *And speak to him saying*—The prophet must explain the action not alone to the highpriest but in the hearing of the visitors as well. For they were lodged in the house to which the prophet was sent. The message, there-

fore, also was meant for their ears. *Thus sayeth Jehovah of hosts, Behold, a man*—Here the word *behold* is not a verb—look at, center your gaze upon—but an interjection equivalent in meaning to *Lo!*—*Lo, a man.* This man is Christ and not Joshua. The latter, as crowned, typified Him, presented Him to view. *Branch is His name*—The name becomes Him. For Branch He is, not a sturdy branch growing from the trunk of a stately tree firmly rooted in the ground, but a shoot, a tender sprig coming forth out of the root of a fallen tree and this root embedded in a dry ground (Isaiah 2:1, 53:1). The shoot, sprig is Christ. The imagery here sets Him forth as a wonder of God. This first of all. For the root—the root of Jesse, by which is to be understood the virgin Mary—was in a dry ground. From a human standpoint, therefore, Christ could not be born, there being for the virgin no man. But the virgin was with child nevertheless. For the Holy Ghost came upon her, and she was overshadowed by the power of the Almighty. And so the shoot came forth. Christ was born.

But there is more to say. A shoot is a tender and unsightly creature. It has no beauty. So, too, Christ. Not that Christ was physically ugly and repulsive. On the contrary, also physically He was well-favored, strong and vital and appealing. Not once do we read of him being physically sick, or of His being derided by His enemies because of physical deformities. For He had none. Yet the Scriptures say of Him that He had no form nor comeliness, that when men saw Him there was no beauty that they should desire Him (Isaiah 53:1). But this can only mean that He did not belong to the great ones of the earth, was not born in purple, was without worldly rank, power, glory, fame. Indeed He was born in a cow stable and He who was held to be His father—Joseph—was an obscure carpenter in the city of Nazareth, a place of which men were saying that nothing of good was known ever to have come from it. He was not a priest or a ruler in Israel. He was not even a scribe. And so men despised and rejected Him, for in their sight He was but a sprig, which if found growing from the root of a tree in a man's garden, the axman comes and cuts it away. But in the sight of God He was the beloved Son whose meat and drink it was to do the will of His Father. *And from his place he shall grow up*—This is doubtless the meaning of the expression that literally reads, "And he shall grow up from under him." Sprigs never amount to anything to speak of. They never attain to a normal size. They do not grow up. As trees they are failures. And in the eyes of unbelieving men, Christ was a failure, dying, as He did, on a cross. But actually He was a wonderful success. He grew up indeed. For His death was His victory. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief. But when He had made His soul an offering for sin, He saw His seed. He arose unto life in glory, and was set with His people in the highest heavens. He sat down at the right hand of the throne. He was given all power in heaven and on earth and given to be the head over all things in the

church. The sprig, the shoot that came forth from the root of Jesse grew up.

From His place He grew up. That place was the low level of existence at which He was born, and lived and wrought. That place was the root in the dry ground from which He came forth. That place was the stable in which He was born, and the house of that obscure carpenter in which He dwelt as a youth. That place was Gethsemane where His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. That place was Herod's courtroom where He was mocked by Herod's men. That place was the palace of the highpriest where He was spit on, and buffeted and where the servants of the highpriest struck Him with the palms of their hand, saying to Him, prophecy. That place was the judgment hall of Pilate where they scourged Him and delivered Him to be crucified. That place was the cross on which He laid down His life for His sheep. That place was the grave wherein He lay that He might sanctify it for His own. These were the places—His place—from which He grew up.

*And He shall build the temple*—As grown up from His place He shall build the temple—the spiritual temple that was always before God as graven in the palms of His hands—the hands of Jehovah. For the temple is His. This temple the Branch builds, now that He is grown up from His place.

13. *Even He shall build the temple of Jehovah*—This is repeated for emphasis. He, Branch, builds the temple, He and none other. This can be explained. It was in Him that its lively stones were chosen unto life everlasting before the foundations of the world. He is its chief corner stone. For its lively stones it was He who laid down His life. By His blood they were raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him that in the ages to come, He, the Father, might shew the exceeding riches of His kindness toward them in Him, Branch. He is their sanctification, justification and redemption. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, wherefore He is their true bread. Over all things in this temple He was given to be the head. He, and He only, is mighty to save. For to Him, and to Him only, was given all power in heaven and on earth. And so, reigning, as He does, in the midst of His enemies, He and He alone is qualified to build and preserve the temple. And therefore the temple shall be build, so that, when it shall have appeared with Him in glory, not one lively stone shall be missing.

According to some there is no warrant anywhere for making this temple the spiritual temple, the kingdom of God, as distinguished from the temple in Jerusalem, in the building of which Haggai and Zechariah are so deeply interested. But this is an absurd stand to take. Were this true, the message of our prophet is devoid of Gospel. What real comfort could God's believing people of that day, or of any other day, derive from the promises as here proclaimed, were it true that they bear only on Zerubbabel's temple. That eventually also Zerubbabel's temple was destroyed, shows that for

the time being it was but a shadow, a prophetic type of the heavenly. This is all the proof that is needed for the incorrectness of this view. To conceive of the promises of our prophet in this fashion, is to destroy them completely as a glad tidings of salvation. And if we take this view of the promises as proclaimed by our prophet, what is there to prevent us from adopting an identical view regarding the promises as proclaimed by the rest of the prophets.

*And He shall bear the glory*—The glory that Branch shall bear is the fulness of the Godhead—the fulness of blessings that He shall merit for His people and of which the Father shall be the overflowing fountain—that shall dwell in Him bodily and shine in His and all His people's faces. *And he shall sit and rule upon his throne*—A throne upon which He shall be seated at the Father's right hand. Indeed He shall be highly exalted. The name that shall be given Him shall be above every name, and at which every knee shall bow. And He shall rule upon His throne—rule also in the midst of His enemies, implying that, though they mean it not so, they shall be serving His counsel. And when He has done with them, He shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. But for His people His rule shall spell salvation. *(For) He shall be priest upon His throne*—Priest shall He be, priest upon His throne, priest unto God. Through Adam's transgression, we by nature are priests unto satan, dedicated to his lie, "Thou shalt be as God," and doing his works, he being our father. But Branch shall be priest unto God, the idea of which spells perfect devotion to God, loving Him with all the heart, mind, will and strength. Of this idea Branch shall be the perfect expression. He shall offer Himself for sin in perfect consecration to God. By His own blood He shall enter the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption, there to rule upon His throne as priest, praying for and blessing His people, imparting unto them His life, and ruling them by His Spirit and His Word. *And the counsel of peace shall be between them both*—Both, not Branch and Jehovah, but the king and the priest, who sit upon one throne united in the person of Branch. And the counsel shall be between them, that is, they shall mind, will, desire and be dedicated to the same deliberate purpose, namely the destruction of the adversary and the salvation of the church, that is, the erection and completion of the temple of Jehovah and its ultimate appearance in glory to the everlasting praise of the Father. And the counsel is one of peace. It proclaims peace and as executed results in peace—peace toward God, the peace of God that passeth all understanding, the peace of Jerusalem that one day shall reign on the earth when the tabernacle of God will be with men. This counsel, of course, shall have to be identified with the counsel of God. For it cannot very well be that Branch in the throne contemplates one thing and the triune Jehovah another.

14. *And the crowns shall be to Helem and to Tobijah and to Jedaiah and to Hen the son of Zephaniah*—Indicated

are the same persons named in verse 11, to wit, the three visitors from Babylon and the Israelite with whom they were lodging. Helem stands for Heldiah and Hen, the Hebrew word for *grace, favor*, stands for Josiah. Hen, as a proper name and as born by Josiah, may record, if he was not already being called also by this name, that the Lord was pleased with him for the kindly hospitality that he was showing the visitors from Babylon.

The crowns were to be to the host and his three guests *for a memorial in the temple*.—Here is where the crowns had to serve this purpose—in the temple. Here, therefore, is where they had to be deposited. It shows, for one thing, that they were not the personal possession of the highpriest, that their being placed on his head was not a coronation indicating that he had been vested with an office that hitherto he had not held.

The crowns were to be for a memorial to the four Israelites named and of course to all God's believing people both in Judea and in the dispersion.

They shall be for a memorial, that is, they were intended to preserve the memory of something. The memory of whom or of what? According to one view, the memory of the liberality of the visitors from Babylon. According to another view the memory of their visit. According to this view, the purpose of depositing the crowns in the temple was to extend the typical significance of the proceeding to the three visitors in order that thereby they might be made to typify the many who would one day come from heathen lands and help to build the temple of the Lord. But we should consider that the crowns in the temple pointed not to the visitors from Babylon but to Branch, to the fact that He was to sit and rule upon His throne and that He was to be a priest in His throne. This is the Gospel that was imposed upon these crowns. Doubtless, therefore, it is better to say that the crowns in the temple were intended to preserve the memory of Branch as He stands out in the promises of this section, all the promises, also the promise, not to be overlooked, contained in the last verse of this section and to which we have still to attend.

It is not difficult to see why the crowns had to be deposited in the temple. Here is where God's people from near and far congregated. Seeing the crowns the worshippers would say, What meaneth these crowns. And the priests would explain, preaching to them Branch, the Christ as He stands out in this revelation.

15. *And they that are afar off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah*.—A prediction of the calling of the Gentiles. The temple is the spiritual house of God. As called of God by the Gospel of Christ the Gentiles shall come. Through all the good works that they perform as new creatures in Christ, others shall be drawn. So shall they build in the temple, yet not they but Christ through their

(Continued on page 398)

## THE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN

So extensive, far-reaching and comprehensive are the implications of embracing a world and life view, that there is virtually no subject that can be discussed, no field of study entered upon, nor any opinion and judgment rendered without reflecting such a world and life view.

Here too, we again observe the practical application and the implications of what it means to be a Christian—a child of God in the sphere of “civics.”

Too often, all manner of compromise is conveniently made in the sphere of “civics” without even being aware of the fact that when such compromise is made, significant and fundamental truths of Scripture are belied. Perhaps this is due to the fact (in part, at least) that one is apt to conclude, the civic responsibility of the Christian is comparatively simple and clear-cut, since to present this matter, is to answer it. However, the truth is that once considered, it can be quite complex; complex that is, if you do not proceed from the fundamental approach of the Scriptures. Therefore, to determine the civic responsibility of the Christian, it stands to reason that we must define these terms.

In the first place, what do we mean when we speak of “civic responsibility?” Civic is that which has to do with the citizen. The science of civics has to do with the citizen and with the rights and the duties of that citizen. However, the reference is not to the rights and the duties of the citizen as they concern the national, but as they concern the local scene—the community. Hence, when one speaks of civics, he speaks of that which “surveys local community life within the nation.” In the final analysis, you understand, whatever happens on the local level, determines what shall happen on the national level because, as one writer states: “The whole machinery of government—the wheels within wheels—pivot on the man with the ballot. He is the government.” Of course, while this is certainly contrary to the Scriptures, it is the presupposition upon which this country functions. In other words, the theory of democracy is founded on the activity of the individual.

Civic responsibility, then, in light of what we have said, would have to do with the responsibility or the obligation of the citizen, in connection with whatever rights and duties he possesses as a citizen. How must the citizen, then, walk? But now, remember, this article is concerned with the civic responsibility of the Christian. Hence, in the second place, let us ask: Who is the Christian?

When we speak of the Christian, this is not to be understood as though the average “church-goer” is meant. The reference is not to the “nominal” church member who reveals an interest (regardless of degree) in everyday civic affairs. On the contrary, the title of this article has to do with the Covenant child; that one who professes to walk in the sphere of God’s Covenant, as manifested in the midst of this world. We speak of that one who is a Christian citizen,

but a Christian *first*. That means his citizenship is in heaven (Philip. 3:20) and therefore he is a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom and subject to the Most High God, *first*.

Yet, in the midst of the world in which the Lord had given him a name and a place, and through which he must pass as a spiritual pilgrim, he is also a citizen of a particular earthly country. Thus, in this capacity, recognizing and confessing that “*there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*” (Rom. 13:1), he subjects himself “*unto the higher powers.*” He submits “*to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.*” (I Peter 2:13-14). He is subject to principalities and powers, obeys magistrates and is “*ready to every good work.*” (Titus 3:1) And, he renders unto Caesar “*the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.*” (Mt. 22:21)

It is therefore the civic responsibility of such a one that must be determined; the civic responsibility of the *heavenly citizen* who must sojourn in the midst of this world, for a season. That we identify the Christian, you see, is important because this enables us to get the proper perspective—to see the relation of civic responsibility to the Christian and therefore ask: What must this Christian do with these “rights?” What is his duty, as a citizen of this world?

Without any fear of contradiction, I dare say, this “cry” of “civic responsibility” has many-a-time been used as a “cloak” by Christians to simply justify their participation in these so-called civic affairs. But the error of this will be established, as we consider a number of significant questions.

What is the calling of a Christian? What is the calling of that one whom God has called from the darkness into His marvelous light? For what purpose did God work in the heart of His child, by the irresistible operation of His Holy Spirit? To save him from his sins and misery and lead him unto everlasting glory? Yes, but of even more significance is the truth that he whom the Lord delivers “*should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.*” (Eph. 1:12) That His child, exalted and seated “*together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*” might forevermore sing the Song of Moses and worship Him who, alone, is worthy of worship, saying: “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*” (Rev. 4:11) This, the Lord purposed to realize in His people, as they continue through the earthly pilgrimage—fighting the good fight of faith and earnestly contending for the faith which was delivered unto them.

Therefore, you see, in determining the civic responsibility of the Christian, it is very right and proper to inquire—to ask concerning the motives that prompt one to be “sensitive” to his “civic responsibility.” Underlying all this civic interest, what is it that gives rise to this activity?

This is a very important question for the child of God because it is no different than asking him: "*Is the glory of God the moving impulse for the concern over your civic responsibility?*" Important, too, because *whatever* the Christian does must be motivated by the glory of God's Name.

You can see that what we have done thus far, is to prepare the ground for now inquiring into motives, desires, purposes, and the like. This, we have done by raising some questions, and also by setting forth some fundamental principles of Scripture which, in turn, can be developed.

By way of illustrating the matter of civic responsibility, it must be readily admitted that we cannot possibly examine all the activities toward which one is ordinarily considered to have some responsibility — whether by personal and direct participation, or by indirect participation, such as donations and contributions. Furthermore, it is not necessary to examine such civic activities in order to determine the Christian's responsibility.

The Christian, you see, proceeds from the Word of God. He knows his calling and his responsibility; not only in the sphere of "civics" but in every sphere, throughout his whole life and walk. The fact that he does not always walk in the light of that calling, is another matter. But we must not assume that the Christian is ignorant of his calling — before God and in the midst of this world.

Therefore, it is only necessary to simply state this calling. For in this calling is also embodied all the Christian's motives, desires, and purposes; and thus, it will readily be seen as to how he differs from the world.

Remember, it is *the world that cries loudest about civic responsibility*. It is the world that always points to "*civic pride*" and reminds the citizen of his "*civic*" and "*patriotic*" duty. Therefore, it is the world, too, that urges the citizen to enter politics and vote, and calls upon him to support one "worthy" cause, and another. But why? Is the world motivated by the glory of God's Name? Does the world purpose that all things redound to the praise and the glory of the Most High God? To ask this question, is to answer it. Of course not! The world purposes improvement, betterment, and reform. The ungodly cannot see and therefore, do not acknowledge that the world and "*the fashion of this world passeth away*" (I Cor. 7:31) hence, they exert all their efforts and endeavours in trying to reform and advance this world in which they live. And furthermore, they expect all to join hands and take part in their so-called "united" efforts.

And the sad part of this commentary on the ungodly and their civic activities is the fact that they have convinced many professing Christians of their "civic responsibility." Hence, from time to time, during the course of a year, these Christians become all "*wrapped-up*" in their "civic responsibility." It may be during an election year or perhaps a time when one of those "worthy" causes is being promoted, and they

are given some position on a committee and work to perform. At any rate, they become so "*wrapped-up*" and enthused over their "civic responsibility" that *they lose their identity as a Christian* — as they mingle together with the ungodly, and "*spend*" themselves in the cause of "civic responsibility."

One often wonders what would happen if these Christians would exert as much faithful and conscientious effort in contending for the truth of God's Word, as they so often do in connection with these other mundane affairs. Strange as it may seem, these same Christians are at no loss for words to express themselves and "fight" for their views when they are in the sphere of "civic activity," but how different it is when the matter of spiritual subjects arise.

But now, what about these Christians who join hand-in-hand with the world? What about that one who professes to be a child of God and can yet "hob-nobs" with the ungodly, in civic affairs? What must be the reason for this kind of conduct? Is it truly because one's "civic responsibility" is so keenly felt? Or, is it just a matter of "self" — where such a one sees an opportunity for a little recognition? Perhaps, it could even be that he who professes to be a Christian is *afraid* to bear the reproaches of Christ and hence, conveniently avoids them under the guise of "civic responsibility" — gaining the well-wishes of the world.

How can such a one ever explain the truth that God's people are a separated and an isolated people; a people who are pilgrims and strangers? That, because of their very distinctiveness, while they are in the world, they are surely *not* of the world and therefore, they are isolated in the spiritual sense of the word. As far as the world and the ungodly of that world are concerned, they are: "*to come out from among them, and be separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing . . . to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, rather reprove them.*"

Actually, then, what is the calling of the Christian regarding "civic responsibility?" Is it not simply that he should be a living epistle, read of all men? Does not the "civic responsibility" of the Christian, as does *all his responsibility and his calling*; does it not resolve itself in this: That he walk *antithetically* in the midst of this world? Isn't that what we, as Protestant Reformed people, have always maintained? That, as the people of God, we walk from the new principle of regeneration, and that we reveal ourselves as belonging to the household of faith — *in every sphere of life*? So that, we oppose the Light of God's Word to all darkness — the Truth to all falsehood and that which is Righteous and Holy to all corruption.

The *antithesis*, then, is preserved in the whole life and walk of the child of God. What does this imply? It implies that declaring God's truth, without any apology, all sin, evil, and corruption is exposed and denounced. That means, too, the motives and purposes which are often clearly revealed as one begins to move about in those circles that are so con-

cerned with performing civic duties; these, too, must be condemned.

If that is your purpose for engaging in all manner of civic labours — to expose the corruption which you know is found therein and to call men to repentance by declaring God's truth and thus, maintain the antithesis, no one can find fault with such purposes. *However, we know this is not possible.* Declare *this* to be your purpose unto those with whom you intend to labour in civic affairs and rest assured, you will *never* have an opportunity to fulfill your so-called "civic responsibility."

Furthermore, it isn't necessary that you "hob-nob" and mingle with the ungodly in these so-called civic affairs. That isn't necessary to maintain the antithesis and let your light shine. As we said, very often that is just an excuse to enjoy some of the pleasures of this world.

You don't fulfill your "civic responsibility" by exercising every one of your "rights" and "duties." You don't, for instance, fulfill your "civic responsibility" by voting for a candidate, even though you are certain he is *not* suited, but is nevertheless the "best" choice of the candidates for the office. There is *no law* that says you must vote, even though you are convinced in your soul that there is no candidate who purposes to serve the Cause of God's Kingdom. As a child of God, how can you vote under such circumstances? You don't fulfill your calling by "voting" or by participating in the sphere of civics, but by walking *in the way of the antithesis*, and this way is *the way of the Covenant*.

Of course, no one can deny that the people of God are to support all civic enterprises and projects that are *rooted and grounded in the truth* and thus, *proceed from the fear of God*. BUT, where are there such projects? Where is there such civic activity? Common Grace is able to find them everywhere. Yes, but look at the fruit Common Grace is bearing.

Don't you see how far-reaching are the implications of naming the Name of Christ and confessing that you are one with Him? And since this does not seem to be the concern over which the Christian outside of our own circles need be alarmed, don't you see the implications of being Protestant Reformed?

Remember, the ungodly and the wicked serve God's people. The reprobate serve the elect, as is clearly seen in the sphere of civics too. It is the Lord who raises up these things, by His Mighty Hand. So that, the wicked in their wickedness, strive to assure the nation of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" and of the "Four Freedoms." And thus, desiring these things for *themselves* and as avenues for the free expression of their wickedness, they secure them for all. But actually, under the Mighty hand of God, *in this way they only continue to fill their measure of iniquity.*

But God's people live alone, and living alone *they fill their measure of blessing*. They are in the world and yet, not of it. They walk *antithetically* — *even in the sphere of civic affairs*.

E. Emanuel

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 395)

good confession. For He and He alone builds the temple. The visitors from Babylon should be ashamed. The gentiles shall come from afar, far from beyond Babylon, even from the ends of the earth to build the temple, and therefore to abide in God's house, but these visitors continue in Babylon. And they are Jews.

*And ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts sent me to you* — The fulfilment of the promises as our prophet proclaimed them will prove that he spake as Jehovah's organ. *And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently obey the voice of Jehovah — Literally, It shall be if ye obey . . .* The suppressed clause must be, (It shall be if ye obey . . .) ye shall share in all the blessings that Branch shall secure for the obedient.

G.M.O.

## AS THIRSTS THE HART FOR WATER BROOKS

As thirsts the hart for water brooks,  
So thirsts my soul, O God, for Thee;  
It seeks for God, and ever looks  
And longs the living God to see.

Far from the courts of God, my tears  
Have been my food by night and day,  
While constantly with bitter sneers,  
Where is thy God? the scoffers say.

With grief I think of days gone by,  
When oft I trod the hallowed way  
To Zion, praising God on high  
With throngs who kept the holy day.

O why art thou cast down, my soul,  
And why so troubled shouldst thou be?  
Hope thou in God, and Him extol,  
Who gives His saving help to me.

Since, O my God, my soul is bowed,  
In exile far, with bitter grief,  
I turn my thoughts to Thy abode  
For consolation and relief.

With mighty voice deep calls to deep,  
While raging storms Thy judgments tell;  
The angry billows o'er me leap,  
The waves of sorrow near me swell.

Though troubles surge, yet through the day  
The Lord His gracious help will give,  
And in the night my heart shall pray  
And sing to Him in whom I live.

Psalms 42:1-7



## IN HIS FEAR

### Praying in His Fear

That, of course, is the only way to pray.

A desire expressed in any other way than in the way of His fear is not a prayer to God.

Any supplication uttered in any other way than in His fear will never be heard by the Living God.

There is so much that goes under the name of prayer today that is anything but prayer. There is so much that goes under the name of prayer that is never heard because it is no prayer.

Let us not be deceived by all that which is presented today as prayer. Let us understand that if the fear of the Lord is not in it, it is not prayer regardless of what men call it. Let us understand that unless we approach the Majesty on high in His fear, we will not be heard and our "prayer" is an abomination unto Him.

We read, the other day, in the May issue of the Reader's Digest of an incident in the life of the first president of our land, George Washington, that illustrates the point at hand. We will reprint it to show you what we have in mind.

"During the last days of the Revolutionary War, an aide to British General Howe arrived at George Washington's headquarters under a flag of truce, bearing a message addressed to 'Mr. Washington.' Washington took one look at the envelope, stuffed it in his pocket unopened and said: 'This is addressed to a "Mr. Washington," a Virginia planter I know well. I will give it to him when the war is over. Advise your commander that the battle will be resumed at once.

"The rebuff served its purpose. Soon another message arrived from Howe, addressed to 'His Excellency, General Washington.'"

No one thinks ill of Washington for his action.

Yet when we insist that one must approach the Majesty on high, as God is called in Hebrews 1:3, in His fear and that all cries for help and expressions of desires are not heard and that some are loathsome in His sight, there will be those who will object violently that we believe in a God who is a monster rather than the God of love that they wish to present.

Indeed, He is a God of love!

But, then, let us not fail to put the proper emphasis upon the fact that he is the GOD of love. His love does not make Him abdicate His majestic position of being God! He Himself testifies to us in His law that He is a jealous God visiting the iniquities upon those that hate Him. He does not love all men. He is not pleased with the prayers of those that hate Him and run to Him only when they get into desperate trouble.

It surely is a carnal, wholly unscriptural observation that was made in the last war: "There are no atheists in the fox-

holes." Indeed there were! The cries of those whose lives had been spent in blasphemy of all the holy things, who had used His name in vain in their very liberal cursing and swearing almost to the moment of their dreadful peril amid the screaming shells and death dealing bombs are not to be classed as prayers. They lacked the fear of God. They were born out of an awful fear of the shell, the bullet, the bomb, the death that seemed imminent. But the fear of the Lord which is faith in Him and a reverent awe for His majesty as the God of our salvation was not in it. And in hell that "prayer" will be held against them as a testimony that they knew there was a God and soon forgot him after the peril of that death was past!

In spite of all the distorted and unscriptural ideas of God as the God of love, it simply is a fact clearly taught in Holy Writ that those seeking help of God must recognize Him as the Majesty on high and that only in that way will they ever be heard.

He is a jealous God; and He loves Himself.

He will not play the part of a handyman who will quickly run to your assistance when from the lofty heights of human pride and conceit you seek to make Him become your servant.

"For Jesus' sake, Amen."

Yes, "For Jesus' sake" He will hear and fill your request.

But when you come in that way, you come in His fear.

Then you recognize Him as God and confess your own unworthiness. Then you do not ask Him to abdicate and turn the course of history for your sake. Then you come with the only reason why He will ever do anything.

A man may react to the approaches of another as Washington did; recognize the pride, the insult in that approach. Rest assured that the Living God, The Majesty on high, the Thrice Holy God surely will do likewise.

A God of love He is.

Yea, The God of Love He is.

But He is also the Thrice Holy One.

Therefore His love is a Holy Love! He is holy in His love. In His holiness He cannot love that which is sinful. In His holiness He cannot save and bless everyone who cries in his terror for help. In His favor He cannot save the life and prosper the way of one wicked man over against that of another wicked doer.

"For Jesus' sake" He can and will do so for those who were chosen in Him. For in Jesus, the Son of His love, He has made His people to be holy. In Him and for His sake He will bless and help while remaining the Thrice Holy One. That is, after all, the only way that He will bless and help anyone.

However, it is the testimony of Holy Writ that this Jesus has not made all men to be holy and that this Thrice Holy God does not want Him to make all men holy. The whole Old Testament is one undeniable testimony of the fact

that God's blessings are not meant for all men head for head and soul for soul. Psalm 147:19, 20 states, "He showeth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not know them. Praise ye the Lord." Jesus Himself declares, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matthew 15:24. And again He declared, "I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10:15 and, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are thine," John 17:9. Jesus Himself prays not for everyone and shall we then maintain that if these for whom He will not pray utter their desires to the Thrice Holy God that He will hear them? And that He will do this for Jesus' sake, the Jesus who will not pray for them because they have not been given unto Him?

The "atheist" in the foxhole who cries out for God to help him and to save him and knows not nor believes in this Jesus of the Scriptures does not pray to the Majesty on high but to some god of his own imagination. He confesses no sin, sees no atonement upon the cross and rules out the whole meaning of "Jesus' sake." For it is for the sake of that cross of Jesus that there is any blessedness and salvation for anyone.

These words, "For Jesus' sake," are not some password or magical formula for getting things done and to induce the Thrice Holy God to condescend and change His mind and works for those who utter these words. "For Jesus' sake" means because of and for the sake of the fact that Jesus has already merited these things for which we ask and already has them in His possession to deal out to us according to the eternal counsel of the Almighty God.

For nothing may we ask that is not merited by Christ. Apart from Him we have no basis for our request; and apart from Him God has no reason for giving us any blessedness.

Thus, praying in His fear surely means to approach God in Jesus Christ His Son as the sole basis for our receiving anything. Approach Him as a God of love Who has love to the creature apart from Jesus Christ His Son and you are not praying. Lift up your voice to Him on the basis of a love that He has apart from Christ and He will not hear you. What is even more, lift up your voice to Him claiming His love apart from Christ and He will hate you for it. He loves His Son and as the Thrice Holy One hates all those Who hate His Son. Solomon correctly declares, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is His delight," Proverbs 15:8. And then this also is true: The prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord; but the sacrifice of the upright is His delight. And it is positively wicked to try to approach God outside of Christ and apart from Him.

Let that point stand, then: praying in His fear means praying in His Son's name and for His sake. Do otherwise and you will come up against a stone wall that your crying

cannot pierce; you will stand before a securely locked door that your supplication will not open. Praying on any other basis than "Jesus' sake" you might just as well pray to the devil that he lead you not in temptation and that he make you holy. You will be just as successful.

Why is it praying in His fear to pray in the name of the Son of God in our flesh?

Because such a prayer recognizes God as the Majesty on high.

That is absolutely essential for every petition or supplication if it is to be a prayer to God!

Washington stuffed the message in his pocket and said, "The battle will be resumed at once." The Almighty Thrice Holy God will do far more. He will cast this audacious and haughty petitioner into the everlasting torments of hell and declare to him, "The fury of My wrath and the heat of the battle is not diminished one iota by your cries, the curse of My holy wrath remains upon you." The only hope of turning away the fury of that wrath and of peace with God is exactly "Jesus' sake."

There is no fear of the Lord in a request that is made before the Thrice Holy God which asks these things for our sakes. To do so is to deny God His majesty. To do so is to call Him a liar and an unholy benefactor of man-kind!

You think that such an indictment is too severe?

Then return in your thoughts to the point where man first departed from the fear of the Lord! When the Holy God said that man would die in the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit, Satan deceived us into thinking that this would not be the case. And the curse and death came. All the things for which we pray for deliverance, all the woes, the pain, the death from which we seek escape in prayer did come by our works and because of our works. Ask God to do anything for our sakes and we behave as though He can easily forget His word, make Himself to be a liar in regard to what happens when we sin against Him and ask Him to bless us in an unholy way.

Are we to be blessed by God; are we to receive anything good from Him; are we to enjoy any benefit of salvation from Him it will have to be given us in a way wherein He remains the Holy God that He is.

Praying in His fear means that we come to Him acknowledging that He is a holy God Who can bless us only in a holy way.

Therefore it means coming to Him in the name of His Son Who satisfied His justice by fulfilling the law for us and by suffering the punishment of our sins.

Praying in His fear, indeed, is praying "for Jesus' sake."

Praying In His fear is coming to the Thrice Holy God through the door of the righteousness of Christ.

For then, and then only, do we by our prayers say that He is GOD.

J. A. H.

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER

Continuing with our article in the previous issue of the Standard Bearer, to the effect that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not the accepted doctrine of the Church during this particular period of the history of the Church, we concluded with the remark that we would quote from Reinhold Seeberg as he has written on Augustine's view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We quote him as follows: "The peculiarities of the separate sacraments may be briefly stated. Baptism, as the *sacramentum remissionis peccatorum*, works the forgiveness of sins, primarily the forgiveness of the guilt of original concupiscence; in this consists its chief efficacy. Augustine frequently speaks of a blotting out of sin (e. g., by baptism . . . sins are destroyed . . .). Discrimination is to be made between this forgiveness once granted and the recurring of daily sins in response to the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer. Augustine, however, made the latter dependent upon the former: "by that which is given once it comes to pass that pardon of any sins whatsoever, not only before but also afterward, is granted to believers." Prayer, alms, and good works would bring no forgiveness to the Christian if he were not baptized. But this idea was obscured by the penitential discipline and by the relatively unimportant place of the forgiveness of sins in the consciousness of Augustine. In contradistinction from Ambrose (e. g., "through the mystery of the sacred prayer they are transfigured into flesh and blood"), the symbolical character of the sacraments comes in Augustine into distinct prominence: "the Lord did not hesitate to say, 'This is my body,' when He gave the sign of His body. The blessing, or gift, of the sacrament is conceived in harmony with this. The body of the Lord is the mystic body, or the church: "hence he wishes the food and drink to be understood as the fellowship of His body and of His members, which is the holy church (or, this is, therefore, to eat that food and to drink that drink — to remain in Christ and to have Him remaining in us). Augustine can even say that the eating of the body of the Lord is "delightfully and profitably to store away in memory that his flesh was wounded and crucified for us." It is true, there are not wanting passages in which Augustine expresses himself differently and more fully, speaking of the reception of the body of Christ; but his real thought is even here not that which the words seem to convey, although he still has in mind the bestowal and reception of a real gift. Thus Augustine's theory of the Lord's Supper has more of a really religious character through his doctrines of baptism and grace,

since the personal nature of fellowship with God here finds due recognition. It is to be observed, further, that in the view of Augustine, Christ is, indeed, omnipresent according to his divine nature, but according to his human nature he is in one place in heaven. In this again we see the model after which the medieval theories were patterned. The genius of Augustine is manifest in his interpretation of the sacrifice of the mass: the sanctified congregation presents itself to God in good works, under its head, Christ. "This is the sacrifice of Christians: Many one body in Christ." Of which thing (the sacrifice of Christ) he wished the sacrifice of the church (which, since it is the body of Him, the Head, teaches that it offers itself through him) to be a daily sacrament (symbolical imitation)." — end of quote.

#### *The idea of sacrifice.*

The idea of sacrifice is still emphasized in connection with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper during this second period even as it received emphasis during the first period of the Church in the New Dispensation. However, the term does not convey the same meaning in this period which the Roman Catholic Church attaches to it. It was rather conceived of as a thankoffering, consisting in prayers, alms, etc. This appears from the quotation from Augustine which appeared in our previous article in which the eminent church father declares that the sanctified congregation presents itself to God in good works under its Head, Christ, adding: "This is the sacrifice of Christians: Many one body in Christ." Toward the end of this period, however, Gregory the Great speaks of the eucharist as a sacrifice which we offer.

Of interest is the view of the eucharist as set forth by John of Damascus. John of Damascus was the last great theologian of the Eastern Church. He, the last of the Greek Fathers and the most authoritative theologian for the whole Eastern Church, was born presumably in Damascus before 700 A. D. and in all probability died shortly before 754. Reading this lengthy quotation from John of Damascus the readers should have no difficulty recognizing a striking similarity between the view as set forth by this last Eastern theologian and the idea of the Popish Mass in the Roman Catholic Church.

#### *The Eucharist by John of Damascus.*

God, Who is good and altogether good and more than good, Who is goodness throughout, by reason of the exceeding riches of His goodness did not suffer Himself, that is His nature, only to be good, with no other to participate therein, but because of this He made first the spiritual and heavenly powers: next the visible and sensible universe: next man with his spiritual and sentient nature. All things, therefore, which he made, share in His goodness in respect of their existence. For He Himself is existence to all, since all things that are, are in Him, not only because it was He that brought them out of nothing into being, but because His energy preserves and maintains all that He made; and in

especial the living creatures. For both in that they exist and in that they enjoy life they share in His goodness. But in truth those of them that have reason have a still greater share in that, both because of what has been already said and also because of the very reason which they possess. For they are somehow more clearly akin to Him, even though He is incomparably higher than they.

Man, however, being endowed with the reason and free will, received the power of continuous union with God through his own choice, if indeed he should abide in goodness, that is in obedience to his Maker. Since, however, he transgressed the command of his Creator and became liable to death and corruption, the Creator and Maker of our race, because of His bowels of compassion, took on our likeness, becoming man in all things but without sin, and was united to our nature. For since He bestowed on us His own image and His own spirit and we did not keep them safe, He took Himself a share in our poor and weak nature, in order that He might cleanse us and make us incorruptible, and establish us once more as partakers of His divinity.

For it was fitting that not only the first-fruits of our nature should partake in the higher good but every man who wished it, and that a second birth should take place and that the nourishment should be new and suitable to the birth, and thus the measure of perfection be attained. Through His birth, that is, His incarnation, and baptism and passion and resurrection, He delivered our nature from the sin of our first parent and death and corruption, and became the first-fruits of the resurrection, and made Himself the way and image and pattern, in order that we, too, following in His footsteps, may become sons and heirs of God and joint heirs with Him. He gave us therefore, as I said, a second birth in order that, just as we who are born of Adam are in his image and are the heirs of the curse and corruption, so also being born of Him we may be in His likeness and heirs of His incorruption and blessing and glory.

Now seeing that this Adam is spiritual, it was meet that both the birth and likewise the food should be spiritual too. but since we are of a double and compound nature, it is meet that both the birth should be double and likewise the food compound. We were therefore given a birth by water and Spirit: I mean, by the holy baptism: and the food is the very bread of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who came down from heaven. For when He was about to take on Himself a voluntary death for our sakes, on the night on which He gave Himself up, He laid a new covenant on His holy disciples and apostles, and through them on all who believe on Him. In the upper chamber, then, of holy and illustrious Sion, after He had eaten the ancient Passover with His disciples and had fulfilled the ancient covenant, He washed His disciples' feet in token of the holy baptism. Then having broken bread He gave it to them saying, *Take, eat, this is My body broken for you for the remission of sins.* Likewise also He took the cup of wine and water and gave it to them

saying, *Drink ye all of it: for this is My blood, the blood of the New Testament which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the death of the Son of man and confess His resurrection until He come.*

If then the Word of God is quick and energizing, and the Lord did all that He willed; if He said, Let there be light and there was light, let there be a firmament and there was a firmament; if the heavens were established by the Word of the Lord and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth; if the heaven and the earth, water and fire and air and the whole glory of these, and, in sooth, this most noble creature, man, were perfected by the Word of the Lord; if God the Word of His own will became man and the pure and undefiled blood of the holy and evervirginal One made His flesh without the aid of seed, can He not then make the bread His body and the wine and water His blood? He said in the beginning, *Let the earth bring forth grass*, and even until this present day, when the rain comes it brings forth its proper fruits, urged on and strengthened by the divine command. God said, *This is My body*, and *This is My blood*, and *this do ye in remembrance of Me.* And so it is at His omnipotent command until He come: for it was in this sense that He said *until He come*: and the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit becomes through the invocation the rain to this new tillage. For just as God made all that He made by the energy of the Holy Spirit, so also now the energy of the Spirit performs those things that are supernatural and which it is not possible to comprehend unless by faith alone. *How shall this be*, said the holy Virgin, *seeing I know not a man?* And the archangel Gabriel answered her: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* And now you ask, how the bread became Christ's body and the wine and water Christ's blood. And I say unto thee, "The Holy Spirit is present and does those things which surpass reason and thought."

Further, bread and wine are employed: for God knoweth man's infirmity: for in general man turns away discontentedly from what is not well-worn by custom: and so with His usual indulgence He performs His supernatural works through familiar objects: and just as, in the case of baptism, since it is man's custom to wash himself with water and anoint himself with oil, He connected the grace of the Spirit with the oil and the water and made it the water of regeneration, in like manner since it is man's custom to eat and to drink water and wine, He connected His divinity with these and made them His body and blood in order that we may rise to what is supernatural through what is familiar and natural.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation from John of Damascus in our following article.

H.V.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### SECOND HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, AND THE REDEMPTION OF MEN THEREBY

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article III. Who teach: That Christ by his satisfaction merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ unto salvation is effectually appropriated; but that he merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as he might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions. For these adjudge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, do in no wise acknowledge the most important fruit or benefit thereby gained, and bring again out of hell the Pelagian error.

The translation "appropriated" will stand, provided it is understood as referring to an act of God, not of the believer, as is plain from the passive verb *applicetur*, "applied." We may also note that our English version leaves out the Latin *certo* in the first clause, which should read: "That Christ by his satisfaction certainly (assuredly, undoubtedly) merited . . ." And finally, the word "obedience" is hardly an accurate rendering of *praestatio*, "fulfilment" (Dutch: volbrenging.)

As the fathers develop step by step the line of the Arminian error which they reject, the fearful consequences of this error are with increasing clarity exposed. The reader will understand that these articles of the Rejection are not unrelated. Each of the errors considered thus far proceeds out of that immediately preceding it. The Arminians begin by denying that the death of Christ is the fulfillment of a certain and definite decree to save any. Then they teach that Christ by His death merely acquired for the Father the right to establish any kind of covenant He might wish to establish. And in this third article it becomes still plainer in which direction the Arminian wants to go. The covenant which God wants to establish is not one of grace, but of works. Christ merited for no one either salvation or faith, but only the authority and will to prescribe new conditions (not the old ones of complete obedience to the law, but new ones of faith and obedience; but conditions nevertheless). And the fulfillment of these conditions (note here the implied definition of a condition) is dependent on the free will of man. Hence, it is a covenant of conditions, or, a covenant of works. And all this the fathers reject.

Let us enter a little more in detail into this aspect of the Arminian error. We may do this by way of a comparison between the Reformed and the Arminian positions.

1. Reformed truth maintains that Christ with certainty merited salvation for all those whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world. Arminianism teaches that Christ merited salvation for no one.

2. Reformed truth maintains that by His satisfaction Christ also merited faith for all the elect, and for them only, so that the elect might through faith become partakers of the benefits of salvation obtained by the death of Christ. Arminianism teaches that Christ merited faith for no one.

3. Reformed truth maintains, consequently, that Christ also confers faith and salvation upon all the elect, and upon them only. Arminianism necessarily denies this also, since Christ has merited neither faith nor salvation for anyone.

This Reformed line of truth, opposed by the Arminian lie, is plainly stated in Article 8 of the Second Head of Doctrine.

But what is the heart of this Arminian error? The Arminian view concentrates completely around man and his "free will." In order to maintain his view that everything depends upon man, rather than God, and upon man's free will, which the Arminian conceives of as naturally good and able to incline itself toward the good, — in order to maintain this, the Arminian is forced to reject the line of the truth, which maintains that Christ through His perfect satisfaction of divine justice, and because His death was the perfect satisfaction of God's justice with respect to our sin, obtained, actually purchased, for all the elect all the blessings of salvation, including the faith whereby these blessings are actually applied to us. He must reject this line because it would mean that the elect inevitably come into possession of those blessings, and that too, not through any merit or work of their own, but solely through the merit of Christ and the work of divine grace.

To be sure, the Arminian still speaks of grace, of the gracious redemption of Christ, of the operation of the grace of Christ. That is why it is always necessary to ask carefully what he means. And then it becomes evident always and again that everything depends upon man, and that the Remonstrant does not mean grace at all, but works.

That is exactly the case in this article.

What did Christ merit, according to the Arminian? By His death Christ made it possible for the Father to deal with men again in regard to salvation. Notice: Christ made something possible for the Father. Did He even so much as make it possible for the Father to give us salvation? Not at all; He made it possible to have dealings with us in regard to salvation. But further, what was the nature of that so-called authority and perfect will to deal again with man, which Christ merited for the Father? According to the Arminian conception, God at one time dealt with man, and had laid down the condition of perfect obedience to the law as the prerequisite of eternal life. However, man had of his

own free will rejected that divine dealing, had failed to meet that prerequisite. Hence, God could no more have dealings with man. Now Christ makes it possible for God to deal anew with man. God may now prescribe new conditions. He is no more bound to prescribe the condition of complete obedience to the law, but may also prescribe other, less stringent conditions. He may prescribe new conditions, *as He might desire*. This is the celebrated Arminian conception of salvation. This is what the Arminian means when he mouths the words "salvation" and "grace." Is there any salvation in the conception whatsoever? Does the view give even a hint of salvation? Not at all. For notice that the Arminian view once again implies that the fulfillment of these conditions depends on the free will of man. God is absolutely helpless to supply anyone with eternal life. If a man would fulfill the new conditions, he would receive eternal life and be saved. But that is entirely up to man. The question whether any man will actually come into possession of eternal life and salvation is not in God's power at all. God can only prescribe the conditions. Man must decide. Hence, it may be that all men will fulfill the conditions; but it may also be that no man will fulfill the conditions. It may be, therefore, that all men obtain eternal life; it may also be that no man obtains life eternal.

Small wonder it is, in the light of the above, that the fathers are very severe in their condemnation of this view.

In the first place, they charge the Arminians with judging too contemptuously of the death of Christ. This is the charge which the Arminians tried to lay at the door of the fathers. They said that the Reformed view implied a defect in the sacrifice of Christ because *all men* were not saved by the death of Christ. But how foolishly wicked is that charge of the Arminians when one considers their own view of Christ's death. According to their view, it might have happened that no one would be saved by that death, and that Christ would actually have died in vain. But notice that this really means that Christ *did* truly die in vain. For if it could happen that all were saved or that none were saved, then in very fact the power to save is not in that death of Christ at all; it resides somewhere else. What a defective sacrifice Christ made, then, according to this view!

In the second place, they charge the Arminians with denying the primary benefit of that death of Christ. Of course, the Arminians deny principally all the benefits of the death of Christ. But here the fathers speak of the *primary* benefit or fruit. What is that benefit? Nothing less than salvation itself. The Arminians also deny that Christ merited the gift of faith for anyone. But they deny first of all that Christ ever merited salvation for any. And then it is of no use to talk about the other benefits. And notice that this too is actually the case with the Arminian view. The Arminian does not simply teach that Christ merited salvation, and that it is up to man to accept the salvation which Christ

merited. He even denies that Christ really merited salvation for anyone.

And finally, the fathers charge the Arminians with recalling out of hell the Pelagian error. The Arminian error was not a new one. It was essentially but a repetition of the error of Pelagius, against whom the church father Augustine fought centuries earlier. It was Pelagius already who promulgated and systematized the error of free willism and who, denying the depravity of man's nature, and denying original sin, taught that by virtue of his inherently good will man was able to accomplish his own salvation. It is true, Arminianism presented that error in a new and more deceiving garb; but it was the same error.

Notice that the fathers call it *error*. This we also must do. It is not the truth. It is not an "Arminian brand" of the truth, in competition with a "Reformed brand" of the truth. It is not thus, that the Arminians "emphasize one side" of the truth, while the Reformed "emphasize another aspect" of the truth. It is not true that Arminianism stresses human responsibility, while Reformed doctrine stresses divine sovereignty. This is the talk of modern day "tolerance." Our fathers did not consider the different brands of doctrine as so many presentations of the truth, much as the different brands of soap and detergents are all good cleansing agents, each having its special quality. For them there was but one truth, the truth of our Reformed confession, the truth of Scripture. All else, whether taught by Arminius or Pelagius, was error, the lie. And we should emulate the fathers of Dordt in this attitude.

In this light it is not difficult to see that the fathers consign that Arminian error to hell. Certainly, error is not from heaven, from God, from Christ! Christ is the truth! But the devil is a liar from the beginning, and the father of the lie. And it is through the gates of hell that the devil and his legions proceed to attack the church. And their main weapon is the lie. And that lie always essentially exalts man, and that too, sinful man, rather than the living God. Characteristically hellish, therefore, is the Arminian-Pelagian error. And if only in our day Reformed people would dare to draw a clear line between truth and error, and would bear in mind that the error is not heavenly, but hellish in origin, the churches would be much more fearful of all that smacks of Arminianism, would avoid it, and would be much more insistent on being consistently Reformed.

H.C.H.

### Announcement

The Free Christian School Society at Edgerton, Minn., is in need of a Principal to teach the four upper grades, 5, 6, 7, and 8, for the next school term.

Please send applications to Board of Free Chr. School Society, Edgerton, Minn., c/o H. Miersma, Sec'y, R.R. 1, Box 116.



## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Labors of the Deacons

"The office peculiar to the deacons is diligently to collect alms (aalmoezen) and other contributions of charity (andere armengoederen), and after mutual counsel, faithfully and diligently to distribute the same to the poor as their needs may require it; to visit and comfort the distressed and to exercise care that the alms are not misused; of which they shall render an account in consistory, and also (if anyone desires to be present) to the congregation, at such a time as the consistory may see fit." (Art. 25, Church Order)

"We believe . . . that there must be deacons . . . that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted according to their necessities." (Belgic Confession, Art. 30)

"The deacon's office is, namely, that they in the first place collect and preserve with the greatest fidelity and diligence, the alms and goods which are given to the poor: yea, to do their utmost endeavors, that many good means be procured for the relief of the poor.

"The second part of their office consists in distribution, wherein are not only required discretion and prudence to bestow the alms only on objects of charity, but also cheerfulness and simplicity to assist the poor with compassion and hearty affection; as the apostle requires, Romans, chapter 12; and II Corinthians, chapter 9. For which end it is very beneficial, that they do not only administer relief to the poor and indigent with external gifts, but also with comfortable words from Scripture." (Form of Ordination of Elders and Deacons)

In the above quotations the task peculiar to the deacons is rather completely defined. Beautiful but also difficult are the labors of these ministers of mercy. Beautiful they are because they are the labors of Christ, the perfect and heavenly High-priest and they are difficult labors because they are to be performed by sinful men in the midst of a sinful people. We may distinguish this work into four parts:

#### a. *Collecting Alms and Gifts of Charity*

If the task of collecting alms consisted merely in passing the offering plate during the services of Divine worship, this phase of the deacon's labor would be relatively simple. In the churches today this has become more or less the established custom so that the major percentage of gifts for the poor are received in this manner. Formerly a large table was placed in the church where-upon the various gifts for the poor were placed. Later, following the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574, the custom changed. The deacons stood by the door of the church and received the gifts for the poor as the people departed after the service. Still later this was again changed since as Voetius expressed it — no one could as conveniently pass it by and the offerings brought in

more — and the contributions for the poor were taken during the services. Further, it was felt that this was more proper since alms-giving is not something to be appended but rather belongs to the service. This is obviously also the position of our Heidelberg Catechism which speaks of the proper observance of the Sabbath as consisting not only in "diligently frequenting the church of God to hear His Word, to use the sacraments, and publicly to call upon the Lord," but also, "to contribute to the poor as becomes a christian."

Offerings for the poor are to be distinguished from the offerings received for the regular expenses and needs of the church. What is contributed for the "budget" is not the same as contributions for the poor. The latter are gifts of love and need not necessarily be in the form of money. Food and clothing are as much needed by the poor as money and oft times more so. Occasionally legacies of real estate and other possessions are properly left to the deaconate to be disbursed to the poor. For this reason such gifts to charity are not necessarily given on Sunday or limited to offerings received in the services.

The task of the deacons is to *diligently* collect these various contributions. Apparently this is not so difficult in times when there is little need for the poor and when there are great surpluses of goods as in our times. Expenditures are at a minimum and through periodic collections the balances in the Charity Fund reveal continuous increases. Such a situation, however, does not necessarily reflect diligence on the part of the deacons. It may be merely due to prosperous economic conditions and the result of many routine offerings where very little, if any, is disbursed. It may even be the lack of *diligent distribution* that creates these surpluses. The congregation may simply in routine manner give into a fund and in some instances part of the offering may even be withheld since there is already a surplus and no immediate need. Such collecting, however, is not what is here meant.

To diligently collect alms means that the deacons must see to it that only legitimate means are used through which the needs of the poor are provided. Alms are gifts of love and, therefore, are not to be gathered through various fund-raising schemes such as bazaars, suppers, auctions, etc. Nor should the Deaconate appeal to the government for aid to assist its poor. No doubt it is true that as tax-payers the people of God are legally entitled to government relief but this cannot be construed as a work of mercy. Better it is that God's people learn to discard their individualism and cease to "look every man on his own things" so that the bond of unity in Christ may be more consciously felt and there may be more readiness to "bear one another's burdens." The deacons are to use diligence as far as possible so that what is received for the poor is indeed the gifts of love and if these are insufficient to meet the needs of the poor an important second step in this matter of diligence must be taken.

That second step is to bring before the consciousness of the church the need and nature of gifts of charity. It has been suggested that the deacons, too, engage in a work similar to the work of family visiting performed by the elders. This would not be improper if kept within its rightful limitations. There is much room for instruction in the spiritual art of giving. Another alternative is that the deacons report their deficits to the consistory and attention be given to these things in the ministry of the Word. It is important that we understand that our gifts to aid the poor and distressed of God's people ought to assume the nature of thankofferings. Such is the underlying idea of II Corinthians 8 and 9. It is only out of gratitude to God for the great gift of His love, Christ Jesus, and in Him the fulness of salvation that we can properly be disposed to assist those that are afflicted and in need. If this were more deeply understood there would be no need for the poor to suffer. The world, as expected, is moved by humanitarian motives in helping its distressed. Such giving is often abundant but it is without mercy. The church is moved by christian love and gratitude in her giving and these are far more excellent. Let the deacons give diligence that those from whom they receive the gifts of charity understand this for then it will also be reflected in the giving.

#### b. *Distribution of Charity*

It is here that the deacons encounter one of the most serious difficulties of their task. They are to be faithful and diligent in this work of distribution. On the one hand this means that they are to see to it that the gifts of charity are not misused and given where there is no real need. An able bodied man who has opportunity to work and provide bread for his family but who manifests himself as a sluggard ought not to be fed by the deacons. Yet, his wife and little children, who suffer in consequence of his evil laziness, ought not to be neglected. A man who is able to purchase a new automobile each year or two, furnish his house with the latest in luxury and entertainment but who neglects to pay his christian school tuition is no object of charity. That man needs sound instruction in the Word, abundant grace of the Spirit and not more money. So the deacons must be diligent for they, too, must give account of their distribution. On the other hand, they do not have to wait to bestow help until there are circumstances of dire want and deep suffering. Aid in smaller quantities in time may often prevent much greater needs later. But the difficulty for the deacons lies in the fact that often those who really have need are the most reluctant to request it while those who are not in the least entitled to charity are very bold to demand it. Such sinfulness, sad to say, is often found in the church and it is this factor that makes this labor so difficult and frequently occasions considerable unjust criticism. If only greed, selfishness and pride could be rooted from the human nature, the work of christian mercy would assume an altogether different character and be met with greater appreciation. But as long

as these things exist, it will be necessary and very important that the deacons use great diligence.

As it is the deacons are often unjustly criticised when they carry out the necessary investigation to rightly execute their work. Certainly they must know somewhat of the circumstances before they can properly apportion the gifts entrusted to their care. Of course, they must confine such investigation to its proper limitations and it must always be done in the spirit of Christ as characterized by humility and love. Even then, however, there are always people who expect hand-outs without disclosing any information concerning their circumstances and when they are requested to honestly present their needs they become bitter and resentful and express the same toward the ministers of mercy who have come to help them. Such attitudes are not reflections of grace but spring either from sinful pride or are an attempt to hide the truth concerning their real circumstances. As long as such things exist the task of the deacon will not be an easy one. He, too, will sow the seeds of mercy in tears.

Another thing that virtually makes much of this work of christian mercy obsolete in our day is the economic changes of our advanced age coupled with the proud independence of man and his refusal to recognize the church as the only proper administrator of mercy. In times past when there were seasons of unemployment, sickness, death, etc. in a family that created hardship and want or when such things as fires, earthquakes, floods, pestilences, drought, tornadoes, etc. occurred, the deacons would stand ready to aid and comfort the distressed and the latter felt keenly the need of their coming. This, in many instances, is no longer the case. Today unemployment compensation, insurances of countless sorts, social securities, etc. tend to replace the deaconate. What formerly would be regarded as a disaster is now almost regarded as a blessing in disguise since the victim is able to reap more than he has lost. To the flesh the mercies(??) of the world prove to be more abundant than the real mercies of Christ. The latter, reflected in the deaconate, are not desired but the former are considered indispensable. The poor widows in Acts 6 could not be directed to some government agency and their deceased husbands left them no nest-egg in insurance benefits. Their need necessitated the deaconate but today one wonders whether it is still "necessary to serve tables" or whether there are still "tables left to serve."

(D.V. to be continued)

G.V.D.B.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Eunice Society of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., mourns the loss of one of its members,

MISS JENNIE KUIPER

who went to her Eternal Rest April 10.

We express our sympathy to the family.

Hebrews 4 vs. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Mrs. R. H. Meyer, President  
Mrs. George Spruyt, Secretary

## ALL AROUND US

### *The Court and the Church Property.*

In the last issue of the *Standard Bearer* we began a quotation of an article written by the Rev. J. Howerzyl in the *Reformed Guardian* on the subject noted above. We closed our article with a rather lengthy quotation on which we wish to make some reflections now. The reader may refer to the last issue for this quotation.

Rev. Howerzyl tells his readers that several court trials are pending, one of which has to do with the properties of the Second Prot. Ref. Church now held by the Blankespoor group. I am going to pass this part of the quotation up for the time being because in a later *Reformed Guardian* (May 10, 1956) the Rev. Blankespoor also writes about this case. The next time, the Lord willing, I am going to write about that article and Rev. Howerzyl's article will be answered at the same time.

He also writes about the case at Edgerton where a decision is being appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court. Concerning this case the Rev. Howerzyl further writes: "I know that compromise and arbitration attempts have been met with flat refusal in the past. We need only cite the unwillingness shown in the Edgerton case, where our people leaned over backward, offering the Veldman group a property worth probably \$50,000.00 for some \$12,000.00 if they preferred, or offering to pay them some \$12,000 if they would relinquish the claim—they to take the choice. This, of course, was turned down."

I have it on good authority that that "leaning over backward" was not as far backward as the Rev. Howerzyl would have his readers think. It does not make for much strain on one's back when he tries to make an out-of-court settlement for properties that rightly belong to somebody else. I am told that the Articles of Incorporation in Edgerton speak in clear language whose shall be the property, and a good conscience would demand that these articles be enforced. Besides, a good conscience would demand that not only Howerzyl but the De Boer group acknowledge several things: how by stealth and trickery they confiscated the properties; how, while they were fighting for the name "Protestant Reformed" in a worldly court, members of their following expressed open disdain of this name. We are told that even Rev. De Boer at one time said that he was seriously considering joining another church. And how about the Protestant Reformed School in Edgerton? When that project was abandoned by the De Boer group and their children sent to a Christian Reformed School, good conscience would dictate that they admit that they were not Protestant Reformed and do not intend to be. And then talk about "leaning over backward," to make a fair settlement for the property—that's a scream!

Concerning what Howerzyl writes respecting the mis-

sives sent to Rev. A. Cammenga and Mr. Fred LaGrange I cannot affirm or deny because I do not know the particulars. But if you want to talk about a "good conscience" Rev. Howerzyl, my question to you is: how can one who is no longer a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches and has become a schismatic minister of a schismatic group of people with good conscience continue to live for nothing in a missionary home that belongs not to his people nor to him? Who ever heard of a Protestant Reformed minister, pastor of a Protestant Reformed Church, living in a house that belongs to a stranger while he offers not to pay one cent of rent and the owner repeatedly asks him to move out? Does Rev. Cammenga believe that the group he represents suddenly became the owners of the house he lives in simply because he happened to be living there when he became schismatic? That is so ridiculous that there are no words to describe it. And then you get hot and bothered when the Rev. Cammenga gets a letter commanding him to get out? Please don't talk about a good conscience any more.

Finally, you are correct when you tell your readers that Redlands and Hull will also be in court in the near future. All because you and your group do not have a good conscience. All because you and your group force this litigation. You write as though the group initiating all these law suits finds a certain delight in hanging out a dirty washing on the line, "the dirty linen of an ecclesiastical family quarrel." This is the farthest from the truth. The truth is that you and your group have lost your conscience of doing what is right. You force all these litigations by your illegal seizure of properties that rightly belong to others. And when it is a question of what is right or wrong, you must not talk about "compromise" as you do in the remainder of your article.

"Personally we would still suggest a compromise of some kind in all these matters. And we ask in all sincerity, 'Would not a compromise of some kind on the synodical and the classical and the local level be possible even at this late date?'"

"I know that compromise and arbitration attempts have been met with flat refusal in the past . . . So we know also that in the case of Hull a compromise offer for out-of-court settlement was also offered and refused. In view of these discouragements it would perhaps seem futile and foolish to attempt something like this again.

"Yet we say: Could not some compromise settlement be offered and agreed upon which would take into consideration name, archives, impounded money and property both east and west?"

"Perhaps this suggestion of a compromise now would be hardly fair to our people in Fuller Avenue, ousted from their property. But it seems to me that this exactly gives the possibility of a compromise settlement more power at the present time. By this I mean that development which the decision of the Michigan Courts has forced upon the individual churches in the east if they are to continue their

defense of their properties. That is an appeal to the decision of the broadest gathering: Synod. Now it must be evident that, just as in this case, no legal body is really competent to judge the question and decide which of our divided gatherings was the legal continuation of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. But in view of the fact that in the Fuller Avenue case the Hoeksema group has won a property valued probably at some half a million dollars, besides some \$30,000.00 in cash, a property which is probably more valuable than all the rest of the church property together—the possibility of a compromise settlement might look more attractive. For if the entire matter is once again thrown into court and a defense is made of our Synod being the legal continuing Synod—then even the victory in the Fuller Avenue case would be jeopardized for the Hoeksema group. So whether or not these items listed here are correct—why not try. Because far more important in the entire matter is, of course, the fact that this is the way of the Church and the way of Christ.

"Personally, win or lose, I have been sick in my soul and tired of church matters in the worldly courts from before the time they have begun. Others may enjoy parading these things before the worldly courts, may enjoy the mental gymnastics of sparring with lawyers, but I cannot. If necessary I can do this but I detest the whole business. These matters in court are not edifying and, win or lose, they do not help neither serve the cause of Christ. To hang out dirty washing on the line, the dirty linen of an ecclesiastical family quarrel, causes only the devil and the world to rejoice.

"So we say again, would not a compromise settlement of some kind, on the synodical and the classical but also on a local level be possible even at this late date. Personally we stand open to discuss and enter into such a discussion always.

"And to underscore the whole matter, in the final analysis property in the church of Christ is of lesser significance. We would rather have a free conscience than all the property of the churches. We must at all costs avoid the obtaining of property while murdering our consciences to do so."

When I read this I was reminded of a conversation one of our ministers had recently with an individual of one of the schismatic groups whom he met in a grocery store. The man said to the minister, "So, here we are buying groceries together in the same store, but we cannot go to the same church together, and worse yet, now we will have to go to court together." The minister said, "You do not like to go to court?" "Oh, no!" said the man, "that's all wrong, that's all wrong!" "Oh, said the minister, "so that's all wrong to go to court, eh?" "Oh, yes, yes!" said the man, "that's all wrong, we should never do that." "Well then," said the minister, "if it's wrong to go to court, you must never go there, man. But you want us to go there? You want us to do what you think is wrong? I'll tell you what you must do then that will keep us both out of court. All you have

to do is see to it that we get our properties back. It's as simple as that!" The man became so flustered with anger that he could not remember immediately where he had parked his car.

So I would say to Rev. Howerzyl and all who are of like mind with him, you must never do anything against your conscience. And if your conscience bothers you so much that you have to go into court to fight for the properties, the simple way out is to give the properties back to us to whom they rightfully belong.

But a compromise deal is as silly as you can make it. Suppose, Rev. Howerzyl, that some evening when you are sitting in your home with your wife and children that a man comes walking into the room where you are sitting and orders you to get out of the house. He informs you that from now on he is going to take over. You will have nothing to say about it. Don't you think that you would pick up the nearest chair and hit him over the head if you could? I think you would. You would defend your property to the very last. But suppose that you protested against his threats, and after a while the man sits down and says to you, "well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Let's compromise. You take half and I'll take half." Wouldn't you still take up the chair and hit him on the head? I think you would.

What you people have done to us amounts to the same thing. First, you tell us to get off from our properties. And this we had to do by force. You locked us out. And now when we try to get the law to open the locks and let us in again you come with this silly compromise thing and say to us, "Let's settle out-of-court. Let's divide fifty-fifty." Isn't that the most ridiculous thing you ever heard of? And then talk about your conscience bothering you. I should think it would. But I would like to help you have a good conscience. So I suggest to you that you tell your people all along the line to give us back our properties, and then let each go his own way. If you don't want to do that, I cannot believe that you want a good conscience. Then there is only one alternative for us, and that is to hang up your dirty wash so that all the world may see it.

M.S.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Steve Broekhuis in the death of her Mother

MRS. MATTIE FEIKEMA

on May 2, 1956.

May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved and may we at all times put our trust in Him.

Rev. H. Veldman, President  
Mrs. J. Brummel, Secretary