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MEDITATION

The Power of God

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16.

This verse is a reason for that which Paul has said in the 15th verse, namely, that he was ready to come and preach the Gospel in Rome also.

The question confronts us: why did Paul say that he is not ashamed to preach the Gospel in Rome also?

The answer is twofold.

First, the whole world was laughing at the Gospel story. The Greeks call the Gospel folly. Imagine: salvation by means of a worm, crawling on that awful cross. The Romans also mock: they are the strong; they subdued the whole world by force of men and arms. Moreover, they had the legal acumen. They were on top. Who needs salvation, and then by Him who like a lamb gave Himself over to their Pilate?

But Paul will show that both the Greek and the Roman are too filthy to mention, and so he did not need to be ashamed in their presence. Their filth is so great that it can hardly be told.

And the second, the positive reason is that the Gospel is beauty of God personified. Rather than to be ashamed, he will boast in that Gospel of God all the day long.

The Gospel is beauty and power, and both of God in Christ.

It is as beautiful as God is, and its power is as great as the resurrection from the dead.

Let us listen to him.

* * * *

Although the text speaks of the Gospel of Christ, you may also call it the Gospel of God, both because that name

is given it in Holy Scripture, and also because Christ is the manifestation of God Himself: He is the Face of the Father and came to declare Him.

The Gospel is the Gospel of God.

But not in the narrow sense of the word.

Some make it so small and so narrow as to include only the Sermon on the Mount. Especially the modern Church, which is fast becoming the Antichrist.

Others make the Gospel of God the words of Jesus, and no more.

Oh no, but the Gospel of God in its broadest sense includes the whole of God's special revelation: the Bible. Here we have another ground for the stand that the Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of God. The Bible is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and therefore we call that Book the Word of God, which is one of the names of Jesus.

Neither is the Gospel of God an expression of the manifestation of God's love for everyone, an offer that is made by God of His well-meaning will to save whomever comes under the proclamation of this Gospel.

Neither is it a conditional promise to everyone that is born under the dispensation of the covenant of grace.

No, the Gospel is not a Gospel on a thumbnail, and it is not for everyone that hears this Gospel outwardly, externally.

No, but the Gospel in the Biblical sense of the word is the glad tidings concerning the promise.

And that promise was made by God in paradise to our first parents, and He repeated that promise through the ages, and in that process of repeating it became richer and richer and richer.

Until Christ, the Son of God appeared in the fulness of time. And that appearance is the Gospel of God.

* * * *

Why is it called the Gospel?

Well, Gospel means glad tidings. And there are no tidings which can approach these tidings.

And here is the gladness of these tidings: they tell of a righteousness of God which shall clothe all the children of God.

This righteousness of God is the most beautiful thing for poor sinners, guilty and undone in themselves, and on the way to hell.

Beautiful, because it includes: (1) forgiveness of sins; (2) adoption unto children; (3) peace with God; and (4) the right to eternal life in the new world that is coming.

You could write a book about each of these four bounties.

And all these bounties are promised, and partially given now already, on the basis of the coming, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

Are they not glad tidings?

I am persuaded that even we who have these great and wonderful promises do not appreciate them as we should. If we saw them and appreciated them as they really are, and then on the background of eternal damnation and eternal death, we would leap for joy in the praise of God. Go and read Habakkuk 3:17, 18. And especially this last verse on the background of verse 17. In the midst of absolute crop failures, so that there is nothing left to live from, he will leap for joy in the God of his salvation.

He saw the great and wonderful Gospel.

Imagine: you die and know that when you arrive at the door of heaven, God will cry out and say: Welcome, my good and faithful servant! Come in, and enjoy My presence unto all eternity!

Put it plainly and simply: you need not go to hell! And, positively, you may go to heaven and be thrilled unto endless eternity with the image of God!

Oh, the glad tidings of the Gospel!

Should we be ever ashamed of it?

* * * *

And that Gospel of God in Christ is the power of God. That is the deathblow to all pelagianism.

They teach that man, natural man has some power left, so that with the help of God they can work out their own salvation.

The deathblow to *all* pelagianism, also the so-called half-, quarter-, or eighth-pelagians. All these shades agree that there is *some* power left in natural man unto good. And they are all wrong. This text is very plain, and says that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God. So man is not in it at all.

I think that it is a sign of the times that almost the whole Church of Christ joins in this erroneous chorus of the power of man. Most of them say it openly, others by implication.

No, but the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Not as we have it in the Bible. The Bible as such has no power at all. It is enough to take away all excuses from them that read and heard. But without the Holy Spirit, the Bible has no power to save. You can hear the whole Word of God preached by the best and most devoted and true preacher, but if you have not the grace of the Holy Spirit of Christ with that Word, it will not save you at all.

The Gospel of Christ is the power of God when God Himself speak in the depth of your heart, through the Word that is preached to you or when you and while you read, or sometimes, after you have heard or read, and applied by His Spirit.

Then the Gospel is almighty in power and beauty, and it accomplishes all which God has planned in His eternal counsel unto salvation of the elect.

And the firstfruit of this almighty power of God is regeneration, the new birth from heaven. It is equal to the power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

And that power of God continues to work in the elect, until with body and soul they arrive in the renewed world, the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell.

But it is only and exclusively the power of God.

* * * *

And that Gospel, that almighty power of God, is unto salvation.

Do you notice, dear reader, that it is all of God?

It is the Gospel of God in Christ.

It is the power of God.

And it is the salvation of God.

Salvation!

What indescribable charm there is in that word!

Negatively, it is the glad tidings of God, the almighty power of God which rescues us from the greatest evil there is.

And that evil is sin, guilt and death, eternal death.

Hence, power is needed, almighty power of God to save from eternal death, damnation and the curse.

And God wrought this salvation through Jesus Christ. And the process of that salvation culminated in the resurrection from the dead. Christ went the dark way of eternal death, and was raised by God to life eternal of the covenant fellowship of the Triune God.

And so our death, damnation and the curse are gone forever. We are saved: hallelujah!

But that is only the negative side. And if that was beautiful, what shall we say of positive salvation?

It is life eternal, and that is the knowledge of God. And this is not a mere intellectual knowledge, but it is a knowledge that is akin to the love of God. It is the communion with Him who gave us the new birth. Eternally we will stand before His face, and we will be satisfied with His image. And that means that all the communicable virtues of God shall be given to us everlastingly. God shall be all and in all.

Moreover, we shall have fellowship with the whole church of Christ in utmost perfection. You will be able to trust all of them, and will never be put to shame. There is no deceit there. Every child of God shall take his place there and shall be as an individual voice in the great songfest forever. And all to the praises of Him who saved us.

Also, we shall have the great multitude of angels for our ministers. They shall serve us so that we may the better serve God. I do not know in what way these angels will serve us. They do even now, but we do not know the character and scope of such loving service. But they do. Note how Peter, when he was in prison, was helped by an angel. They are very willing to serve those who shall inherit salvation. They rejoice over the conversion of one saint, even now.

That salvation is to everyone that believeth. And do not forget, this faith is the gift of God so that no flesh may boast in His presence. It is all of God.

First the Jew and then the Greek.

We know that salvation is of the Jews.

But after the breaking down of the wall of partition this salvation came to the Greek also. And this Greek is the representative of all the elect out of the nations of the world.

Presently this great host shall sing their song of praise.

John heard the pre-audition.

I love those ever recurring hallelujah's!

G. Vos.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, October 3, 1956, in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Consistories and appointed delegates will consider this an official notice.

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

"We cannot, however, show and approve ourselves thankful to God, except we are truly converted: for whatsoever is done by unconverted, is done without faith, and is, therefore, sin and abomination in the sight of God."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 464

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EDITORIALS

Election and Reprobation

When we consider Berkouwer's view of reprobation, we are not surprised that he does not agree with me on the same subject. In his criticism of my view, he refers only to my lecture, "The place of reprobation in the preaching of the gospel." Unless he wilfully distorts the meaning of this lecture he completely fails to understand it. He presents the matter as if I place reprobation on the same line with election "symmetrically." Then, too, he attributes to me a sort of a "natural predestination-theology." He seems to see the light for a moment, for he writes: "For a moment it appears as if the symmetry is, after all, broken through, when we hear Reformed sounds: election and reprobation do not stand on the same line next to each other, and reprobation is subordinate to election. God's love remains chief." But immediately he refuses this light for he writes: "But this light cannot comfort us here anymore because the transparency of election and reprobation precedes this comfort as a natural predestination-theology, which is only later brought into connection with Jesus Christ." p. 247.

It is not my purpose to defend my conception of reprobation as set forth in this lecture. Anyone who reads it may know that Berkouwer misrepresents me whether willfully or ignorantly. The keynote of this entire lecture is exactly that reprobation does not stand on the same line with but is subordinate to election. Besides, in the Netherlands it was well received at the time when it was published. But the trouble is with Berkouwer himself. He does not have much sympathy with the Reformed doctrine of reprobation as we have already shown and as we hope to prove again.

This becomes evident when we read about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and the hardening of whomever God wills to harden. Berkouwer writes the following in connection with Romans 9:

"After Paul had called attention to the free mercy and lovingkindness of God he proceeds to treat the doings of God in respect to Pharaoh. Especially in this connection it has frequently been thought that here we come in the neighborhood of the symmetry (election and reprobation on the same line, H.H.) because not only mercy but also hardening is mentioned. 'For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' Paul knows indeed that Genesis (must be Exodus, H.H.) tells us that Pharaoh hardens *himself*, and he does not mean to deny this. He does not eliminate his activity, his voluntary activity, but he knows that Pharaoh in this activity does not constitute an independent power over against God but that he is in God's hand, and that God, right through and in

Pharaoh's activity realizes His counsel and goes His way to the very end in the salvation of His people."

Let us stop here a moment.

There is in these words of Berkouwer already a tendency to deny reprobation as will become still more evident in what follows. Why does Berkouwer introduce the element that Pharaoh hardens himself? The apostle Paul in Rom. 9 does not even remotely refer to this. He simply speaks of the fact God hardens whom He will, and Pharaoh is an example of this. No doubt the apostle knows that Exodus also speaks of the fact that Pharaoh hardens himself. But he, no doubt, equally well knows that Exodus also speaks of the fact that God hardens him, and that even before it ever mentions the fact that he hardens himself. Berkouwer, evidently does not know this or, at least, he leaves the impression that he does not know this for he simply speaks of the fact that, according to Exodus, Pharaoh hardens himself. But this is not true and this is surely not what the apostle Paul intends to emphasize according to the whole context. On the contrary he means to emphasize that God sovereignly hardens whom He will. This is the teaching of the apostle and this is also the teaching of Exodus. For even before Moses returned to Egypt and approached Pharaoh, the Lord had said unto him: "When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go." This is the Scripture in Exodus. To this the apostle refers. Why, then, does Berkouwer distort this portion of Scripture and make Paul say something quite different? My answer is: because he does not like reprobation.

The just quoted text may be found in Ex. 4:21. Nor is this the only passage that speaks of the Lord's hardening the heart of Pharaoh. Cf. also Ex. 7:3, 13; or the passive "and Pharaoh's heart was hardened." Ex. 7:22; 8:19; 9:7; again the active form: "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart," 9:12; and again the passive, Ex. 9:35. In Ex. 10:1 we read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him." And again: "But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart," Ex. 10:20, 27:11:10. From all these passages it is very evident that, indeed, Pharaoh also hardened his own heart, but that, nevertheless, the Lord was first, and that the deepest and ultimate cause of Pharaoh hardening his heart was that the Lord hardened his heart. Why, then, does Berkouwer ignore all this and write as if "Genesis (must be Exodus, H.H.) tells us that Pharaoh hardens his own heart?" Again I say: Because he does not like reprobation.

But let me now continue the quotation. Berkouwer writes:

"Paul here follows the Septuagint (eksegeira) while in Genesis (must be Exodus, H.H.) we only read that God allowed Pharaoh to continue to exist. Paul, as it were, trans-

poses this allowing to continue to live in a putting into office, an appearing. More strongly still than in Genesis (must be Exodus, H.H.) the all overpowering, initiating act of God is thus denoted in the course of the history of salvation. It is an acting that does not destroy the voluntary activity of man, but which embraces all and that is thus ahead of man's acts because He acts in them—in the self-hardening of Pharaoh—and thus proceeds triumphantly and purposefully. It is evident that Paul does not here suddenly call attention to the individual lot of Pharaoh, but shows him his place in the history of salvation, and one may not,—as does Calvin—draw conclusions here concerning the 'example' of hardening out of an eternal counsel and concerning the reprobation of the ungodly. Calvin beholds in Pharaoh an example which God meant to give. 'The first thus Calvin, H.H.) is the predestination unto corruption, which is being brought back to God's counsel, which is, indeed, righteous, but also hidden.' p. 252, 3.

Now as to Berkouwer's interpretation of the term "I have raised thee up," I cannot agree with him. The Hebrew word used is *amad* which means to stand. In the form in which this verb is used in Ex. 9:16 (the hiphil) it signifies, therefore, *to cause to stand* or to raise up. As far as the Greek verb used by Paul in Rom. 9:17 is concerned, some interpreters give it the meaning: "I have raised thee up as king." But also with this I cannot agree for, in the first place, the words immediately following are: "For to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." And, in the second place, vs. 18: "and whom he will he hardens" is, evidently to be understood as a sort of a commentary on this raising up of Pharaoh. For these reasons the text, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, means "for this purpose I have hardened thee against me that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

But again, Berkouwer attempts to get away from reprobation. He cannot agree with Calvin that in Pharaoh the apostle quotes an example of hardening according to the eternal decree of Reprobation. Yet, this is in harmony with the entire context: the children of the flesh and the children of the promise, Jacob and Esau, God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens. Especially this last verse shows clearly that Paul does not even hesitate to draw a parallel between election and reprobation. God has mercy on whom he will have mercy: i.e., according to his eternal counsel of election. But also: whom he will he hardeneth, according to his eternal counsel of reprobation. And of the latter Pharaoh is an example.

Berkouwer may not like the true Scriptural doctrine of reprobation, but I would challenge him to give any other exegesis to Romans 9 than this. But then let it be exegesis and not philosophy.

H.H.

Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage

The last synod of the Christian Reformed Church passed certain resolutions in regard to the question of unbiblical divorce and remarriage. They took the stand—or perhaps I should say: they suggested the stand, for they really took no stand at all—that persons divorced on unbiblical grounds or because of their own adultery and that are remarried, may be admitted into the church merely on their own repentance, without dissolving the adulterous relation with their present spouses.

Let me quote the resolutions:

"1. No substantial and conclusive Scriptural evidence has been produced to establish the thesis that parties remarried after being divorced on the ground of their own adultery, or divorced on non-biblical grounds, are living in continual adultery.

"2. No substantial and conclusive Scriptural evidence has been produced to warrant the demand that a person remarried after being divorced on the ground of his own adultery, or divorced on non-Biblical grounds, must, in order to prove the sincerity of his repentance, cease living in the ordinary marriage relationship with his present spouse.

"3. The consistories are urged most earnestly to guard the sanctity of marriage, and warn unceasingly against every violation of the marriage bond through unbiblical divorce or through adultery, keeping in mind the need for true repentance on the part of all who seek admission to the Church.

"4. The consistories are advised that people who are guilty of unbiblical divorce or who are divorced as the result of their own adultery and, having remarried, seek entrance or re-entrance into the Church shall show their sorrow and genuine repentance during an adequate period of probation. Such cases shall not be settled without the advice of Classis.

"5. These declarations are referred to the consistories for their guidance so that they may deal with the concrete cases which come before them in accordance with the given situations, the demonstrable teaching of Scripture on marriage, divorce, repentance, and forgiveness, and the general provisions of the Church Order."

The first two of the above propositions were the original resolutions, the last three were added at a later session of synod.

Synod added to the above still two other resolutions which, although they do not concern us here, we, nevertheless, also quote:

"1. Synod declares that the decisions just reached in this matter constitute a satisfactory answer to the Board of Foreign Missions for light on the subject of divorce and remarriage, with respect to which there are vexing problems on the Indian Mission Field.

"2. Synod continues the present committee on Marital Problems; for a twofold task which it was not able to complete in time for the Synod of 1956. This twofold task is the consideration of the Ecumenical Synod's report on other pos-

sible grounds for divorce and the question of polygamy on the mission fields. A report covering this study should be presented to the Synod of 1957."

The above was taken from *The Banner* of July 13, 1956.

It appears that the committee that was assigned by the former synod to study this matter and advise the present synod, did not feel itself quite ready, and they requested synod, therefore, that they be given time till 1957 to review the whole matter. This request was rejected. An advisory committee was appointed to consider the issue. This committee, in its reports to synod, after reviewing the case and presenting the conflicting opinions on the matter, came to the conclusion "that it is futile to expect conclusive Scriptural evidence for either position," that is, that remarriage of a divorced person, who is divorced either on non-biblical grounds or because of his own adultery is or is not living in continual adultery. They then presented in their report substantially the advice that was adopted by synod in the above quoted propositions.

Considerable discussion followed on the floor of the synod. The original committee on Divorce and Remarriage that had asked for time till 1957 to reconsider their report, had in their report the recommendation to express that "those who have been divorced and remarried contrary to Scriptural requirements have entered into an adulterous relationship which is sinful in its continuation as well as in its inception." Someone made a motion to adopt this recommendation. Later, however, this was defeated with a large majority.

There seems to have been considerable discussion on the floor of the synod, both *pro* and *con* the original recommendation of the committee on Divorce and Remarriage.

Dr. Herman Kuiper emphasized that we must not regard lightly the historic stand of the church on this matter as formulated by our fathers. He also referred to the similar position taken by some English theologians, as well as to the stand taken by the Missouri Synod, Lutheran Church, and the Southern Presbyterians. He referred to Matt. 19:9 and Rom. 7:1-3. He rejected the position of those who hold that remarriage of unscripturally divorced persons becomes holy wedlock the moment they are married again. To him this is a sinful relation. And thus there were others.

But there were also those, and they were, evidently, far in the majority at synod, that took the opposite stand. As a typical example of their argumentation I may refer to the reasoning of the Rev. G. Hoeksema as quoted in *The Banner*:

"I would like first of all to wipe away some mists. First, in the circle of the Reformed Churches we would stand virtually alone, if not completely alone, if we retain our present position. We should dare to stand alone if Scripture requires it; but we must be sure our position is Scriptural. The fundamental problem is one of misunderstanding. The problem: If anything is sin in its inception, is it not also sin in its continuation? But there is nothing in what Jesus says about a relationship. He speaks of an *act* when He says

'committed adultery.' The act of which Jesus speaks is not continued. Giving or making a vow is not continued. The problem is selfcreated, as we see if we just read what Jesus says. The old position rests on the assumption that the first marriage is still in force. That is an impossible position.

"Those who hold to this position dare not follow it to its logical conclusion. We must then say to the guilty parties to break up that whole new relationship. You must tell such people: 'you are on the road to hell.' If we do not dare to say that, let's know that we are on the wrong road. We have no gospel for such persons when such people come and say they love the Christian Reformed Church and they are willing to undergo investigation. I would rather say to such people: 'Go and sin no more'."

At present I am not discussing the stand which the synod of the Christian Reformed Church took in the re-marriage of divorced persons. I hope to do this later. But I cannot refrain to make a few comments, even now, on the argumentation of the Rev. G. Hoeksema which, in my opinion, is sheer sophistry.

The problem, according to him, is expressed in the question: is sin in its inception also sin in its continuation? This he would deny.

In order to sustain his position, he refers to the supposed fact that Jesus, when He says "committed adultery" does not refer to a relationship but to an act. And, so he says, that act is not continued. Is this true? Emphatically not. I suppose that the Rev. Hoeksema refers to Matt. 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." I ask: what, according to these words of our Lord Jesus, is the adultery of which He speaks? Is it the act of having illegal intercourse with a woman, or is it the entering into the marriage relationship with her? Anyone, even the Rev. Hoeksema himself must admit that it is the latter. The adultery of which the Lord speaks is exactly that the man enters into an illegal marriage relationship. This is the literal meaning of the text.

Hoeksema says: "The act of which Jesus speaks is not continued." If he means, as one would almost surmise, that the man who thus enters into an illegal marriage does not live in continuous sexual intercourse with the woman he thus married, he speaks a very obvious truth. But if he means by "continued" the same as "repeated," it is just as obvious that he speaks an untruth. In this sense, it is certainly true that sin in its inception is the same as sin in its continuation. I expect to refer to this again. But it would have been much clearer to all if the question of which Hoeksema speaks, had been put in a slightly different form, namely, in this: is the first act of sin the same as its frequent repetition?

"Giving or making a vow," Hoeksema says, "is not continued." I suppose that, in this case, he has in mind the marriage vow. But although the vow itself may not be continued

or even repeated, to remain under a vow is also an act, and this is certainly continued. And the giving of the vow (the sin in its inception) is certainly not less a sin than the remaining under the vow (then sin in its continuation).

The last paragraph of Hoeksema's quotation is rather an appeal to sentiment than to sound and Scriptural reasoning. Why one would not dare to say to anyone: "you are on the road to hell" if he walks in the way of sin is impossible to understand. In fact, it is the only thing one may say to such a one according to the gospel.

But, at any rate, such was the tenor of the discussion on the floor of the synod.

As has been already stated, the motion to accept the original advice of the study committee on divorce and remarriage was rejected, and the motion quoted in the beginning of this article was adopted.

Someone now made the following motion, which in my opinion was perfectly consistent: "Synod judges that no conclusive evidence has been produced to establish conclusively the thesis that persons un-biblically divorced and remarried are not living in continual adultery." Also this evoked some discussion on the floor of the synod. But as might be expected, this found no favor in the eyes of the synod and was rejected.

In some future editorials we expect, D.V., to discuss these decisions of the synod of the Christian Reformed Churches and, at the same time, offer our own conviction of what Scripture teaches regarding this matter.

H.H.

Christian Encyclopaedia

As already said, Mr. Kok in Kampen asked me to offer a more extensive discussion of the Christian Encyclopaedia than is usual in a common book review. This I will attempt to do. It stands to reason that it is impossible to enter into a detailed discussion of the various articles appearing in this first volume. A general impression must suffice. This is as follows:

1. On the whole I was very favorably impressed by this work. It is true, as the redaction and publisher state in an introduction, that in general this encyclopaedia sounds forth a positive note and that it reflects a trustworthy representation of Protestant thinking in the various fields of study it discusses. As such I do not hesitate to recommend it.

2. The question arose in my mind, however, whether the redaction does not take "too much hay on its fork," to use a Dutch expression, by issuing such a general encyclopaedia touching on virtually every subject under the sun. There are in existence several encyclopaedias, also in the English language, such as the Encyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by McClintock and Strong; the Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, by Schaff-Herzog; or the International Bible Encyclopaedia, by different authors.

But they all cover a certain field and do not attempt to discuss every possible subject, biblical, theological, historical, ecclesiastical, sociological and scientific. I know not how many volumes this encyclopaedia will cover, perhaps twelve. But I do not believe that a single work can possibly do justice to all the various subjects it proposes to discuss. This, to my mind, is already evident from the first volume.

3. My impression is, too, that the work is too Dutch, not, of course, as far as its language is concerned, but as to its scope. I refer, for instance, to the articles on the labor question and the labor movement, which limit themselves to labor in the Netherlands. In an encyclopaedia, the labor movement and organizations in other countries, as e.g. the American Unions, should have been considered. Thus also we find an article on Bilderdijk, the well-known Dutch poet, while other poets under B are ignored. We even found an article on the Dutch publication *De Bazuin* which I doubt should have had a place in any encyclopaedia, but if it did, several other papers should have been mentioned also. For an encyclopaedia it is too Dutch in its scope.

4. I do not wish to enter into criticism of separate articles. Otherwise I would certainly call attention to the articles on "The Earth" which I, as a biblical theologian, do not accept because they cater too much to the theory of evolution. Nor would I, in that case, refrain from criticising the short article on the subject of the offer of grace in which my name is mentioned. And there is more. But, although the publisher asked me to write a more extensive discussion of this work than is customary in a mere book-review, if I should enter into a detailed criticism, this review would become way too long. Hence, let this be sufficient.

H.H.

Important Notice

There will be a Sunday School Inspirational Mass Meeting in our Creston Church on September 21, at 8 p. m.

All Sunday School teachers and friends are invited to attend.

Arthur Schuitema, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Young People's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby expresses its sympathy with the bereaved family of

PFC. GORDON A. KING

who, at the time of his passing, was a member of our society. May the Lord, Who in infinite wisdom always does all things well, comfort the bereaved with His word that ever abides. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory . . . My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Ps. 73:24, 26.

Beverly Van Meeteren, Secretary

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Covenant with Noah

According to the Scriptures, the covenant with Noah, the same as the covenant with Abraham, included not humanity soul for soul but Christ and His chosen people only (and the lower creation). It was thus, according to the Scriptures, a covenant of special grace and not of so-called common grace. Let us turn to the Scriptures and see how true this is.

a) God everywhere appears in the Genesis narrative as a friend of Noah and Noah on this account as the friend of God. Now friendship is the essence of the covenant of grace. It is established, is this covenant, through an act of God according to which he realizes in His people the fruits of Christ's atonement, in His love for them. And in that love, as their God and Father in Christ Jesus, he fellowships with them through Christ, walks and talks with them, reveals unto them His secrets and satisfies them with His likeness. And in that same love—the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, His people know Him in the face of Christ, inquire after His glories in His holy temple, and, as being of His party, confess His name before men, witness for the truth and oppose it to the lie, and condemn by their holy conversation the world and all that is of it. The essence of the covenant of special grace—there is, to be sure, no other covenant than this—is indeed friendship. In the Genesis narrative Noah everywhere appears as a friend of the Lord. We read of him, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Gen. 6:9. It means that he fellowshipped with God and arrayed himself on God's side against the wicked world of his day and age, through his prophesying and his building the ark in the obedience of his faith before the face of God and in the presence of his contemporaries. And so does God everywhere appear in this narrative as the friend of Noah. He pours out his heart to Noah, so to say, complains to him about the wickedness of man, divulges to Noah his secrets when He tells him what He had resolved to do with man. Let us quote Scripture here. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; and behold, I even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is on the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee."

Assuredly, the Lord and Noah are friends. It means, certainly, that God's covenant is already with him, the covenant whose essence is friendship, thus the covenant not of common but of special grace. For the covenant of common

grace—conceding now for the sake of argument that there is such a thing—is not one of which the essence is friendship. For although, according to the exponents of this type of covenant, God assumes an attitude of favor toward the reprobate wicked, the latter, certainly, do not love him. They hate him, the reason being that though God, so it is held, loves the wicked, he refrains from shedding abroad His love in the hearts of the wicked. But Noah was a man righteous in his generation with a righteousness that was his in Christ. Seeing now that the covenant of special grace was already with Noah before the flood it certainly should have to be considered strange, should God have forsaken the special covenant that He already had established with him, now to establish with him, as the representative of reprobated men, such a common covenant including the reprobated. For consider once more what the Lord said to Noah, "But with thee I will establish my covenant. Now if this statement must be made to apply to a new covenant of common grace, the conclusion is inescapable that the covenant of grace was not continued with Noah in his generations and that, if it was, there is no record of it in the Scriptures. But this is inconceivable.

b) Consider, further, the position of the conjunction *but* in the statement, "But with thee will I establish my covenant." Now *but* is an adversative conjunction. It joins opposite ideas. Hence, what the Lord here tells Noah is precisely this, "With you will I establish my covenant but not with the wicked. The latter I shall destroy, for they are wicked. How then could it be true that the covenant, established with Noah after the flood, was a covenant that included the reprobated wicked, thus a covenant of grace that is common. We say once more, this is inconceivable.

c) The announcement, "But with thee will I establish my covenant," must be taken as indicating that the very purpose of the Lord's saving Noah was to perpetuate with him in his generations the covenant that already was with him to perfect it, through the ages, unto the second appearing of Christ.

d) Consider the ground on which the Lord saved Noah and promised to establish with him His covenant. That ground was Noah's righteousness, his being a just man and perfect in his generation. Now, certainly, Noah's justice and perfection formed not a good that proceeded from a general attitude of favor that God is supposed to be assuming toward all men; but this good was Noah's because Noah was Christ's. It means that the covenant that was established with him after the flood was grounded upon Christ's atonement.

e) There is still other strong evidence of this in the sacred narrative. Let us again quote, "And Noah built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground for man's

sake . . ." In the sequence of this verbal response of the Lord to Noah's sacrifice by blood appears the statement, "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him saying, And I behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you . . ." So, then, it was on the ground of this sacrifice by blood, thus on the ground of Christ's atonement, that the establishing of the covenant with Noah, took place. It means that the covenant must have been one of special grace.

f) According to the Scripture quoted, the establishing of the covenant was an answer to Noah's thank offering, to his sacrifice by blood. Mark the logical sequence of the following sentences, "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord . . . And the Lord smelled a sweet savour . . . And God spake unto Noah, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you . . ." As Noah's sacrifice typified the atonement of Christ, it is correct to say that the Lord established His covenant with Noah with the sweet savour of that atonement in His holy nostrils, thus as delighting in the perfect sacrifice of His Christ on the cross, thus as delighting also in the fruit of that sacrifice as realized in His people and particularly in Noah, and that fruit was Noah's thank offering, the holy sentiments of his soul to which he gave expression through that transaction. Consider what these sentiments, feeling, thoughts were. A deep sense of guilt, and the feeling, "I am unclean," thus a craving for divine pardon, and a thirsting after righteousness and a longing after God in the faith that the sinner's only avenue of approach to God is through the blood that cleanses from all sin and that he going by this way will be fed with mercy and be satisfied with God's likeness. And the truth, the doctrine, involved in the sacrifice by blood is that without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin and that thus the blood of the sacrifice cleanses from all sin. No, Noah was a believer. The above cited sentiments were his. The truth involved in the sacrifice by blood dwelt in his soul. And he was thankful. He praised God in love and blessed His name for His great salvation, and vowed to be wholly consecrated to His God. And his sacrifice was the expression of these truths as they dwelt rightly in him, and of these holy sentiments of his heart, and of the gratitude that was flooding his soul, and of his determination to be wholly consecrated unto God. They formed the sweet savour that God smelled and in which he was delighting. And so smelling and as so delighting, the Lord established with him His covenant anew. How evident, in the light of these observations, that this covenant was one of special grace. How utterly absurd to say that as so delighting, he established here with the reprobated a covenant of common grace.

g) But there is much more evidence that the covenant with which we here have to do is a covenant of special grace. Let us again quote Scripture. "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual

generations: I do set my bow in the cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud: and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." "And God said, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." That the bow is the sign and pledge of God's love of His chosen people and of His everlasting mercy upon them, thus a sign and pledge of the covenant of special grace and of the perpetuity of this covenant is evident from the following. The bow always appears against the dark background overcast with foreboding clouds, with clouds laden with fire and streaked with the lightnings and resounding with the rumblings of thunder. Thus the cloud in Scripture is the emblem of the wrath of God, revealed from heaven over the unrighteousness of the wicked, of the judgments with which God overtakes the wicked and by which, at the end of time, they will be swept into everlasting desolation. What then is the message of the bow set by the Lord God in the cloud? This we learn from the vision of St. John as reported in the Book of the Revelation—the vision of the throne. "And immediately," writes John, "I was in the spirit, and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone and there was a rainbow about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald . . . and out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices . . ." Mark you, from the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices. What is signified thereby is that the throne is one of judgment for the reprobated wicked, that the Lord comes in judgment and that He is about to execute vengeance upon the ungodly. But, as remembering His everlasting covenant, He will save His people through the very destruction of the wicked. This is precisely the matter pledged and sealed by the rainbow, to wit, that God will deliver His people from all their troubles, when He comes to judge the world; for the rainbow encircles the throne. Now in the Genesis narrative the bow is set in the cloud as a sign and seal of the perpetuity of the covenant with Noah. Thus it must follow with unrelenting logic that this covenant is one of special grace. For, mark you, the bow signifies, (1) God's redeeming love of His people, (2) remembering His covenant with Noah. Thus it follows that His remembering that covenant is a doing according to which He saves His people from the wicked world and from sin unto life everlasting, and that the covenant with Noah must therefore be a covenant of special grace, on the ground of the axiom that two things equal to the same thing must be equal to each other.

h) There is still more proof that the covenant with Noah was one of special grace. Let us consider the promises of

(Continued on page 500)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

19.

(I Corinthians 3:16-23)

We now come to the last few verses of this Chapter in I Corinthians. This entire section reads, in part, as follows: "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which are ye. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*"

In this essay we shall not enter in too much detail in the text. Rather we shall attempt to do justice to the sense of the text and trace out the bold and conclusive argument of the Apostle as he shuts the mouth of all who "boast in men"!

There is nothing that causes a preacher of the Gospel to put off the shoes from his feet as the knowledge that he is constantly standing on holy ground. The church, in whose midst he may labor to plant and water, is the possession of God. A preacher must shepherd the flock of God. He cannot ever act the part of Lord and master in the flock. Strictly speaking he is not a "domine," a Lord! He is *servant* of God. And there is nothing that stops all the foolishness and wickedness in the congregation so soon and fundamentally as the knowledge that she has been bought with a great price, and sanctified with the blood of the eternal Son of God in the flesh.

The church is holy!

We believe an *holy*, catholic church, do we not?

And when we confess this, we do not simply mean that there is such a church somewhere, on a "beautiful isle of somewhere," but that the church to which *we belong* is "holy," that the members are holy, since the Spirit of God in Christ dwells in the hearts of the members.

Thus Paul presents the church at Corinth. With all her sins and shortcomings, she is nevertheless "temple of God" and, therefore, she is "holy"! This means that the church is the dwelling-place of God in the Spirit. He lives, dwells in the church. That is the unique grace of the church in distinction from the angels. In the latter God does not dwell. He only dwells in the Church.

Of this holiness in the church, the holiness exemplified in the O. T. temple was but a type and shadow. Yet, even there, we see that whoever defiled the temple in any way, by trampling its ordinances under foot, was surely slain. Think of the king Uzziah in the temple when he attempted too offer the sacrifice, which was only permitted to the priests. When anyone defiled Jehovah's dwelling place he surely was visited

from God on high with Jehovah's jealous ire for His house. Think what happened to the sons of Eli, who desecrated the temple.

Thus must a minister, elders and all conduct themselves in the church of God, which is always holy.

Let us take the shoes from our feet — lest the Lord kill us, terrify us, drive us from the church, or bring *His wrath upon the entire congregation*.

And notice then that Paul says: "Let no man deceive himself." The term "deceive" in the Greek is *ex-apatatoo*, that is: deceive himself very much, so that great will be his fall! Such a man who *deceives* himself has sin in him, which through this very warning that the church is "holy" will deceive him and slay him.

When one deceives himself in the sense here spoken of, one does so on a gigantic scale. No it does not mean, that such a person is one who has a very low Intelligence Quotient. On the contrary, such a person has enough talents and ability to be accounted someone amongst men. He possesses a certainly worldly wisdom. He has "been around," he "knows the ropes!" He can take care of himself rather well. Thus at least he is in his own evaluation of himself. He seems to be and thinks to be "wise among men." In *this* world "he rates!"

However, he does not truly fear the Lord in His holy temple!

But he plays with fire all the while. The fires of the just judgment of God, who avenges His people; God, into whose hands it is terrible to fall, he does not reckon with. Practically, in *the church*, he does not put off the shoes from his feet! He does not tremble before God with a holy trembling, in beauty of holiness, worshipping the Lord.

He honors men, and seeks the honor of men!

And while, to men, he looks like quite a man, he is nevertheless a "fool" all the while.

God sees through this "wisdom" of men and sees that it is nothing but human "craftiness!" It is not the judiciousness of one who has learned to profoundly live and say: God alone is great and holy in His temple, the church! Nay, if the entire church must be defiled, God's temple desecrated, that means nothing, as long as it is but a means of self-vindication! Such a one will needs climb, over the wreck and ruins he occasions by his worldly wisdom, to the top!

And all his "worldly wisdom" is then displayed.

God calls this wisdom in the mouth of Job 5:12, 13, "Craftiness." The term in the original is "panourgia," that is: any or all work, as long as it is bad enough. The Dutch has a saying: *tot alles gereed en bekwaam!* Here you will be the witness of versatile cleverness — without any concern for the holiness of the temple, the house of God. Nor is there any concern about the foundation besides which none other can be laid. But adroit readiness with brains, clever, versatile evasiveness there is a plenty. And there are few that can really keep up with them — matching wits! And in

deviltry they are no children. But solid judiciousness you look for in vain.

And they think they are wise!

But, says Paul, the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. They are really to no purpose in the church. They do not build the saints in faith, quicken in hope! There are as vain as clouds are without rain in them. They never has understood the holiness of God in His church.

But God understands.

And that is the great comfort of the church, so that she sings:

*"The Lord will judge in righteousness;
From Him all truth and knowledge flow,
The foolish thoughts of wicked men;
How vain they are, the Lord doth know!"*

Let, therefore, no man boast in men!

In the church of God . . . GOD is all in all!

And, therefore, says Paul "let no man" boast in men. Let us keep our sights straight, o, ye Corinthians. Boast in Paul, Apollos, Peter—and, then do it with a semblence of holiness? And to this we can add the names of the faithful preachers of the past and present! Boast in them? God forbid!

We will simply boast in the Lord, our God!

This certainly means that we hold on to the profession of the hope steadfast to the end. That we have a holy concern about the truth in Jesus. But that we do not make "schism" where Christ does not make one.

Then we will follow the following line in our boast in the Lord:

1. We will say "all is ours!" We will not limit our boast to a few men, but standing on the foundation besides which there is none other we will see the whole of the riches that is ours in Christ, and each will then fall into the proper perspective where God puts them!

2. Here we will see that to the pure all things are pure, standing in the service of God.

a. That means that Paul, Apollos, Cephas—whatever preacher there may be is put there from God for our benefit—as long as he builds upon the foundation besides which there is none other.

b. That also means that in Christ, our Lord, we may shout that the entire Cosmos is ours in faith and hope, and that in "life" and "death" we belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Both of these are ours; we are indeed the victors, and we boast in the Lord.

c. And it means that this is all true, that all things are of us, since we are of Christ! We belong to Christ. He is our Lord. And He is Lord over all.

d. And Christ belongs to God. God, who is the owner of all.

When we thus speak then we are taking off the shoes from our feet. Then all in heaven and on earth becomes holy ground for us upon the foundation laid by Paul in Christ, the crucified one.

Here is true judicious knowledge. Here the thoughts are not vain, but here is the language of those who became "fools" that they might be wise.

Blessed is that church, which has the consciousness that she is "holy," the temple of the Lord!

Here saints sing in sincerity:

*"The Lord will not cast off His own,
Nor His inheritance forsake;
Just judgement shall at length prevail,
And upright hearts shall courage take."*

*"Our God, the refuge of His saints,
Will fight against iniquity;
Avenger of the innocent
The Lord omnipotent will be."*

G.L.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Oak Lawn, Illinois, Wednesday, September 19, 1956. The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agendum must be in the hands of the stated clerk thirty days before the meeting of Classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Creston Prot. Ref. Church and the Societies of the congregation join together in expressing their most sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Joe King, Marilyn, and Roger, in their recent and sudden loss of Son and Brother

GORDON A. KING

May our Covenant God comfort the family by His Almighty Word and Spirit, knowing our loss is his gain in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life.

"That in which both these things (truth and justice) root and ground themselves is the conversion of man to God; for the works of none but those who are regenerated, are good and pleasing to God."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 464

IN HIS FEAR

Praying in His Fear

(5)

Prayer does not change things.

And the man made slogan "Prayer changes things" is not a text of Scripture.

It is not at all unusual to hear the phrase quoted as though it were a verse from Holy Writ; but it surely is not.

All things are determined by the All-wise God from before the foundation of the world and all the prayers of all men together cannot make Him change one smallest element in the eternal, all-comprehensive counsel He has with Himself from all eternity.

This very truth is often the occasion for many to display their lack of fear before Him; that is, the mentioning of this undeniable truth of Holy Writ will often reveal in those that do not wish to walk in His fear that they will not bow before this truth that God reveals of Himself. They will not, therefore, bow before God and will not pray to Him. For, not to pray in His fear is not to pray to Him.

Let those who desire to hold on to the unscriptural idea that prayer does change things read Isaiah 40 and Job, chapters 38 through 41. If the truth therein recorded does not move them to say with Job in chapter 40:4, 5, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee: I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further," then we can only conclude that they do not know the fear of the Lord.

Shall foolish, limited, frail and sinful man by his prayers be able to change all that the Living, All-wise, Almighty and Holy God has decreed as the Unchangeable God?

Indeed, men will argue (or rather complain) that there is no sense in praying if by our prayers we cannot induce a loving God to change things for us. The view that declares with Scripture that God has decreed all things present and future as well as past will be accused of presenting a God Who is not a God of love, mercy and grace. But we make bold to maintain that all such criticism of the stand that our prayers cannot induce God to change what He decreed from before the foundation of the world is made not in His fear but in the sinful boldness of the proud flesh of man.

For, if we by our prayers can change God's will and mind, we have no God left but instead an almighty (?) and pliable servant to do our bidding. Then we can change God. And he who can change God has the supremacy over God and is himself become God.

Even for Jesus' sake Jehovah will not allow such a god-dishonoring thing to take place. He is and will remain God in answering our prayers as well as in all other things.

The complaint that there is no sense in praying if it is all determined ahead of time by God does not stem from

fear in His name. It expresses a desire for man to have some power over God rather than awe and reverence before His face. It breathes the spirit of the challenge of the devil unto Adam and Eve: "ye shall be as gods." In that spirit man never prays but assumes an attitude of equality with God if not even of superiority over Him in the field of that which ought to happen and ought to be changed.

A few texts from Scripture are not out of place to answer the criticism that the stand above makes all praying worthless. Jesus says in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." He likewise declares in John 14:14, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." It will, then, be observed that each time there is a qualifying statement as to what we shall receive. When we abide in Christ and His words abide in us we walk in His fear. Then we do not pray for selfish carnal things for our fleshly joy at the expense of others. No, we will pray for that which God has decreed from eternity to give us. We will ask for God's will and not for our own.

Consider once how carnal and selfish our prayers are and what a quandry it is in which we would be able to place the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth if we could induce Him to change things at our request! You pray for an early frost for relief from the miseries of hay fever; your neighbour prays for a mild Autumn that the remaining crops on his field may ripen and he may be able to pay that large hospital bill that was unexpectedly placed upon him by that same God Whose eternal counsel decreed you as a hay fever sufferer. By what rule or standard would the sovereign God determine which prayer He will fulfill? Is He moved by numbers? Is He moved by the length of the prayer? Does He count the words and the letters?

Is there respect of persons with God?

Nay, but if we abide in Christ and His words abide in us we will have respect, reverence and awe before Him and pray for that which is to the glory of His name. We will know our place before Him. We will be humbled in the dust before Him and approach Him as the Exalted One. Yea, in our prayers we will exalt the Lord and not our will and our mind.

And can one in Jesus' name pray for that which will hurt the brother in Christ? Can one whose earthly fortunes require the sunshine pray in Jesus' name to the Father to keep away the rain which his brother in Christ needs for his earthly fortunes? Can one in Jesus' name and while His words abide in him come to the sovereign God and tell Him in prayer that His plans of taking one of his loved ones to glory is not wise and good and ought to be amended and postponed? Pray in Jesus' name; pray in His fear and you will pray for that which the living God has decreed He will give you.

Those who pray in His fear do not ask whether prayer is not useless and worthless. It is those who do not pray

in His fear that speak that way. Those who pray in His fear do not say, "O what is the use anyway?" It is those whose prayers are not heard because they are not uttered in His fear that correctly draw the conclusion that *their* prayers are useless in the obtaining of that which their sinful lusts seek.

James says, and that correctly, that the prayer of righteous man availeth much. It does not overpower God. It does not prevail over Him. It does not change Him and His counsel. But it availeth much to the one who utters it in the fear of God's name. In that very prayer he is blessed. But that prayer availeth much is not the same as "Prayer changes things."

Take, if you will, that model prayer which Christ taught His disciples and His Church. Where will you find in one of those petitions the idea even that we are to seek or have the right to seek to have God change things for us? The prayer sets out with the lofty petitions for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of His kingdom and the execution of His will on earth as it is done in heaven. No suggestion even of a petition that God change things for us is to be seen there.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Whatever view you may take as to how the word "daily" should be interpreted to mean, it must be conceded at the very start that all of this petition must be explained in the light of and not in contradiction to the preceeding three petitions. Shall we pray?, "Give us this day our daily bread even though it will militate against that hallowing of Thy name." Dare we pray?, "Give us this day our daily bread even though it disrupts the plan according to which Thou hadst decreed to cause Thy kingdom to come." Is it praying in His fear to utter these words?, "Give us this day our daily bread because our will must be done on earth even though Thine is done in heaven."

Nor should we overlook the plural form of the prayer. We do not and may not pray for that which takes the daily bread out of the mouth of others so that ours may be stuffed full. Give us this day our daily bread must be uttered in the spirit of the petitions that precede it.

Then, too, it is for daily bread. And we prefer the explanation of the original word "daily" that sets it forth as the bread "coming to me." Then especially it will be plain that we do not ask God in this petition to change things for us when we pray to Him but that we pray for that which is coming to us according to His eternal, unchangeable decree from before the foundation of the world.

And a prayer for daily bread, even when the word daily is interpreted to mean "for the present," that is, "for today" severely limits our petition for material things and condemns many of the requests that are made in the name of prayer. Even if we are to take the word "daily" to mean what the english word means; the bread I can use and need today,

where do we find, then, room to pray for long life and wealth?

Shall we, when a loved one hovers near the point of death, pray for recovery and many happy days to come with the idea that by our prayer we can change God's mind and change this present situation while we are limited by God Himself to pray only for the needs of the day?

There is another side to this matter often overlooked. A parent prays earnestly for the recovery of his child, for the safe return home of his child, for protection for his child or loved ones that are away from home and on the way to a happy reunion. So narrow are we in our vision at such times, so prone to take things for granted and to forget our own dependancy upon God that just because we have life and no dangers seem to threaten us at the moment we pray that they may safely be brought to us without considering that many things can also happen to us to make that happy reunion impossible.

True it is what the Heidelberg Catechism declares, that our best works are polluted with sin. Prayer is a good work. It is a work that God works in us and through us. And what He does in and through us by the Spirit of His Son is ethically and morally good. But we, according to the sin that abides in us all the days of our earthly life, soon turn from that which is good and our prayers as well as our worship and tithing become polluted with sin.

Praying in His fear is not an easy thing.

Yet prayer is a wonderful gift of God to His child.

In prayer he has fellowship and communion with God. He speaks with God and opens his heart to Him. He makes his requests known, unburdens his heart and rolls his cares and anxieties upon God. He does not count it a "chore" and does not condemn it as a useless, worthless thing. He who has the fear of the Lord in his heart delights to come to Him in prayer. It gives him joy and peace.

And it takes an approach in His fear to have this joy.

In His fear is the only way to pray to the only true God.

J.A.H.

"Since good works are the fruits of our regeneration — since they are the expression of our thankfulness to God, and the evidences of true faith; and since none are saved but those in whom these things are found; it follows on the other hand, that evil works are the fruits of the flesh, that they are manifestations of ingratitude, and evidences of unbelief, so that no one, who continues to produce them, can be saved."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 467

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Eucharist by Philip Schaff.

Marcarius the Elder, a gifted representative of the earlier Greek mysticism (died in the year 390), belongs to the same symbolical school; he calls bread and wine the antetype of the body and blood of Christ, and seems to know only a spiritual eating of the flesh of the Lord.

Theodoret, who was acknowledged orthodox by the council of Chalcedon, teaches indeed a transformation (*metaballein*) of the eucharistic elements by virtue of the priestly consecration, and an adoration of them, which certainly sounds quite Romish, but in the same connection expressly rejects the idea of an absorption of the elements in the body of the Lord, as an error akin to the Monophysite (the Council of Chalcedon, 451, declared of our Lord Jesus Christ that He is perfect God and perfect man . . . of one substance with the Father as touching His Godhead, of one substance with us as touching His manhood . . . in two natures without confusion, without change, without distinction, without separation, in such a way that the difference of natures is in no way abolished by the union, but rather the properties of each nature are preserved and united in one person and one mode of being. The Monophysite (one nature) denied the union of these two natures in the Christ—H.V.) "The mystical emblems of the body and blood of Christ," says he, "continue in their original essence and form, they are visible and tangible as they were before (the consecration); but the contemplation of the spirit and of faith sees in them that which they have become, and they are adored also as that which they are to believers."

Similar language occurs in an epistle to the monk Caesarius ascribed to Chrysostom, but perhaps not genuine; in Ephraim of Antioch, cited by Photus; and even in the Roman bishop Gelasius at the end of the fifth century (492-496).

The latter says expressly, in his work against Eutyches and Nestorius: "The sacrament of the body and blood of Christ which we receive, is a divine thing, because by it we are made partakers of the divine nature. Yet, the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease. And assuredly the image and the similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the performance of the mysteries.

It is remarkable that Augustine, in other respects so decidedly catholic in the doctrine of the church and of baptism, and in the cardinal points of the Latin orthodoxy, follows the older African theologians, Tertullian and Cyprian, in a

symbolical theory of the Supper, which however includes a real spiritual participation of the Lord by faith, and in this respect stands nearest to the Calvinistic or orthodox Reformed doctrine, while in minor points he differs from it as much as from transubstantiation and consubstantiation. He was the first to make a clear distinction between the outward sign and the inward grace, which are equally essential to the conception of the sacrament. He maintains the figurative character of the words of institution, and of the discourse of Jesus on the eating and drinking of his flesh and blood in the sixth chapter of John; with Tertullian, he calls the bread and wine "*figuræ*" or "*signa corporis et sanguinis Christi*" (but certainly not *mere* figures), and insists on a distinction between "that which is visibly received in the sacrament, and that which is spiritually eaten and drunk," or between a carnal, visible manducation (the word "*manducate*" means: to chew—H.V.) of the sacrament, and a spiritual eating of the flesh of Christ and drinking of his blood. The latter he limits to the elect and the believing, though, in opposition to the subjectivism of the Donatists, he asserts that the sacrament (in its *objective* import) is the body of Christ even for unworthy receivers. He says of Judas, that he only ate the bread of the Lord, while the other apostles "ate the Lord who was the bread" (incidentally, we do not believe that Judas was present when the Lord's Supper was instituted in the upper room but had departed before the institution occurred—H.V.). On another place: The *sacramentum* "is given to some unto life, to other unto destruction;" but the *res sacramenti*, i.e., "the thing itself of which it is the sacramentum, is given to every one who is partaker of it, unto life." "He who does not abide in Christ, undoubtedly neither eats His flesh nor drinks His blood, though he eats and drinks the sacramentum (i.e., the outward sign) of so great a thing to his condemnation." Augustine at all events lays chief stress on the spiritual participation. "Why preparest thou the teeth and the belly? Believe, and thou hast eaten." He claims for the sacrament religious reverence, but not a superstitious dread, as if it were a miracle of magical effect. He also expressly rejects the hypothesis of the ubiquity of Christ's body, which had already come into use in support of the materializing view, and has since been further developed by Lutheran divines in support of the theory of consubstantiation. (This reference to the views of Augustine is certainly striking. Augustine rejects the theory of the everywhere presence of the body of Christ, which the Lutheran theologians must accept in support of their conception that the body of the Christ is with and under the bread in the Lord's Supper. And the quotations of Philip Schaff to support his presentation of the views of Augustine are equally striking.—H.V.) "The body with which Christ rose," says he, "He took to heaven, which must be in a place . . . We must guard against such a conception of His divinity as destroys the reality of His flesh. For when the flesh of the Lord was upon earth, it was certainly not in heaven; and now that it is in heaven, it is not upon earth."

"I believe that the body of the Lord is in heaven, as it was upon earth when he ascended to heaven." Yet this great church teacher at the same time holds fast the real presence of Christ in the Supper. He says of the martyrs: "They have drunk the blood of *Christ*, and have shed their *own* blood for Christ." He was also inclined, with the Oriental fathers, to ascribe a saving virtue to the consecrated elements.

Augustine's pupil, Facundus, taught that the sacramental bread "is not properly the body of Christ, but contains the mystery of the body." Fulgentius of Ruspe held the same symbolical view; and even at a much later period we can trace it through the mighty influence of Augustine's writings in Isidore of Sevilla, Beda Venerabilis, among the divines of the Carolingian age, in Ratramnus, and Berengar of Tours, until it broke forth in a modified form with greater force than ever in the sixteenth century, and took permanent foothold in the Reformed churches.

Pope Leo I is sometimes likewise numbered with the symbolists, but without good reason. He calls the communion a "spiritual food," as Athanasius had done before, but supposes a sort of assimilation of the flesh and blood of Christ by the believing participation. "What we believe, *that* we receive with the mouth . . . The participation of the body and blood of Christ causes that we pass into that which we receive, and bear Christ in us in spirit and body." Voluntary abstinence from the wine in the Supper was yet considered by this pope a sin.

III. (I presented the realistic and mystic view of the sacrament, whereas II presented the symbolical view of the Lord's Supper.—H. V.) The old liturgies, whose testimony on this point is as important as that of the church fathers, presuppose the actual presence of Christ in the Supper, but speak throughout in the stately language of sentiment, and nowhere attempt an explanation of the nature and mode of this presence, and of its relation to the still visible forms of bread and wine. They use concerning the consecrated elements such terms as: The holy body, The dear blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ, The sanctified oblation, The heavenly, spotless, glorious, awful, divine gifts, The awful, unbloody, holy sacrifice, etc. In the act of consecration the liturgies pray for the sending down of the Holy Ghost, that he may "sanctify and perfect" the bread and wine, or that he may "sanctify and make" them the body and blood of Christ, or "bless and make."

IV. As to the adoration of the consecrated elements: This follows with logical necessity from the doctrine of transubstantiation, and is the sure touchstone of it (the meaning of this statement is clear. The worship of the elements in the sacrament of the Lord's supper must follow if it be true that the wine and bread have been changed into the blood and body of Christ—H. V.) No trace of such adoration appears, however, in the ancient liturgies, and the whole patristic literature (the literature of the fathers—H. V.) yields only four passages from which this practice can be inferred; plainly showing that the doctrine of tran-

substantiation was not yet fixed in the consciousness of the church.

Chrysostom says: "The wise men adored Christ in the manger; we see him not in the manger, but on the altar, and should pay him still greater homage." Theodoret, in the passage already cited, likewise uses the term *proskunein* (this is a Greek word which means: to bow the knee and to worship), but at the same time expressly asserts the continuance of the substance of the elements. Ambrose speaks once of the flesh of Christ "which we today adore in the mysteries," and Augustine, of an adoration preceding the participation of the flesh of Christ.

In all these passages we must, no doubt, take the term *proskunein* and *adorare* in the wider sense, and distinguish the bowing of the knee, which was so frequent, especially in the East, as a mere mark of respect, from proper adoration. The old liturgies contain no direction for any such act of adoration as became prevalent in the Latin church, with the elevation of the host, after the triumph of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the twelfth century. (With respect to the assertion of Philip Schaff that this "adoration and homage and worship," which terms appear in the writings of the fathers, refers not to the idea of worship which became prevalent later in the Latin or Western Church, but to the idea of respect, Freeman writes as follows: "The Church throughout the world, down to the period of the unhappy change of doctrine in the Western church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, never worshipped either the consecrated elements on account of their being the body and blood of Christ, or the presence of that body and blood; nor again, either Christ Himself as supernaturally present by consecration, or the presence of His divinity; neither have the churches of God to this hour, with the exception of the Roman obedience, any such custom."—end of quote of Freeman. Hence, we may conclude with the remark that the consecration and adoration or worship of the elements in the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine, are later developments and that this conception is prevalent only in the Roman Catholic Church. The fathers do not appear to subscribe to this view in any of their writings.—H. V.)

H. V.

Annual R.F.P.A. Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held September 27, at 8 o'clock in the First Prot. Ref. Church.

Reserve this date and enjoy an evening of christian fellowship in this worthy cause. Election of officers from the following: R. Bloem, Hope, Al Heemstra, First, Tom Reitsma, Fourth, P. J. Lubbers, Hudsonville, H. Zwak, Hudsonville, J. Lanning, Hope, H. Vander Wal, First, Peter Koole, Creston.

Speaker for the evening will be Rev. H. Hanko, annual reports will be given and refreshments served.

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

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 VII. Who teach: That Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, and did not die for these, since these do not need the death of Christ. For they contradict the Apostle, who declares: "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. Likewise: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died," Rom. 8:33, 34, viz., for them; and the Savior who says: "I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10:15. And: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John 15:12, 13.

The above rendering of this article is correct, except that it is repetitious when it inserts the words, "and did not die for these." The latter phrase is not repeated in the original, and could better have been omitted in the translation.

In this last article of the Rejection of Errors under Chapter II of our *Canons* the character of the Arminian error becomes plain in all its monstrosity and wicked hideousness. And we must remember in this connection that the fathers of Dordt do not lay words in the Arminians' mouth in these articles of rejection, but that they cull these errors directly out of the Arminians' own statements. The Arminians do not want the atonement of Christ. They claim that it is neither possible, nor necessary, nor real: "Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life." Mark you well, they deny the atonement. It is not simply thus, that the Arminians hold to one view of atonement, and that the Reformed maintain another view of atonement. It is not so, that the Arminians teach general atonement, as it is commonly referred to, while the Reformed hold to the doctrine of limited atonement. The Arminians deny any atonement whatsoever! To be sure, the historical fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died on Golgotha about the year 33 A.D. they do not deny and cannot deny. That is history. But the question does not concern mere historical fact. The question concerns the meaning of that fact. And as far as that meaning is concerned, the Scriptural and Reformed doctrine is that of vicarious atonement, while the Arminian actually denies that Christ died *for*, that is, *in behalf of*, in-

stead of, anyone at all. And while we sometimes loosely refer to the Arminian theory concerning the death of Christ as a theory of general atonement, it is nevertheless incorrect. They have a theory concerning the death of Christ, but that theory is not the atonement theory. In fact, it was the strictures to which their views concerning election and reprobation led them that forced them to replace the theory of limited atonement by the so-called governmental theory of the death of Christ.

The Arminian theory is that the love of God could be magnified, and the righteousness of God be maintained without vicarious atonement. The Arminians could not maintain and did not want to maintain the principle that the divine justice with respect to sin must be satisfied, and that therefore man must make this satisfaction either through himself or through another. Behind this lies the Arminian theory that man does not actually lie under the wrath of God by nature, but that God's love toward men in general is stronger than His wrath and cancels His wrath. The Arminians therefore teach that Christ's death is a divine demonstration of the way in which God *could* punish sin, but *did not want to* punish sin. But for the satisfaction of justice and for reconciliation the death of Christ was not necessary. If only the sinner, looking at the demonstration of the justice of God in the cross, meets the conditions of faith and the obedience of faith, God will forgive him and treat him as if he never had or committed any sin.

But the Arminian is very bold. He not only substitutes this governmental theory for the atonement, but he even attempts to show that it could not be otherwise, and that is impossible that the love of God could be revealed and magnified through vicarious atonement, through the satisfaction of divine justice against our sin by the blood of Christ. Such is the bold claim of the Arminian that is rejected and refuted in this article. In support of this claim, the Remonstrant reasons as follows:

1) The elect are loved by God in the highest degree, with an eternal love, and are from eternity chosen unto everlasting life.

2) They are, therefore, as far as God is concerned, not children of wrath at all, but eternally beloved children.

3) Hence, if they were never children of wrath, it could never be necessary for Christ to suffer and die for them in order to remove that wrath.

4) If it was not necessary for Christ to remove that wrath, it was not possible either, since where no necessity exists, the possibility is cancelled.

5) And that which is impossible cannot be factual, cannot take place. Hence, Christ could not and did not die for the elect, since they did not need the death of Christ. His death is not the payment of the debt of sin and the removal of the wrath of God, but a demonstration of what God might righteously have done to us if it were not for His love, or it is an example of meekness and love which we ought to follow.

Now what does this article teach us in refutation of the error above described?

First of all, the fathers teach us something by implication concerning the methodology of the Arminians. Notice that our fathers accuse the Remonstrants of contradicting "the Apostle . . . and the Savior." This is exactly their fault. They substitute the word of man for the Word of God. The Arminian method is the method of rationalism. Mark you well, the error of their method is not merely that they reason, but that they reason apart from Scripture, and exalt reason above and over against the plain Word of God. Again we cannot fail to observe that the Arminian is guilty of the very error of which he accuses his Reformed opponents. Against consistently Reformed doctrine the charge is always made, — and, sad to say, made by those who claim to be Reformed, — that it is coldly logical, rigidly reasoned, and therefore rationalistic. But he who would be consistently Reformed must fling this charge in the face of those who make it. He must do so not because Reformed doctrine is not logical, systematic, consistent, without self-contradiction; but he must do so because the logic and the reason and the system and the consistency of Reformed truth stand in harmony with and in submission to and are derived from the Scriptures. And this is not rationalism. It is the diametrical opposite of rationalism. But the Arminian is a rationalist. His reasoning is a sinful, twisted reasoning, which seeks to twist and warp the truth of God. It is a reasoning which will not submit to and be founded upon the truth of the Scriptures.

That such is the case becomes very evident in the product of such sinful reasonings. And specifically, the error of the Arminian position is plain here. In the first place, the Arminian divorces Christ's vicarious suffering from the counsel of God and from the elect in the counsel of God. He presents matters as if God from eternity loved His elect people outside of Christ and apart from the suffering and death of Christ. It is indeed true that God loved His elect from eternity, and from eternity chose them unto everlasting life. This must never be denied. And it is indeed true, therefore, that in God's counsel the elect do not stand before God as children of wrath, but as beloved children. This too must never be denied. But this is not to be divorced in our minds, also as far as God's counsel is concerned, from Christ and His atoning suffering and death. God hath chosen us from before the foundation of the world indeed; but *in Christ Jesus*. Never apart from Christ and the atonement, but always in Christ and as covered by His blood does God behold His people in love, also in His eternal counsel. It is also true, to be sure, that the sins and the sinfulness of the elect are in God's counsel, and that their natural worthiness of the wrath of God is included in that same counsel. But as far as the elect are concerned, they are with all their natural sins and sinfulness and worthiness of wrath beheld by God in love from eternity in Christ Jesus. God's counsel is not many, but one. It is not partial, but complete. It does not contain a series of isolated and unrelated events, but in it all

things are conceived in their proper position and in their proper relation to all other things. And in it the sin and guilt and corruption and damnable worthiness of the elect is from eternity in the divine thoughts conceived in its proper relation to the salvation of the elect and their destiny in eternal life and in its proper relation, therefore, to Christ Jesus.

In the second place, the Arminian is guilty of ignoring the fact that what is in God's counsel from eternity, and therefore eternally before the mind of God, and that too, in its proper relationship to all else, whether as means or end, is revealed and realized in time step by step. God does not create His elect people at once in their glorified, heavenly state, no more than He creates the reprobate immediately in their miserable and desolate state. No, in time the order is that first they fall in Adam, are conceived and born in sin; then Christ comes in the fulness of time in order to die for their sins and redeem them; and finally, having been placed in living connection with Christ, regenerated, called, justified, sanctified, and preserved to the end, they are received into the state of everlasting bliss.

And because of this failure to connect the elect with Christ in the counsel of predestination, together with the failure to give proper notice to the relation between the counsel of God and the realization of that counsel in time, the Arminian arrives at his conclusion that since God loved the elect in the highest degree and elected them to eternal life, it was not necessary or possible for Christ to die in their stead and to atone for their sins.

All this, the fathers make very clear, is the simple teaching of Holy Writ. We must be very careful to maintain this. It is not a question of one view over against another, of Reformed thinking over against Arminian reasoning. It is exactly a question of the mind of Christ over against the mind of sinful man, of the Word of God over against the word of man. And the Word of God teaches that it is exactly because God loved His elect from eternity in the highest degree that He sent His only begotten Son into the flesh to be the propitiation for our sins. The atoning death of Christ is the revelation of the love of God in the highest degree. Never must we change this relationship. God does not love us because Christ died for us; but God, because He loved us in Christ from eternity, sent His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us. And to this truth the passages cited in Canons II, B, 7, as well as numerous other passages of Scripture, plainly testify. The Arminian position stands condemned by the Word of God. H.C.H.

"It is characteristic of genuine piety to have exalted conceptions of future blessedness, and earnest longings after it. Those, therefore, who are contented with the world and indifferent about heaven, can hardly possess the first-fruits of the Spirit."

Charles Hodge on Romans 8:23

ALL AROUND US

Banner Editors Retire.

The Banner of August 31, 1956, informs us that two of the old-time writers for this periodical are leaving their posts. The Rev. James M. Ghysels, who has written the Meditations for the Banner for 36 years; and the Rev. Henry J. Kuiper, the editor-in-chief, who has written for this paper for some 27 years, bring to a close what many will consider an enviable record of service to the Christian Reformed Church. Mr. Jacob J. Buiten, business manager of the Banner for many years, is also retiring.

No doubt future issues of the Banner will eulogize these men for their untiring service rendered the Christian Reformed constituency. No doubt, too, church papers and other periodicals of sister denominations will also take note of this change of editorship and express sentiments of praise to these men. We may, therefore, leave the eulogies to be expressed to others who are in a better position to do so. It stands to reason that we cannot praise these men because of the existing differences between us both as to doctrine and practise. No more than we could be expected to respond favorably to a request to take part in the dedication of any of their new church buildings (which we have been asked to do more than once, but have always refused), could we be expected to ask the Lord to bless all that these men have written. We could never be so hypocritical as to praise the Lord for the dissemination of doctrines which we believe to be contrary to Scripture and our Reformed Confessions. This does not mean, nor should anyone conclude, that we were in total disagreement with all that these editors have written. Moreover, we believe that these men have been faithful sons of the Christian Reformed Church. They set forth and defended the doctrines of this church as well and better perhaps than others of their men were able to do. If to say this is a eulogy then we have expressed one, though it is not so intended.

To write for a church paper continuously for so many years is no small task, granted that their task was lightened considerably in late years by the fact that both of these men were retired from the active ministry in their churches.

Nevertheless, to write for so many years, and to be elected and continually reappointed to do so by the church is no small thing.

We have not yet been informed as to Rev. Ghysel's successor. This appointment will most likely be made by the Publication Committee. Whoever he will be, he should not find it too difficult to improve on the style and contents of the Meditations Department filled by the former editor. It is our opinion that he did not always write Scriptural Meditations. Generally this department was filled with Ghysel's sentiments and expressions of his emotional feelings with a Scripture text placed over them. Also, often, when an at-

tempt was made to dig out of the text the findings were not always soundly Reformed as they should be. We hope that the new appointee will give us more satisfaction than the old.

Rev. Kuiper's successor has already been named by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. The Rev. John Vander Ploeg has been devoting himself to special study in Chicago for this work. We are not so optimistic at this point to believe that the new editor-in-chief will be an improvement over the retiring editor. We have read some of the writings of the Rev. Vander Ploeg who for some time has filled another department in the Banner. We frankly state that he has not left the impression with us that he is the man Rev. Kuiper has proved to be. Even his special training will not make a man out of him in our judgment. We like the editor who dares to say what he thinks, who is not a "yes" man, who dares to be original, who is not given to pussy-footing. Even though we did not always agree with him, we believe Rev. Kuiper to a large extent did a good job as editor. Rev. Vander Ploeg will have to change considerably if he is going to fill the bill.

Progressive Calvinism and Common Grace

We have called attention before to the periodical called Progressive Calvinism which is now in its second year of publication. This little paper means to be, so it seems, critical of the "Calvinism" of Christian Reformed Calvinists. Some of this criticism we find in the August, 1956, issue where one of the editors publishes his answers to certain questions propounded to him at a certain meeting of a Reading Club to which he had been invited. The questions all appear to be related to the principle question suggested by earlier issues of Progressive Calvinism where the latter gives the "formulation of the law of brotherly love as being, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, with the emphasis on the last two words, *as thyself*." The principle question asked was: "What does it mean to love the neighbor *as thyself*?"

On pages 233-236 of the August issue the editor attempts an answer to the related question: "On the relationship of Christianity to Prosperity." He writes as follows:

"From the floor the question was asked to the effect: Is it sound to say that prosperity definitely results from obeying God's commandments? Does not experience indicate that obeying God's commandments does not uniformly make men prosperous, but even sometimes the reverse? This question challenges Declaration No. 5 of the Progressive Calvinism League. The declaration reads:

(a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a *free* market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.

We presented in our first issue, January 1955, a brief explanation of this declaration. See that issue.

Some of our explanatory statements in the January 1955 issue need more careful formulation than we gave them.

In the first place, we do not mean by *prosperity* merely

material riches. We mean by it a pleasant earthly life, a life you can live to suit your own inclinations (except to sin). This kind of comfortable or good life might mean a modest life on a college campus, in pleasant physical surroundings, with delightful intellectual stimulation, long summer vacations, sabbatical years for study and travel. Of course, you will not get rich in material goods doing that, but you will still be 'rich' because you are living your life *your* way, as you wish to spend it on earth on mundane matters. A man cannot expect wealth if he does not work for it. Nor can he enjoy the intellectual life, if he fails to do what that requires. And so prosperity means (in our thought) the good life the one you specifically want to live, and that is certainly not limited to Cadillacs and town and country houses and great luxury. It means other kinds of lives than the mere acquisition of wealth.

But, we regretfully admit, the good life does not always follow from adherence to Christianity as certainly as a physical effect follows a physical cause, for several reasons:

(a) *Private* evil interferes with the natural cause and effect;

(b) *Public* evil also interferes;

and then we should have added a third qualification, namely,

(c) God in his inscrutable wisdom (but probably for the benefit of our souls) afflicts us. Consider the case of Job.

These are sweeping qualifications. We mentioned (a) and (b) inadequately in our January 1955 issue, but we wholly neglected (c).

In regard to the question: Is there a normal cause and effect relationship between obedience to the commands of God, as cause, and a resulting good life (prosperity, living as we wish) as effect—to that question our answer was and is *Yes*. All Scripture teaches it. We can fill a book of solid references to support this. Scripture teaches that God rewards the good and punishes the evil. If it does not teach that, then the world and morality are upside down.

We hold, therefore, tenaciously to the conviction that the general rule in this world in the past was, today is, and in the future will be that temporal rewards result from conduct in obedience to God's laws, and that temporal penalties follow conduct in disobedience to God's laws. As a qualification we admit that coercion (power) exercised by individuals and by men collectively (governments), interferes with these laws. Further, we admit that the inscrutable providence of God seems occasionally to interfere with the general rule."

The author of the above lines continues with what especially struck our attention as most interesting and no doubt will be of interest to our readers. We continue the quotation:

"This last factor touches on a moot question among Christian Reformed Calvinists—the question of *common grace*. God makes 'his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.' (Matt. 5:45). This sounds like a statement against Declaration No. 5, that is, that there are neither punishments nor rewards for different kinds of conduct.

In this connection we told the meeting that there are obvious logical contradictions in various ideas about *common grace* and *total depravity*. If a man has sufficiently naive ideas about cosmogony (how the world is put together and functions), he can also have—he must of necessity have—correspondingly naive ideas about 'grace.' Sometime we hope to cover these ideas possibly under the title, 'Playing Tiddley-Winks With Words.' Much of what passes for doctrinal profundity on 'grace' is plainly unrealistic.

We told the meeting: of course the rain falls on the just and the unjust. Imagine a square of ten miles on each side, with quarter-section farms owned by 'believers' and 'unbelievers'; the holdings of each type of owner are distributed throughout the whole area; and then God because of some 'grace' idea should keep the rain and sun off the plots of the 'unbelievers' and should bountifully dispense them on the adjacent plots of the 'believers'! Such *discrimination* in natural affairs by the *providence* of God would be so absurd and unworkable, that Christ simply called attention to an idea of such elementary common sense that there is no proof of 'common grace' to be derived from such a text. For PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM therefore, common grace (whatever some may define that to be) does not reduce the general validity of our Declaration No. 5."

If we have understood the writer of the above quotation, he emphasizes especially two things in denial of the doctrine of common grace, and both of them have repeatedly been the contention of our leaders from the beginning of our controversy with the Christian Reformed Church relative to this false doctrine.

In the first place, he insists that the prosperity of the wicked in this world is not due to a certain common grace of God to them, but simply to the fact that the ungodly in a natural and outward sense conforms to the law of God. One of our leaders has used the illustration of two bakers, one godly and the other reprobate, to clarify this point. The latter is in possession of the formula for making good bread, while the former can only make sour dough. Who gets the business? Of course, the ungodly man. Why? Simply because he conforms to the law of God for making good bread. Any grace involved here? Of course not!

In the second place, the writer of Progressive Calvinism has correctly seen that grace and providence must not be confused. This also our leaders have always contended. The fact that rain and sunshine fall on the acreage of the ungodly is not due to a certain common grace of God over him, but simply to the providence of God according to which He provides for all His creatures. Providence is not grace, nor should these two concepts ever be confused as has been done by the common grace people.

Progressive Calvinism has more to say in criticism of the "Calvinism" of Christian Reformed Calvinists which is interesting. We will continue to take note of what is written in future issues.

M.S.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 489)

that covenant. They are the following. (1) I will not again curse the ground for man's sake . . . While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. (2) Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. (3) And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . ." Let us now get before us the Scriptures at Heb. 11:7, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The "things not as yet seen" were the destruction of the world through the flood as an unfulfilled prophecy of God. Noah believed God. Of all that vast multitude to whom he communicated his revelation, he was the only one who believed. And under the constraint of his faith, in obedience to the word of God, he built an ark, to the saving of his house, and thereby condemned the unbelief and profanity of all his contemporaries. The result was that he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. He inherited righteousness in Christ and the reward of righteousness, to wit, the fulfillment of the promises of the covenant established with him. He inherited the earth as freed from the race of men that had corrupted it—the earth as freed from that race by the waters of the flood. He inherited the right and privilege to be fruitful and replenish this earth. He inherited the right and privilege to rule over every beast of the field, the fowls of the air, all that moved upon the earth, and all the fishes of the sea. "Into your hand are they delivered." He received the right to nourish his body with the flesh of animals. Lastly he received the right and duty to unsheath the sword in punishment of crime, that is, of murder. He inherited the earth with its perpetuity of divine ordinances. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest . . . shall not cease." Now all this good—these rights and privileges—formed not the supreme reward of Noah's righteousness but were typical of it. We must bear in mind that we deal here with types. The supreme reward of Noah's righteousness was and is the kingdom of heaven, the new earth, the new and glorified earth, where the tabernacle of God will be with men. Let us consider now that all this good, both on the earthy plain and on the heavenly plain, was a fulfilled promise of the covenant, that God established with Noah and at once the reward of His righteousness, thus a reward of the atonement of Christ, for Noah's righteousness was Christ's. What follows from this, again with unrelenting logic, is that the covenant established with Noah was one of special grace. For if the promise of that covenant, and the fulfillment of these promises, the good that Noah inherited, was the fruit of Christ's atonement, it certainly must follow that the covenant itself was the fruit of Christ's atonement, that it was thus a covenant of special grace. G.M.O.

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