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Bearer

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MEDITATION

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; . . . being rooted and grounded in love." Ephesians 3:17.

This is a prayer.

Or rather, this is a single petition of a prayer which is constantly being sent to the throne of grace by the apostle for the believers at Ephesus, and, for that matter, for all the church of the new dispensation.

He wants us to know that.

What is even more important, the Holy Spirit, Who inspired the apostle to write this, wants us to know that the apostle makes this prayer for the church.

Not as a matter of curiosity, but that also we may know what is the spiritual need of the church, and thus of ourselves.

And may learn to pray this same prayer.

Daily presenting this need.

And daily being heard.

"For this cause I bend the knee," the apostle had said.

In essence he repeated after the psalmist of old.

*O Lord, Thou hast ascended on high in might to reign;
Captivity Thou leadest a captive in Thy train.
Rich gifts to Thee are offered by men who did rebel,
Who pray that now Jehovah their God with them may dwell.*

The depths of his soul were stirred by the thought of the "unsearchable riches of Christ" which he was called to preach among the Gentiles. His heart rejoiced as he saw the power of the Spirit working through the means of the preaching of the Word and gathering the church from both Jew and Gentile into the unity of a glorious temple of God, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

"For this cause I bend the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

And informing us of this, the Spirit instructs us to do the same.

"That He would grant you . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts."

Now there can be no doubt about it, but that this "you" refers to the believers of the new dispensation. For they are addressed throughout this epistle. And, therefore, when the apostle prays that Christ may dwell in them, he does not imply that as yet this is not the case. But rather it is his fervent desire, that, even as Christ has taken up His abode in their hearts, He may evermore fully indwell in them, until all their hearts and lives are filled by Him.

This prayer applies to us, who have Christ dwelling in us by the Spirit.

That He may evermore fill our hearts and lives.

That we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

"In your hearts."

That is the spiritual-ethical center of all our existence. It is the seat of all our will, emotions, and desires. Love harbors there as the basic and strongest desire of all. From the heart are the issues of life, for from that source arise all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Therefore Scripture sometimes compares the heart to a fountain. If the source is pure, all the waters that flow from the fountain are pure. And on the contrary, if the source is corrupt, all that flows from it is corrupt.

Here the apostle compares the heart to a dwelling place, a home.

A home is not the same as a cold, uninviting structure. Even a beautiful, modern house, equipped with the most attractive furniture and every modern convenience, still lacks the warm coziness of a home as long as it is unoccupied. Even when a house is occupied, it still is no home if the occupants cannot exercise true love and fellowship, but live in aloof bitterness there.

In a home you experience friendship and fellowship, mutual confidence, a delight in one another's company, a seeking of each other's welfare, so that everyone lives in the warm atmosphere of harmonious love.

Our heart is that kind of home.

For Christ dwells there. He has taken up His abode to remain there forever.

That has not always been the case.

Or, it is better to say, that this is not our spiritual condition as we are by nature.

By nature, our heart is also a dwelling place of a sort. But then a dwelling place of the devil. He is not a prisoner there, nor a slave, nor a boarder, nor a stranger. He feels perfectly at home there, for he loves the environment of sin and darkness, which fits his own corruption. Moreover, he sets up a dictatorship there as the prince of darkness, and finds us his willing subjects. For we love the works of darkness in rebellion against the living God as much as he does.

Children of darkness was our name from our earliest infancy. We have never known nor sought any other companionship than in the realm of darkness. We were perfectly willing that our hearts should remain the citadel of Satan.

But grace has changed all that.

For the Son of God, Who came into the likeness of sinful flesh to fight and overcome the powers of darkness, Who broke the chains of death and hell, has marched triumphantly on to victory, so that He is now exalted as Lord over all in the highest heavens.

And He has come to dwell in our hearts by His Spirit.

He did not wait to be invited, but stormed this stronghold of Satan, deprived him of his power, and put him out of our hearts, for He, in turn, took up residence there. He regenerated us, made us new creatures, as a holy temple of God, a fit dwelling place for Himself in the Spirit.

He is not a mere unseen guest, who unobtrusively occupies a small corner of our hearts. He fills the whole heart for He spreads His life and His love abroad in our hearts. He dwells there in intimate fellowship and friendship. In fact, He has the chief place there, for He is our Lord and our God, Who has come to live and reign within us forever. He reigns in love, and He makes us His willing subjects.

That is His prerogative, given Him by the Father.

But even so, this is only in principle. For we possess the life of Christ in a body of sin and death. Therefore we must still bitterly complain, that we will the good, but the evil is still present with us.

And thus the prayer, that Christ may dwell in our hearts, evermore fully until all the issues of our lives are governed by Him.

Until we have put on perfection in heavenly glory, and forevermore.

"Through faith."

How important it is to add also that phrase to our prayer.

For faith is the living tie that unites us to Christ.

How else could Christ ever dwell in us? He is in heaven, and we are still on earth. He is the exalted Lord in a human nature which has been made spiritual and heavenly, while we are still in this earthly house of our tabernacle.

But as the branches of the vine receive their life from the root, by a living tie that unites them as one vine, so we also receive our life from Christ as branches of the true vine. His life is in us, for He Himself lives in us. Or, again, as all the stones of the temple have their solidity and unity in the one cornerstone, so we also are one, eternal temple of God, founded on Jesus Christ, and united with Him in a living faith. Or, if you will, as the electric current originates in the power house passes through the bulb and produces light in the bulb, only to return without loss of energy to its source; so the life of Christ fills us, becomes the light of life within us, and returns to Him unexpended.

He is the life of our life, the strength of our strength, our righteousness, our holiness, our complete salvation.

Through faith Christ dwells in our hearts.

This is also our conscious experience.

For the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened to know Him as our Lord and Savior, and thus to know the only true and living God as the God of our salvation. We have the Word of God's revelation in the Scriptures, applied to our hearts by the Spirit. And we live out of that fountain of life, experiencing intimate fellowship with God in Jesus Christ.

For it is our only comfort in life and death that we belong to that faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

We know Him, as our mighty Deliverer, our only Lord.

We live by faith, and not by sight.

But even so, we experience that we have this treasure in a body of sin and death.

And we ask: Lord, evermore give us that faith. Cause us to grow in it, to live evermore fully by faith.

That Christ may indwell in us, evermore completely, through faith.

A bold prayer.

Yet confidently the apostle sends this prayer up to the throne of grace for himself and all the church. And he would have us approach the throne of grace in that same confidence. Therefore he adds, "being rooted and founded in love."

That love is always basic for all of our blessings. For it is the love of God, which eternally fills the heart of God, and causes that heart to throb in the intimate fellowship of the three persons, seeking and delighting in one another. It is the love of God for us, which eternally impelled Him to

take us into His life and into His fellowship, that He might abide with us, and thus we may abide with Him.

It is the love that was manifested on the cross in the Lamb of God who brought the perfect sacrifice for our sins. It is the love that now fills our hearts through His indwelling Spirit. We love Him, because He first loved us, and has spread His love abroad in our hearts. And by that love we are knit as members of one family to all who love the Lord Jesus.

That love is the root, in which we are firmly rooted, and from which we draw our love, living the covenant life of God. That love is the foundation stone, upon which we are grounded, to remain firmly fixed through life and death, in whatever may befall us, even unto eternal perfection.

That love can never fail, because God can never fail.

But that love abounds more and more, so that Christ becomes evermore completely our Lord, and we become evermore fully His willing subjects, to trust in Him and serve Him in love.

That gives us the boldness to ask: Lord, ever multiply Thy love to us, cause us to live evermore fully by faith and not by sight, that Christ may continue to dwell ever more completely within us with all the blessings of His grace, Until we are filled with all the fulness of God.

To Whom be the glory throughout the ages. World without end.
C.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory and congregation of Creston Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their sympathy to Mrs. P. Van den Engel and family in the loss of their husband and father,

MR. PAUL VANDEN ENGEL

Mr. Vanden Engel has for many years been a spiritual brother and a faithful leader in our midst, and we grieve with the family at his departure from among us. Our prayer is that they and we may be given comfort, knowing that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." — Ps. 34:19

IN MEMORIAM

The Lord has recently taken from two of our fellow members, Mr. Jake King and Mr. Joe King, a brother,

MR. ELO KING

We, the consistory and congregation of Creston Protestant Reformed Church, pray that these brethren may find comfort in the wisdom of the Lord knowing that, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." — Ps. 145:17, 18

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EDITORIALS

The Free Offer

In the issue of our paper of Feb. 1 we started to discuss the pamphlet "*The Free Offer of the Gospel*" composed by the Revs. Murray and Stonehouse of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

We commenced our discussion by calling attention to the introduction in which the authors set forth the principles on which the booklet is based. We still have to call your attention to the closing paragraphs of this introduction.

The first of these reads as follows:

"Again the expression 'God desires' in the formula that crystalizes that crux of the question, is intended to modify not at all the 'seeming' attitude of God but a real attitude, a real disposition of lovingkindness in the free offer to all, in other words, a pleasure or delight in God, contemplating the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture proffered and the invitation given."

There can be but one meaning expressed in this paragraph. It is that in the preaching of the gospel there is revealed, on the part of God, a real attitude of grace, a real disposition of lovingkindness to save all men, elect and reprobate. Again, if this means anything at all, it must signify that, as far as God is concerned, there is no determination in Him that any man be lost, whether elect or reprobate. What does this mean in regard to God's decree of election and reprobation? It can mean only one thing: the authors prefer the Arminian conception of predestination, unless they are playing with words. The Arminian presentation of election is, as we know, that God, from all eternity, foresaw and foreknew who would believe in Christ and persevere in that faith until the end. Likewise, the Arminian conception of reprobation is that God, from all eternity, foresaw and foreknew who would refuse to believe in Christ and persevere to the end in their unbelief. Only in that light, which means that man has a free will to accept the gospel or to reject it, can one possibly speak of a desire or a disposition of lovingkindness in God to save all men, including the reprobate.

These men do not believe their own confession which is the Westminster Confession of Faith.

That Confession declares:

"Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." Chapter III, art. II.

Murray and Stonehouse, however, believe that God is filled with an earnest desire to save all men, except upon the supposed and foreseen condition that they refuse to accept the gospel invitation.

The same Confession declares further:

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory,

some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." Chapter III, art. II.

We ask the authors of the pamphlet: did God have a sincere desire and was He disposed in his lovingkindness to save those whom He ordained to death? And if the decree of reprobation was not motivated by grace and a desire to save the reprobate, could there be such a desire in God in time? And if there is no such desire in God to save the reprobate, could the gospel ever reflect such a desire or disposition of lovingkindness in God? It is evident that Murray and Stonehouse corrupt their own confession.

"Further, the same confession teaches:

"These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." Chapter III, IV.

Mark you well, the number of the elect and reprobate is very definitely determined, not by what God foresaw and foreknew, but by what He decreed from all eternity. There are no possible conditions. The acceptance or rejection of the gospel invitation has nothing to do with this. To this, too, Murray and Stonehouse do not subscribe.

Still further, the Westminster declares:

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace." Chapter III, V.

Also this the authors of the pamphlet do not believe. According to this article, grace is for the elect only, but according to them, God is filled with lovingkindness to the reprobate, a grace for all that is revealed in the gospel.

The Confession states further:

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." Chapter III, art. VI.

We ask the authors of the pamphlet: why do you pretend to subscribe also to this article while, in fact, you teach the very opposite? Why do you not openly move in the Arminian camp, where you belong?

What does this article teach?

It teaches in the first place that Christ redeemed, that is shed his lifeblood for the elect only. When Christ died on

the accursed tree he paid the price of redemption only for those whom the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world. This was over nineteen hundred years ago. It was once and forever. Hence, even apart from the decree of election and reprobation, it is absolutely impossible that there should be in God a desire or disposition of lovingkindness to save all men, even the reprobate. There certainly was no such desire in God when He delivered His Son to the death of the cross, for he did not redeem them all but only the elect. Besides, this is also impossible because, if Christ died and paid the price of redemption for the elect only, there is, so to speak, no capital to pay the price of redemption for the reprobate. If I desire to give a hundred dollars to a hundred men each, and I have laid away just ten thousand dollars for the purpose, I certainly cannot give or even offer a hundred dollars to a hundred more men. Now, I know that this is a homely figure and that it cannot be applied to the redemption of Christ in every detail, but it serves the purpose for which it is given. If Christ did not pay the price of redemption for all men, God, in his lovingkindness cannot mean to save all or offer salvation to all.

From this point of view, Murray and Stonehouse, do not subscribe to, but corrupt their own confession. They should not pretend to be Orthodox Presbyterian, for they are and mean to be Arminian.

That the Westminster Confession teaches, indeed, that Christ paid the price of redemption, not for all men, but only for those whom the Father has given Him, is also plainly in chapter VIII, art. V:

"The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him."

Again I say that, according to the Westminster Confession, Christ, by His death purchased nothing for the reprobate. How, then, can God, in His lovingkindness intend to save them and offer unto them the salvation which Christ purchased for the elect alone? Again, I claim that the authors of the pamphlet do not believe and subscribe to their own confession.

There is still more in the article of the Westminster we quoted a moment ago. It does not only teach that Christ paid the price of redemption for the elect alone, but it also emphasizes that the application of that work of redemption is God's work alone. He alone effectually calls, He alone adopts, justifies, sanctifies, and He alone keeps them through faith unto salvation even unto the end. And this He does, according to the article, only in and for the elect.

Now, I ask again, as I did before, why, if God is so filled with lovingkindness to save all men, even the reprobate, why does he not do it? The answer of the Westminster Confession is plain: He is not filled with a desire to save all

men, but only the elect. But the answer of Murray and Stonehouse is: because they do not comply with the condition, i.e. to accept the general offer and invitation of the gospel; in other words: God loves to save them but they do not want to be saved. They deny the sovereign grace of God and, therefore, do not subscribe to what they pretend to be their own confession. Professing to be Calvinists they are Arminians.

We still wish to quote the article of the Westminster on the truth of reprobation:

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, for the glory of his glorious justice." Chapter III, VII.

To those reprobate, whom God ordained from eternity to dishonor and wrath for their sin, He, according to Murray and Stonehouse assumes a real attitude of lovingkindness and desire to save them. We readily understand that this is an impossible theory. It is neither Scriptural nor confessional. But I wish to say even more. I do not believe that they can nor want to believe this themselves. They must be irrational to believe that God has a sincere desire to save those whom, from all eternity, He has ordained to wrath and eternal desolation. This, mind you, is no mystery, which is far above our comprehension, but is simply a flat contradiction, an wholly irrational proposition, and, therefore, incapable of acceptance. But they do not believe in reprobation in the confessional and Scriptural sense of the word.

They do not subscribe to their own confession.

More about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

QUESTION BOX

The Rev. E. E. of Randolph, Wis., asks:

1. Is it wrong to say, "God punishes and condemns Pharaoh NOT on account of sin but rather IN THE WAY OF SIN (Pharaoh's sin)?" Does this phrase "Not on account of sin" become superfluous when it is used in the same sentence where the phrase: "IN THE WAY OF SIN" appears?

The brother explains the meaning of his question. He understands that, according to the Protestant Reformed position, we must have nothing of the Arminian view of reprobation that God reprobated some because He saw beforehand that they would sin and refuse to believe in Christ. However, he also understands that the decree of God, election and reprobation, is inseparable from the fruits that men reveal in time. In this connection he writes literally: "a man can only act according to the character God has given him and, there-

fore, his fruits shall be in harmony with that character." Hence, the question arises, not only whether we must say that reprobation takes place, not because of or on account of sin, but in the way of sin; but also that we must say that God condemns and punishes a man, not on account of, but in the way of sin.

The brother, evidently, deals with deep and very difficult problems, with problems, too, that, ultimately, we cannot solve because we cannot fathom God. Nevertheless, we may say something about it, in the light of Scripture, in order to define the problem and to keep our attempt at solving it within proper limits.

And then I would answer the above stated question as follows:

1. It certainly is the Reformed position that reprobation is not on account of sin but it is realized in the way of sin. No more than any works of man are the cause or ground of his election, no more is his sin the cause or ground of his reprobation. The article in the Canons of Dordrecht that speaks of reprobation reads as follows (representing the infralapsarian viewpoint):

"What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election, is the express testimony of sacred Scripture that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own ways, at last for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and perish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger thereof."

Reprobation, therefore, is solely out of God's sovereign good pleasure.

And, in the same chapter of the Canons, rejection of errors, VIII, we read that we reject the errors of those who teach:

"That God, simply by virtue of his righteous will, did not decide either to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation, or to pass anyone by in the communication of grace which is necessary for faith and conversion. For this is firmly decreed: 'He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth,' Rom. 9:18. And also this: 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' Matt. 13:11. Likewise: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven

and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.' Matt. 11:25, 26."

From all this it is clearly evident that the decree of reprobation is not on account of the sin of those that are rejected, but solely out of God's sovereign good pleasure, and simply by God's righteous will. Whether one takes the infralapsarian or the supralapsarian viewpoint of God's eternal predestination, this truth remains the same. Our fathers and the Reformed churches in general must have nothing of Arminianism.

2. Another question is, whether we may ever say, as the brother has it, that "man can only act according to the character God has given him and, therefore, his fruits shall be in harmony with his character."

I take it that, in this sentence, the brother uses the word "character" in the sense of "nature." If this is not the case, he better answer and correct me, at the same time defining the term "character."

Now, I agree that everyone acts according to his "character" or nature, whether it be good or evil and that, therefore, his fruits, meaning his works will be in harmony with his character or nature. But I cannot agree when the brother states that "man can only act according to the character *God has given him*." I stated in the beginning of this article that we cannot fully fathom the mystery of election and reprobation, but that we can nevertheless, say something about it in the light of Scripture, and that we can so define it that we keep the attempt to solve this problem within proper limits. This I wish to apply now to the view of the brother that asks the question. And I wish to do so by stating: that we certainly, on the basis of Holy Writ, believe with all our heart in absolutely sovereign election and in equally sovereign reprobation, but always emphasizing that God is never the author of sin.

It seems to me that this is the mistake of the brother when he states that man always acts according to character *God has given him*. That implies that God has given to the reprobate his evil nature, or, in other words, that God created him wicked and perverse.

This the Reformed Confessions never teach or allow.

O, I know that we can say a good deal more about this. We can say that even the fall of man was not outside of God's sovereign rule, that the very devil and his host are absolutely under God's control, and that God always fulfills His counsel. To all this I have no objection, in fact, this I have always taught and still do teach with all the love of my heart. I know, on the basis of Scripture, that it is according to the counsel of the Most High that sin *must* come into the world. Much more can be said about this.

Nevertheless, we may never say that God gave the reprobate his evil nature.

Then we land into the error of determinism, of blind fatalism.

Then we make God the author of sin. This we may never do.

Our Reformed Confessions are always opposed to this error. This is plain already from the article in the Canons on reprobation which we just quoted. In that article we read that by reprobation God decreed to leave some "in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves" and: "permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and perish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins."

This is also the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism in questions 6 and 7. In question 6 we read: "Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?" And the answer: "By no means; but God created man good and after his own image," etc. And in question 7: "Whence then proceeds this depravity of the human nature?" And the answer: "From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin."

I could quote more. But this is sufficient to show that, according to our Reformed Standards, God did not give man his evil "character" or nature, but that man himself is to blame for his sin.

3. But the first question of brother E. really does not ask about the truth of reprobation, although it is closely connected with it and although he, evidently, had this in mind. He asks whether we must say that God punishes sin, not on account of sin, but in the way of sin. And he refers to Pharaoh.

My answer is negative. We must positively say that God punishes the sinner on account and for his sin, and not that he punishes him in the way of sin. In fact, to say that punishes a sinner in the way of sin is a contradiction in terms, as the brother, judging by the last part of this question, himself felt. He confuses in his mind reprobation, the sin of man, the judgment of God, and the punishment of sin. Let us get this straight:

a. God reprobated some to eternal destruction. This decree of reprobation is not on account of foreseen sin, but is absolutely sovereign, out of His own good pleasure.

b. This decree is realized through and in the way of the fall and sin of man whom He created good but lapsible. This fall is an act of wilfull disobedience.

c. God, in His righteous judgment, punishes the sinner with eternal desolation, not in the way of, but for and on account of his sin.

That this is the clear teaching of all of Holy Writ we do not have to show. This is even evident from the history of Pharaoh to which brother E. refers. God sent His plagues upon the land of Egypt for and on account of his sin that he did not want to let the people of Israel go. And when Pharaoh occasionally confesses that he sinned and momentarily came to a carnal repentance, God withdrew the plague. Cf. Ex. 9:27ff.

Nor is it necessary to call attention to the fact that the Confessions teach the same thing. I wish to refer to only one or two illustrations.

First of all I refer again to the article in the Canons that speaks of reprobation. We read there, as I quoted before that God, in His just judgment, allows the reprobate to follow their own ways and, "at last, for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and perish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins."

This is plain language. God does not condemn and punish the reprobate in the way of, but on account of and for their sins.

And in the Heidelberg Catechism, qu. 10, we read:

"Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?"

"A. By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as with our actual sins; and will punish them in his just judgment temporally and eternally, as he hath declared, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'"

Well, this is my answer to the first question of brother E. Hope that it may be of some help to all of us.

H.H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 4, 1957, the Lord willing, our dear parents

MR. AND MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

hope to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Covenant God for all the blessings he has bestowed on them and us.

Our prayer is that the Lord may grant them His peace the remaining days of their pilgrimage.

Their thankful children,

Mr. and Mrs. George Spruyt

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THE MULTIFORMITY OF THE CHURCH

The subject of the multiformity of the church is not only of some theological importance, but it also is from a practical point of view a very interesting topic. This is true in the first place, because the subject of the church is always dear to the heart of the child of God, for he confesses in the words of the Heidelberg, concerning that church that "I am and forever shall remain a living member thereof." From a little different point of view the subject is of practical interest because it speaks of the relationships which the various members of that church sustain to one another, and of the place and duties of the individual member in the sphere of the church.

But the subject of the multiformity of the Church has been and is today very often misunderstood, which misunderstanding results in some very pernicious errors in the views of the true and false church. And therefore the subject is of value also theologically.

In order to understand clearly what the Scriptural idea of multiformity is, it is imperative that we understand the Scriptural idea of the Church. What is the church from the point of view of Scripture?

The truth that the church is a living organism with Christ and as such is the object of election is probably the fundamental idea of the Church in Scripture. This is taught in many passages. In John 15:1-5 we read, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Again in Rom. 12:4, 5 we read, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." To the passage in I Corinthians 12 we must refer at a later time, but nevertheless there also the church is spoken of as an organism. After Paul discusses the various members of the human body and the interdependence and interrelationships of these various members, he concludes by saying, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," verse 27. Again in that glorious passage of Colossians 1, in verses 13-18 we read, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things

were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." And in a comparable passage we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephesians 1:3, 4.

Although from two different figures, these texts teach the same basic thought. In John 15, Christ is represented as the vine, while the various members of the Church are the branches. In the other passages quoted, Christ is pictured as the Head of the body, and the Church composes the other members of that same body. Yet more specifically these passages teach us some important characteristics of that Church.

In the first place, that church as one organic unity is the object of election as is especially evident from Ephesians 1. God chose from before the foundations of the world one people in Christ. According to Scripture that one people forms one harmonious unity and entity with Christ. That means that they were not chosen alone as to form, but also more particularly as to the individual members that compose that unity. Each member was chosen directly by God eternally in His counsel according to His own sovereign good pleasure. Not only that, but they were chosen to a particular place within the unity of that organism. And they were chosen and prepared eternally to fit that place exactly. If we may follow the idea of the figure, God chose one body with Christ the Head. He chose each member of that body as it seemed good to Him. He chose each member to occupy their own particular place. He chose a hand, a foot, a toe for its place, and only its place in the one unity of the body of Christ. Furthermore, we must remember that that counsel of election is also the powerful and efficacious cause of the realization of that body in time, and finally in perfection in heaven.

In the second place, that one unified body of Christ is an organism. Without going into detail (for that is not necessary for this paper) into the idea of an organism, we may say that that unity is a living unity, deriving its life from a common principle. And that principle of all the life of the unity of the organism, is Jesus Christ. And because the church is a living unity and organism, each member is dependent first of all upon Christ, and because it is dependent upon Christ, each member is dependent upon the other. There is no function of the organism without the complete function of each member. There is interdependency and interrelationship as the whole functions and lives only out of Christ its Head.

That we must remember first of all when we speak of the multiformity of the church. For the multiformity is a multi-

formity of that body of Christ which is the object of God's electing power, and which is an unified organism in Jesus Christ. "Yet the fact remains, that God's church is *one church* in her true spiritual essence, guided and blessed by the operation of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in her. The Church does not consist of various denominations, which together make up the true church. Then she would be divided. Even though we may grant that there are true believers in various denominations, these various denominations do not make up the true church. The church is spiritual, heavenly, and therefore is knit together by a spiritual bond."¹

The Church considered as such has four attributes ascribed to it by Scripture and our Confessions. They are its unity, catholicity, holiness and apostolicity. Only the first two are important for our subject.

Although our Confessions speak very little about the multiformity of the Church, nevertheless concerning the Church from the point of view of these attributes, they speak very often. In Articles 258-262 of the Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church we read, "Why is the Church one? Because she is one spiritual Body, has one Head, Christ, and is animated by one Spirit of God. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Eph. 4:4-6.

"Are we still more expressly assured that Jesus Christ is the one only Head of the one Church? The Apostle Paul writes, that for the Church, as the building of God, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Cor. 3:10, 11. Wherefore the Church, as the Body of Christ, can have no other Head than Jesus Christ. The Church, being to abide through all generations of time, needs also an ever-abiding head; and such is Jesus Christ alone. Wherefore, also the Apostles take no higher title than that of ministers of the Church. Col. 1:24, 25.

"What duty does the unity of the Church lay upon us? That of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:3.

"How does it agree with the unity of the Church, that there are many separate and independent churches, as those of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Russia? These are particular churches, or parts of the one Catholic Church: the separateness of their visible organization does not hinder them from being all spiritually great members of the one body of the Universal Church, from having one Head, Christ, and one spirit of faith and grace. This unity is expressed outwardly by unity of Creed, and by communion in prayer and Sacraments.

"Is there likewise unity between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven? Doubtless there is, both by their common relation to one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, any by mutual communion with one another."² We notice in this

creed already an attempt to solve the problem of the unity of the Church and the manifestation of the body of Christ in various denominations in this world.

In the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession we read, "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. But the Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered.

"And unto the true unity of the Church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike every where, as St. Paul saith: 'There is one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.'"³

In Chapter XVII of the Second Helvetic Confession we read concerning the Church, "Forasmuch as God from the beginning would have men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (I Tim. 2:4), therefore it is necessary that there always should have been, and should be at this day, and to the end of the world; a Church — that is, a company of the faithful called and gathered out of the world; a communion (I say) of all saints, that is, of them who truly know and rightly worship and serve the true God, in Jesus Christ the Saviour, by the word of the Holy Spirit, and who by faith are partakers of all those good graces which are freely offered through Christ. There all are citizens of one and the same city, living under one Lord, under the same laws, and in the same fellowship of all good things; for the apostle calls them 'fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God' (Eph. 2:19); terming the faithful upon the earth saints (I Cor. 4:1, who are sanctified by the blood of the Son of God. Of these is that article of our Creed wholly to be understood, 'I believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints.'

"And, seeing that there is always but 'one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ' (I Tim. 2:5); also, one Shepherd of the whole flock, one Head of this body, and, to conclude, one Spirit, one salvation, one faith, one Testament, or Covenant, — it follows necessarily that there is but one Church, which we therefore call Catholic because it is universal, spread abroad through all the parts and quarters of the world, and reaches unto all times, and is not limited within the compass either of time or place. Here, therefore, we must condemn the Donatists, who pinned up the Church within the corners of Africa; neither do we assent to the Roman clergy, who vaunt that the Church of Rome alone is in a manner Catholic.

"The Church is divided by some into divers parts or sorts; not that it is rent and divided from itself, but rather distinguished in respect of the diversity of the members that are in it. One part thereof they make to be the Church Militant, the other the Church Triumphant. The Militant wars

still on earth, and fights against the flesh, the world, and the prince of the world, the devil; against sin and against death. The other, being already set at liberty, is now in heaven, and triumphs over all those things overcome, and continually rejoices before the Lord. Yet these two churches have, notwithstanding, a communion and fellowship between themselves.

"Moreover, the Church Militant upon the earth has evermore had many particular churches, which must all, notwithstanding, be referred to the unity of the Catholic Church. This Militant Church was otherwise ordered and governed before the Law, among the patriarchs; otherwise under Moses, by the Law; and otherwise of Christ, by the Gospel. There are but two sorts of people, for the most part, mentioned: to wit, the Israelites and the Gentiles; or they who, of the Jews and Gentiles, were gathered to make a Church. There are also two Testaments, the Old and the New. Yet both these sorts of people have had, and still have, one fellowship, one salvation, in one and the same Messiah; in whom, as members of one body, they are all joined together under one head, and by one faith are all partakers of one and the same spiritual meat and drink. Yet here we do acknowledge a diversity of times, and a diversity in pledges and signs of Christ promised and exhibited; and that now, the ceremonies being abolished, the light shines unto us more clearly, our gifts and graces are more abundant, and our liberty is more full and ample." Notice that here the true Scriptural idea of multiformity is already mentioned.

We read further, "It is the head which has the pre-eminence in the body, and from whence the whole body receives life; by whose spirit it is governed in all things; of whom, also, it receives increase, that it may grow up. Also, there is but one head to the body, which has agreement with the body; and therefore the Church cannot have any other head besides Christ. For as the Church is a spiritual body, so must it needs have a spiritual head like unto itself. Neither can it be governed by any other spirit than by the Spirit of Christ . . . For we hold and teach that Christ our Lord is, and remains still, the only universal pastor, and highest bishop, before God his Father; and that in the Church he performs all the duties of a pastor or bishop, even to the world's end; and therefore stands not in need of any other to supply his room. For he is said to have a substitute, who is absent; but Christ is present with his Church, and is the head that gives life thereunto. He did straitly forbid his apostles and their successors all superiority or dominion in the Church . . ." (Articles 1, 4, 5).⁴

In our own Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 54 we read, "What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Catholic Church? That out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by his Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion in the unity

of the true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of the same."⁵ This is particularly beautiful because the Catechism calls attention to the fact that the Church as it really is, and the church as it is holy and catholic is an object of faith. That Church cannot be seen with the physical eye, nor perceived with the senses but is for the true believer always an object of faith.

In Article XXVII of the Belgic Confession we read, "We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of true Christian believers, expecting all their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed in his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost . . ."

"Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit."⁶

In the Scotch Confession of Faith, Article XVI we read, "As we beleve in ane God, Father, Sonne, and haly Ghaist; so we maist constantly belevee, that from the beginning there hes bene, and now is, and to the end of the warld sall be, ane Kirk, that is to say, ane company and multitude of men chosen of God, who richtly worship and imbrace him be trew faith in Christ Jesus, quha is the only head of the same Kirk, quhilk als wa is the bodie and spouse of Christ Jesus, quhilk Kirk is catholike, that is universal, because it conteinis the Elect of all ages, of all realms, nations, and tongues, be they of Jewes, or be they of the Gentiles, quha have communion and societie with God the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus, throw the sanctificatioun of his haly Spirit: and therefore it is called the communion, not of prophane persounes, bot of Saints, quha as citizenis of the heavenly Jerusalem, have the fuitioun of the maist inestimable benefites, to wit, of ane God, ane Lord Jesus, ane Faith, and ane baptisme: out of the quhilk Kirk, ther is nouthier lyfe, nor eternall felicitie. And therefore we utterly abhorre the blasphemie of them that affirme, that men quhilk live according to equitie and justice, sal be saved, quhat Religioun that even they have professed. For as without Christ Jesus there is nouthier life nor salvation; so sal there nane be participant therof, bot sik as the father hes given unto his Sonne Christ Jesus, ant they that in time cum unto him, avowe his doctrine, and belevee into him, we comprehend the children with the faithful parentes. This Kirk is invisible, knawen onelie to God, quha alane knawis whome he hes chosen; and comprehends as weil (as said is) the Elect that be departed, commonlie called the Kirk triumphant, and they that zit live and fecht against sinne and Sathan as sall live hereafter."⁷

There are several paragraphs of Chapter XXV of the Westminster Confession of Faith which are worthy of notice. "I. The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are,

or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

"V. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will.

"VI. There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: . . ."⁸

In these Confessions and in the Scripture passages quoted is defined for us the two attributes of the Church which are important for our discussion of multiformity.

We learn in the first place that the Church considered as an unity and as catholic is an object of faith. That Church cannot be seen nor perceived with the senses, but is revealed to us in the Scriptures, and as the content of revelation it can be maintained and believed only by faith.

Secondly, the attribute of oneness implies the following:

a) The source of the oneness of the Church is in Christ. For that Church is only one as it is the body of Jesus Christ. This is implied already in the idea of an organism, for an organism is one unity, one plant, one body, receiving its principle of life from a common source. Thus this unity is spiritual, for the Church is one in Christ as united to Christ and to itself by the Spirit of Christ.

b) Thus the unity is not achieved through the efforts of man. This too is important to remember in our discussion of multiformity. Even as that Church comes to manifestation in time, and that in various denominations, nevertheless the unity of the Church, the essential unity can never be achieved through the work of man, but it is one in Jesus Christ. To quote the text that is so often quoted by the Confessions, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6.

c) Because the Church is an organic unity, it is not a mere mob of individual people. To use the illustration of a building that is used by Paul in the last verses of the second chapter of Ephesians, the church is not merely a heap of stones, but is a beautifully constructed building. Every member has his own peculiar place in the organism of the Church. Every member fits that place perfectly. Every member serves the whole in his own way in his place. And the total membership form one beautiful harmonious organism living in Jesus Christ to show forth eternally the praise of the divine Author, the triune God.

d) This essential unity of the Church is important to remember when we speak of multiformity. For of that Church as a whole do we speak in this paper. First of all, we do not speak of any particular manifestation of that Church upon earth at any given time in history, but rather of the one living

organism of the Church as it exists in the eternal counsel of God, and as it shall finally be realized in heaven. If we do not remember this, then we will have trouble understanding multiformity. It is true that at any time in the history of the world that Church is present on earth in part, and that therefore there is a manifestation also of multiformity in a measure, but it is incomplete and cannot even be seen in all the riches of its diversity. Thus we must remember that when Scripture speaks of multiformity, it speaks of the multiformity of the entire living organism of the Church with Christ.

Thirdly, the attribute of catholicity is also important to remember. The catholicity of the Church refers to the fact that the Church is gathered in time from all the nations of the world, of every tribe and tongue, of every race and people. Thus in the real sense of the word the Church is universal. But neither can this be said of the Church at any one time in the history of the world. But again this is only true if we consider the Church as a whole. Therefore the Church is catholic as to its oneness. And as considered in its unity in Christ, the catholicity of the Church transcends all natural and physical boundaries, remaining as a unity in the organism of the body. This, too, is important, for much of the diversity of the Church is to be found in the fact that the Church is catholic.

What then is the multiformity of the Church? Or as the Dutch has it, *de pluriformiteit* or *de veelszijdigheid van de kerk*?

The literal meaning of the words that are used is, the many formedness or many sidedness of the Church. And although the term as such is not Scriptural, it conveys satisfactorily the idea of Scripture.

And yet the term as such may be misleading. If, e.g. we would speak of the many forms of the organism of a tree, we would refer to the fact that that tree was once a seed in the ground, but that through a normal process of growth it became a sapling and finally the mighty plant of the forest. That however, is not the idea of the multiformity of the Church. For the Church does not assume at different times in its history different forms. In itself, of course, in a sense this may be true if we consider the Church only from the point of view of its manifestation on the earth at various times in history.

(To be continued)

H. Hanko

1) Rev. C. Hanko, "The Multiformity of the Church," *Standard Bearer*, XXV, (February 15, 1949), p. 214.

2) Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 4th Ed., (New York, 1919), pp. 484, 485.

3) *Ibid.*, II, p. 11.

4) *Ibid.*, pp. 868-871.

5) *Ibid.*, p. 384.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 416.

7) *Ibid.*, p. 458.

8) *Ibid.*, p. 657.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

I.

(Introduction)

The attentive reader will notice, that in this essay we are beginning a new series of articles in the rubric "From Holy Writ." In the past we have written a series of essays on the first four Chapters of I Corinthians. We have also written five articles on Matthew 11:25-30. These latter articles, evidently, met with some favor with the readers, judging by the response I might receive on them.

We now turn our attention to the Chapters 12 through 14 of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

For some time the undersigned has contemplated writing this series of Articles in the *Standard Bearer*.

The reason?

Fundamentally, because these Chapters too belong to the inspired Scriptures, which are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, in order that the man of God may be thoroughly prepared unto every good work. And the immediate occasion for writing this series is the fact that there is concrete evidence in our churches, one and all, that there is a need for underscoring the very truth, which Paul here sets forth in these Chapters. We are repeatedly reminded, that we have only a small beginning of the new obedience yet, it should not be overlooked that a christian not only begins to love according to some of God's commandments, but according to all of these commandments.

Besides, does not all of Scripture emphasize, that the fulfilment of the law of God is summed up in this one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself? We shall have numerous and timely occasions to notice the wonderful teaching of Paul concerning the love of God in Christ Jesus. In the church of God at Corinth there evidently was no lack of confessing that they believed in the "Communion of Saints." However, the practical implications of this confession did not clearly stand before their minds eye. They were not as spiritually sensitive of the proper exercise of this Communion of Saints as they should be.

Paul does not belong to those, who would tempt God in the church, by separating what He has in His infinite wisdom most intimately joined together. (Canons of Dort, III, IV, Heads of Doctrine, Art. 17.) He gives us here a model of preaching, through which the Holy Spirit confers the grace of obedience. For the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel. Also the obedience of faith and love is wrought in our hearts through teaching, reproof, correction in righteousness. Each of these elements are most wonderfully interwoven and blended in these Chapters which we shall here consider.

It is especially the great theme of the "love of God" in Christ, which is here expounded in its most excellent nature; it is that earmark of grace than which there is none greater and more exalted.

Such is the motive that impels us to take up our pen to write on this exalted subject.

As to our *method* in discussing these Chapters permit us to state that we shall try as much as possible in each essay to follow a step in the development of the argument of the Apostle. Always we shall try to attend to the place that each step in the argument sustains to the rest of the argument. To quote a rather well-known saying: We must not loose sight of the woods because of the trees!

Just a word should also be stated as the *main argument* and the *chief subject*, which is here developed by Paul.

It should be borne in mind, that Paul is writing concerning a very real problem as it existed at that time in the church of Corinth. He is not simply writing in the abstract, but very much in the concrete. He is here dealing with men and women, who are fundamentally *spiritual* men. They understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom, the Mysteries of God in Christ, since God has revealed it unto them by His Holy Spirit. They have the mind of Christ. However, they are not fully matured in all matters, understanding the relative importance of the gifts of God in the church. In some ways they are like children. Rather than being child-like they act childish. And that should not be. And now Paul labors that they may be children in sin, yet be men in understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Paul will write very carefully and with wise pedagogy.

He, therefore, first calls attention in Chapter 12 to the nature, scope and purpose of the *Spiritual Gifts* (charismata) in the church.

The first point he establishes is that the Corinthians were by nature outside of the Church and outside of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They had come a long way. Principally all had been changed for and in them. That is, indeed, sobering.

Hence, they are to listen to his instruction. In no way are they to listen to the instruction of those who curse the name of Jesus. Such do not speak through the Holy Spirit. For only through the Holy Spirit does anyone confess: LORD, JESUS! Verse 1-3.

For all comes from one and the selfsame Spirit; the Spirit of the same Lord and all is energized by the same God. Many and diverse are the gifts of the Spirit. But that is their glory so that they may serve for the profit of the entire body. Nothing is in the church for the individual, for his own personal and selfish interests. It is all for Christ, and in all the several members. No one lives himself or dies himself in the church. Verses 4-11.

For thus hath God ordained all, setting each in the church as He has willed. No member in the church, or no congrega-

tion in the midst of the church in the whole world can separate herself, claim she is not part of the whole, nor can she usurp the place of the other congregation or member. The body of Christ is indeed tempered together, the weak and the strong members, the honorable and the dishonorable. There can and may be no schism in the body. He or they who attempt this nonetheless will find that they cannot mock with God. Verses 12-27.

Wherefore let each seek the best gifts for the sake of the edification of the entire church. Not everyone, however, can be everything. All are not apostles, teachers, evangelists, helpers and rulers. Each, must aspire after the best gifts. However, there is one grace which all must, can aspire after. And that is the more *excellent way*! This more excellent way is not in conflict with, does in no way clash with the gifts in the church. It simply is that which makes all the gifts *come their own*. It is the way of love. Herein shall all men know that ye are my disciples, namely, that ye have love one for the other!

On this theme of "love" Paul sings a hymn of praise, while he shows us the manifestation and earmarks of the same. Chapter 13.

First of all in a triad of climactic instances he shows that except there be "love," the love of God in us and, therefore, through us, all religion, prophecy and speaking with tongues is so much vanity and loss. We should notice the accent from the less important in religion to the more important: Tongues of men and angels — prophecy and all wisdom and knowledge — all our goods to feed the poor and body to be burned! What an imposing list. And notice also the corresponding value of them when "love" is not their inner motivation: Sounding symbol — nothing — profits nothing! Verse 1-3.

Then we should not overlook the "keynote" of love as it must needs reveal itself in the imperfect saints in the body of Christ. That is: love *suffers long*! Well may this sink deep into our hearts. Wherefore, negatively, it must follow that love will never, never, never: be envious, vaunting of self, puffed up, behaving unseemly in the midst of the saints, as a member amongst the members, seeking merely her own, be provoked at the slightest occasion, and then rejoice in all this iniquity. Verses 4-6.

And, positively, love will surely in its being "longsuffering" rejoice together with the whole church in the truth. Wherefore, love believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things! Where love is you have no troubles *in the church* of Jesus Christ. And it doesn't take much love either to have all the gifts in the church come to their own!

It never fails. When there is a failure there was but one reason. There *was* no love! That can be stated without fear of contradiction. All the rest fails. Prophecy, speaking with tongues, knowledge — it all is to pass away. And, therefore, it is but "in part," that is, it is not yet a complete knowledge. No one knows the whole truth yet, not even the entire

church together. Presently we shall no longer see the image of things. We shall see them. Should we then now not see the "limitations" of the gifts, while at the same time remembering the "limitlessness" of *love*!? Here all can share limitlessness. And it shall never pass away. No even in the heaven, in the ages to come. No, love must not be contrasted with "gifts," but it must be the *motive* in all the gifts exercised and enjoyed of the church. Both are from one author, the Holy Spirit. Verses 6b-13.

This point of the relative value of the gifts, Spiritual Gifts in the church needs a bit more illumination. That we have in Chapter 14.

The fundamental axiom and premise underlying the reasoning of Paul in this 14th Chapter is that all the gifts are in the church for the *profit, edification, comfort, and strengthening* of all the members. That which does not edify is useless and besides the purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit. This is sobering.

Speaking with tongues certainly has its place in the church. But it has its very, very severe limitations! In it one may speak to God, edify self. However, this all means nothing for the church, where there is not an interpreter. Thus it is with one who, for example, prays in the Spirit. No one can pray with him and say "Amen." This should be remembered by the Corinthians.

Hence, to aspire after the "best gifts" implies that they rather "prophesy," speak the Word in understandable language. Here five words mean more than ten thousand words in speaking with tongues.

Not to see this would be acting the part of children. It would be simply child's play, working much evil. And they must be children in sin but not in righteousness. Verses 15-25.

Hence, a final word of warning. All things must be done in decency and in good order, that is, according to order, place, station which God has appointed to each in the congregation. Not any man-made order, but Divinely appointed order! It must be as spoken of in the Law.

In a formal sense this implied that in the gatherings not all speak, but that each take a turn. It must not look like a "nut-house!" Then the secrets of the hearts cannot be revealed under the preaching. And *women are to be silent* in the church. They better ask their husbands at home. A good principle, indeed. Paul didn't suck this out of his thumb. It is as written in the law. The principle here laid down may well stand a little underscoring! Verses 26-40.

Thus none will be puffed up. We will then covet to speak unto edification. And all things will be done in decency and in order.

Much that was here present of "speaking with tongues" we no longer encounter. Yet the principles here enunciated stand. This word is still profitable to us, that we may so live. that what we do is for the profit of all in the church, that there be no schism!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Respect and Obedience

(4)

It happened at a picnic.

A ball game was in progress. Many of the men had shed their coats and rolled up their sleeves; and a lively game was being persued by the players and being watched with interest by numerous spectators.

Then it happened.

A spectacular play. A brilliant move by one of the members on one team. Then came the response from the lips of one who appreciated that particular play, "If you were as good on the pulpit as on the ball diamond, Domine, you would be one of the best."

O, that individual did not mean to be disrespectful. He probably had much respect for his minister and would be one of the first to defend him against any attack upon his doctrinal soundness, and maybe even upon his delivery. Yet in an unguarded moment such as that of suddenly being overawed by such a spectacular demonstration of physical prowess and skill, one often does say what in another setting he might not say. At the moment he may have had far more respect for his minister as a ball player than he has for him as a proclaimer of the glad tidings of salvation, as an exegete of the Word of God and as an instructor in righteousness on the pulpit.

And we do not mean to have it understood that we, herewith, go on record as claiming that one called to this highest and most glorious office in all the world is forever and under all circumstances forbidden to get bodily exercise or to do so before the eyes of men.

But an axiom of the world is fitting here: Familiarity breeds contempt. And where there is contempt, there is not respect. One must not complain if others show no respect to him in his office when they know him *better* as their bowling team-mate, their high scorer, their source of information and hero in this or that sport. When the proper balance between one's appearance in his office and between his hobbies or avocations is not maintained, one becomes respected for his worldly skills rather than in his office.

And when respect is lost, obedience is replaced with the disobedience of contempt.

It may seem like an empty formality. Resentment may be built up and the accusation easily made that men are proud and wish to "show off" their authority and office. Yet we hold firmly to the stand that the officebearers in the Church of Jesus Christ should enter the place of public worship as a body before the eyes of the congregation.

An empty formality it is not.

From pride and the desire to "show off" authority it does not spring.

These are the men God has placed over us and we ought to see them and learn to know them as such. It is not the honor of the man in the office that is at stake. If that were the case we would be guilty of respect of persons. But it is the glory of God in the offices which He has been pleased to institute in His Church.

Let the offices in the Church be covered up with dust. Let the officebearers come in church with their families, one through this door and at this moment and another through that door and somewhat earlier or later. The very idea of the offices in the Church is lost. But, then, let not that church complain when the youth and also the adult membership defy the authorities in the church and behave disrespectfully towards them in their offices. The worldly axiom says, "Familiarity breeds contempt"; but we may also say, "Behave as though no respect is required and you will reap disrespect." Do all you can to break down the difference that God has made by calling to an office in His Church or by placing children *under* your authority and by the disobedience that follows you will soon reap indifference to your commands and to God's laws.

It all comes down to this that those whom God has placed where others should show them respect and obey them for God's sake must so walk themselves that they do not deny that demand for respect which God still requires others to show them.

Parents can easily "spoil" their children and encourage them to show disrespect. A parent must "get close" to his child. There surely is time for them to romp and play with their children. A covenant parent must not be one which his children cannot touch with a ten-foot pole. A child must know his father's love; and respect for the "whip" that has no love in it is of no spiritual value before God. God demands of us that we render unto Him all the honor and respect that is due unto His divine and holy name. But God does not desire this without love.

James speaks of that in his epistle. The "devils" (demons, for there is only one devil) believe that God is and tremble. There is no spiritual value in that, James declares. And our children must not simply tremble before us in a fear that knows not love. A fear of the Lord which contains no love is not the fear that God demands of us.

A parent must get down to the level of his child and enter into his life. A minister of the Word of God must live along with his people, his flock. The elders and deacons are part of the congregation and must live as a part of it and not apart from it. Yet, always, that difference that God has made by raising one above the other with authority over the other must be preserved. It is too late to cry that our children and men do not respect us when we have consistently behaved such a way that we have denied the fact that it is required by God.

As we stated last time, this idea and demand of God that we respect the authorities whom He has placed over us and render them the honor due unto them for God's sake must be taught in early infancy by father and mother in the home. All too quickly in this day and age the rod becomes a museum piece and parents who still heed the Word of God to the effect that each home should have one and who make proper use of it are considered brutal, old-fashioned and people with a detestable temper. So-called "advisors" and columnists whose advice is sought by youth and adults alike must be read very critically. Much of the advice that is given is in direct conflict with the word of God. It is given in a certain worldly wisdom but not in the fear of God. This matter of teaching our children by means of the rod is only one of the matters on which the word of God is contradicted. And it is an important one.

Let us quote just a few of the instances in Scripture where God demands of us that we teach respect and obedience by means of the rod. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is not one of them. This is a worldly axiom; and those who know not the Scriptures dare, of course, to oppose the thoughts of other men and to declare their axioms as antiquated and as having proven to be in error. But Scripture speaks very plainly and forcefully on the matter. And he who in the fear of the Lord has respect himself for God and His honor will not dare to call God's principles antiquated and as being in error. The folly of the world and of its worldly wise counselors is so plain. When the child is spoiled and becomes a menace to society, the rod is applied. So that they have changed the axiom into "Spoil the child and then apply the rod."

But then the beauty of the word of God shines forth and shows the folly of men when they forsake its principles. "A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding," Proverbs 10, 13b. Or if you will, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes," Proverbs 13:24. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die," Proverbs 23:13. And then Solomon continues in the next verse, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell," Proverbs 23:14. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame," Proverbs 29:15. And in answer to this accusation of the worldly-minded that the rod is cruel and to the observation that children need not put up with it and have a right to protest against it, Solomon in the wisdom of God writes, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," Proverbs 19:18.

If all this is old-fashioned, let it be such; but it is the God ordained way to teach the child respect and obedience. The modern teen-age mess and juvenile delinquency in the world certainly does not speak favourably of the godless practice of discarding God's ordinances.

We say godless practice because that is what it is.

Parents may behave as Eli did. They may be able to claim that they never laid a finger on their children. Men may protest that it is not love to do such a thing to a child. But the word of God condemns all this as godless.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom," Solomon declares. Now there surely are times when reproof is sufficient and when the rod need not be applied. But that comes only after wisdom has been acquired through the rod. A child who has never felt the rod will never be so wise that a word of reproof is all that he needs. And if we dare to accept the "child psychology" of the world and put God's ordinances on the shelf, we are in that respect godless in our bringing up of our children.

Love?

We may love our children with all the sentimentality of which a man or woman is capable. And in that love we may make them the most spoiled children on the city block. In that love we may let them apply the rod figuratively to us and set us in the corner where they want us to be out of their way.

But, then, we do not love God.

No man can love God and at the same time and by the same deed allow his child to perform acts of hatred against God and approve of these acts of his child. When we permit our children to walk in evil and fail to correct them with the rod as provided by God, we may love our children but at the expense of not loving God.

And do we really love our children when we encourage them in acts of hatred against God? Let us not philosophize and be moved by sentimentality. Let us listen to God Himself on this matter. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes," Proverbs 13:24.

Obedience requires respect and respect is taught by the rod as well as by word of reproof and instruction.

And a parent who wants his child to show him respect for God's sake, must so conduct himself in the home with his children that he teaches his child that God demands respect and obedience.

J. A. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. W. Wierenga, in the sudden and unexpected death of her daughter-in-law

MRS. WM. KUIPER

who, on February 16, 1957, was involved in a fatal automobile accident.

May she, and those who mourn with her, be comforted and strengthened by the Spirit of grace!

"He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Psalm 68:20

Oak Lawn Ladies' Society

Mrs. C. Haak, Secretary

PUBLIC CONFESSION QUESTIONS

We've heard and read them often enough to be familiar with their contents. In our churches those who intend to make public confession of their faith are asked to reply to the following questions:

1. Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?
2. Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine; to reject all heresies repugnant thereto and to lead a new, godly life?
3. Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?"

In simplicity of language and style as well as clarity of purpose and thought these questions leave little to be desired; there is nothing ambiguous about them. The simplest child of God knows what he is being asked. "The doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament" is simply the whole truth of the Word of God, particularly as it applies to the salvation of the child of God. This points to the only and eternal source whence all doctrine of salvation is drawn. "The Articles of the Christian faith" is the Apostolicum, the creed of all churches. Here the questions become more specific and speak of this same doctrine as it is believed and confessed by the church of all ages. The apostolic creed is the summation of what the Holy Catholic Church confesses concerning the basic truths of Holy Writ. "This Christian Church" is just that; the denomination and even particular congregation whereof the confessor is member and wherein the confession of faith is being made. Here reference is made to the doctrine as expressed in our Reformed confessions. The rest speaks for itself. Those making the public confession are asked whether they acknowledge this doctrine to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, whether they have resolved by God's grace to adhere to this doctrine and reject all heresies repugnant thereto, whether they are minded to lead a new and godly life, and finally, whether they will submit to church government and in event of delinquency to church discipline. The language and general contents, therefore, offer little in the way of difficulty.

A bit more should be said at this time about the phrase "here in this Christian Church." This phrase has made history and in the past has been a bone of much contention, primarily as part of our Baptismal Form from which it appears to have been taken. The original edition spoke of "this doctrine *here taught*." Later this was changed and the "here taught" was made to read: "taught in the Christian Church." Hence, the "here" was elided and "*this* Christian Church" became "*the* Christian Church." This change had its reason, of course. At first it was customary to baptize only children of parents who were members of the Reformed Church and **therefore** adhered to the Reformed confession. Later parents of other confessions and beliefs were admitted as well. Naturally, these parents had objections to the phrase "taught *here*

in *this* Christian Church." Especially the Arminians objected vigorously; they could not in good conscience reply in the affirmative to the question in that form. We cannot be surprised about that. Consequently, the change. Many Reformed preachers, however, refused to go along with this change and remained loyal to the original reading. They insisted on reading "here in this Christian Church." A controversy arose which led eventually to an overture from the Synod of Noord-Holland to the great Synod of Dordt begging for the reinsertation of the word "here." The Synod acquiesced and again it became "here in this Christian Church." Thus it remained ever since that early date, and never must this be changed. Only in this way can the conscience of the church remain free. We must have nothing that can and will open the gates for every and all kinds of winds of doctrine. In the light of this history it will be clear that this phrase "here in this Christian Church" will have to refer to the official position of the church or churches wherein the questions are asked. One making confession of faith in the Christian Reformed Churches, e.g., will have to construe this part of the question as including the "Three Points of 1924." For our young people the meaning will have to be: the doctrine taught here in this Protestant Reformed Church."

These questions as used in our churches and as found in the liturgical portion of our Psalter, immediately preceding the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, will have to be evaluated in the light of some important considerations. There is the question, What is really the purpose of confession of faith? The answer to this has much to do with our approach to these "public confession questions." If you regard confession of faith as an entering into the covenant of God, a receiving of Christ, a joining of the Christian Church, these questions may have to be regarded as quite inadequate and poor. Such is the case with them who come to confession and baptism as adults. Therefore the Form used in their case is quite different. However, if confession of faith is this, that God's minor children come to the years of discretion, cross the threshold of maturity and majority and thus seek admittance to the table of the Lord, these questions appear far more pertinent and adequate. This is the case with them, who are placed before these particular questions. There is certainly a basic difference between unbelievers, who come to faith and thus are received into the covenant and church of God by way of the questions found in the Form for the Baptism of Adults, and the seed of the covenant, who advance as it were from baptism to holy communion. Reformed people, following in the footsteps of Calvin, have always judged that confession of faith is for the purpose of opening the way to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The former is with a view to the latter. This is also the purpose of all catechetical instruction, namely, to prepare for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Catechism, Confession of Faith and

the Lord's Supper are inseparable. That this was also the position of the great Synod of Dordt is evident from what we read in Article 61 of our Church Order: "None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who according to the usage of the Church with which they unite themselves have made a confession of the Reformed Religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly walk, without which those who come from other Churches shall not be admitted." Clearly, therefore, confession of faith has in view the celebration of Holy Communion.

In connection with the preceding, it should also be borne in mind, that the covenant seed *are* members of the Church of Christ and as such they make their confession of faith. These public confession questions can be properly evaluated only in that light. In some circles you find rather deeply rooted the false notion that confession of faith makes one a member of the Church of Christ. The Church is really a religious society, whereof you become a member by voluntary choice, and confession of faith is the formal joining of that church. These people do not seem to understand that the baptized *are* members of Christ's Church and as such come to seek access to the table of holy communion. Yet, such is very really the case. All that talk about "joining the church" and "becoming a member" that one often hears in connection with confession of faith is sheer nonsense and founded on serious misconception. Confession has to do with those who *are* children of God and have been so regarded since birth and baptism. For long years already they bore on their foreheads the sign and seal of God's covenant. Unto them God the Father witnessed and sealed "that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs." Unto them God the Son witnessed and sealed "that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection." Unto them God the Holy Spirit witnessed and sealed in baptism "that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ." Concerning them, the true covenant seed, it was said at baptism, that "as they are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ." Therefore the first baptism question reads as it does: "Whether you acknowledge, that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH ought to be baptized." Now these members of His Church come to make confession of their faith. Certainly, this does not gainsay all the foregoing. It only means that the seed of the covenant, the members of the church of Christ have now come to the age of discretion and as such seek access to the table of the Lord. And the Church, thru its office, has the calling to ascertain whether they are prepared to share in this privilege. All this, in connection with the preceding, tells us how we

must view confession of faith. The principle question is not, whether he who comes to make confession is elect or reprobate, wheat or chaff, believer or unbeliever, although that is surely not excluded. The main issue is whether the seed of the covenant is ready for the table of the Lord. That basic purpose is reflected in these questions.

Not should it be forgotten in evaluating these questions, that the person making public confession has already made a broad and detailed confession of the same before the consistory. All this need not be repeated when they make their appearance in the midst of the congregation.

In view of all the preceding, what shall be our conclusion? These questions even as they stand certainly serve their purpose. They ask, first of all, concerning the doctrine of the Word of God and His Church. This reveals a healthy position. Knowledge of the doctrine is surely an indispensable requirement for confession of faith. The aspirant must know Christ to confess Him. This does not mean that confession is only a confessing of the doctrine of the church in a purely formal sense of the word, without believing with the heart what Scripture teaches and desiring to serve Christ as one's personal Savior. There is no spiritual profit in cold dogma-worship. True confession is heartfelt, conscious, spiritual acquiescence to doctrine. Only he who believes with the heart and thus confesses with the tongue is and shall be saved. Even so, confession of faith is basically confession of doctrine. The questions also ask about one's walk and purpose to live "a new and holy life." Finally, they elicit the promise, that, if need be, the confessing Christian will submit to church discipline. There can be no principle objections to our public confession questions even in their present form.

All this, however, does not mean that this portion of our Protestant Reformed liturgy leaves no room whatever for improvement. Apart from the fact, that this Form strikes us as being more or less scholastic in contents, it is also briefer and stiffer than the occasion would seem to warrant. There are only the three questions, nothing more. There is no introduction of any kind; nothing to indicate in any way what confession of faith really signifies; nothing in the way of a fitting conclusion. All in all, the Form seems to make too little of a truly auspicious occasion. Usually, it is true, our ministers add a word of exhortation and admonition; this, however, is not part of the official Form. Besides, all that pertains to the walk of the confessing Christian is contained in one brief phrase: "Have you resolved . . . to lead a new, godly life?" The whole thing leaves a rather cold and matter of fact impression.

It is a bit difficult to see why the Reformed Churches of the past never composed a Form for Confession of Faith. The occasion, certainly, is important enough. We have a Form for most everything; a Form for baptism; a Form for the Lord's Supper; a Form for excommunication; a Form for read-

(Continued on page 260)

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

OF THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD, AND THE MANNER THEREOF

Article 7. This mystery of his will God discovered to but a small number under the Old Testament; under the New, (the distinction between various peoples having been removed), he reveals himself to many, without any distinction of people. The cause of this dispensation is not to be ascribed to the superior worth of one nation above another, nor to their making a better use of the light of nature, but results wholly from the sovereign good pleasure and unmerited love of God. Hence they, to whom so great and so gracious a blessing is communicated, above their desert, or rather notwithstanding their demerits, are bound to acknowledge it with humble and grateful hearts, and with the apostle to adore, not curiously to pry into the severity and justice of God's judgments displayed to others, to whom this grace is not given.

The above translation is substantially correct. The phrase "without any distinction of people" does not appear in the original Latin, but does not materially alter the meaning. And instead of the negative "unmerited" the original has the positive "gratuitous." But for the rest, the above version faithfully conveys the thought of the original.

In this article the fathers continue along the line begun in the preceding paragraph, namely, to develop positively the doctrine of the conversion of man. And in particular they begin to speak here of the outward aspect of that calling through which the corrupt sinner is brought into living and conscious connection with Christ the Savior, or the "call of the gospel."

The article speaks especially of the difference between the old and the new dispensations as far as the revelation of the mystery of God's will is concerned. By the expression "this mystery of God's will" we are pointed to the preceding article, where we learn that the fathers understand by this mystery the good pleasure of God to save such as believe through the ministry of reconciliation. In the sixth article the fathers had also pointed out that the way of salvation was fundamentally the same in the old as in the new dispensation: "... it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old, as under the New Testament." Now, however, they point to the outstanding difference between the old and new dispensations. In the old dispensation, when Christ was revealed through the shadows and types, the revelation of this mystery of God's will was limited to a very small number. This was especially true from the time of Abraham on, when the Lord began to limit His revelation to the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel. Out of all the nations of the world Israel was

singled out, and for many centuries the gospel of salvation was their peculiar possession. The only contact with the gospel that anyone of another nation could have was always through Israel. And the individuals outside of Israel who were saved were but very few. In the new dispensation, when Christ has come and is exalted, the national distinction is removed. This was indicated already on the day of Pentecost in the sign of the tongues. And soon afterwards the gospel was actually preached to the Gentiles. And ever since that time there has been no national distinction as there was in the old dispensation. The gospel of reconciliation is brought to all nations without distinction.

It is to be noted, however, first of all, that the article by no means intends to propound a general gospel. In the first place, the very fact of the difference between the old and new dispensations certainly serves to emphasize the truth that it is not and never has been the will of God to save all men. In the old dispensation already it was emphatically revealed that God's will to save is strictly limited. Only one nation out of all the nations of the earth was the object of the ministry of reconciliation. But in the second place, even in the new dispensation the ministry of reconciliation does not extend to all men, even though to all nations. God reveals the mystery of His will to *many*. Hence, even the outward call of the gospel is limited.

Secondly, we must remember that even though the Jew-Gentile distinction is removed, and even though the gospel is preached to all nations in the new dispensation, this does not change the fact that in a sense there is still distinction made between one nation and another as to the time when the gospel is preached to it and the extent to which the gospel is preached to it. The gospel is not suddenly preached to all nations at the same time. But the preaching of the gospel to all nations follows a certain course already in the time of the apostles, and that course can be clearly traced in the book of Acts. First Antioch, then Asia Minor, then Macedonia and Greece, and thence westward and into all Europe, and finally only in recent centuries to America — such has been the course. Hence, for many centuries many nations even in the new dispensation have been unevangelized. And this means that millions upon millions of individuals never had the opportunity to hear the gospel of reconciliation. And even today this is true. Outside of the main line of the course of the gospel there are still many nations which are the object of missionary activity, and that too, very limited activity. This means that even though one can speak of those nations as being evangelized, this by no means implies that every individual is reached by the ministry of reconciliation. The very opposite is true.

Now this is a very important fact. And it must certainly act as a deterrent to a certain false missionary zeal that sometimes pervades even Reformed circles. The major premise of this zeal is that it is God's will that as many individuals

as possible be reached with the gospel, and that if possible all men should be evangelized, let alone be saved. And it is claimed that the only thing that prevents this universal evangelization and saving of millions of souls is that there are not enough who will devote their life to mission-work. The heathen, they say, are simply crying for the gospel: if only we had an army of missionaries to bring it to them! And it is the church's fault that millions upon millions of people are not evangelized and go lost forever. Their blood is upon us. But this is plainly a false presentation of the matter, and a false presentation of the will of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures. And it is typically Arminian, of course. It is controlled by the same denial of the sovereign and omnipotent will of God that pervades the whole Arminian view. For plainly, if it was the will of God that all nations be simultaneously evangelized from the day of Pentecost on, and that every last individual in those nations be reached by the gospel, then God is also powerful to accomplish that will. If not, then you must adopt the Arminian view of God, which leaves Him impotent to fulfill the counsel of His own will, able to be frustrated by the will of mere man. But the Reformed position is that even the process of evangelization is strictly subject to the will of God's good pleasure. All nations must be indeed be evangelized, and they will also be evangelized; but they will be evangelized in God's time and according to His counsel. You may charge that this is fatalistic and passivistic. You may raise all kinds of worries about the missionary responsibility of the church. I insist that for a Reformed man the above must certainly be maintained as a fundamental principle of all missionary enterprise, and that all the history of the evangelization of the nations stands as a solemn testimony to the truth of it. And furthermore, that is the only possible ground of comfort and assurance for the church in its mission endeavors also. What a horrible thought it is that all the blame for the millions upon millions of heathen that go lost is upon us! Why, that simply means that we are lost too: their blood is upon us. God will require that blood at our hand! And mark you well, that same must apply to the church of apostolic times too, and even to the apostles themselves. For also in those days this theory of the Arminian evangelist could be applied. Surely, it is utter folly to propound such a view. And Reformed people must never allow this sentimental theory to pervade their mission work and mission zeal.

This all stands in close connection with the second main element of this seventh article. And that is the question: what is the cause of this dispensation of the ministry of reconciliation?

As the article suggests, the Arminians find the cause to lie in the superior worth of one nation over another, or in the fact that one nation made better use of its natural light than another. It is the same old Arminian lie of the free will of man, only now applied to the very outward call of the gospel.

Even as the obtaining of salvation is ascribed to the exercise of man's free will, so even the fact that men have the gospel preached to them is ascribed not to God, but to men. Men make themselves worthy of having the gospel preached to them. One thing must be conceded to the Arminian: he is consistently Arminian. What must be said of this view?

In the first place, it must be plain that the Arminian is simply building on his own false foundation. It is evident that if one consistently maintains the truth of the total depravity of man, and insists that all men are conceived in sin, by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, it is simply out of the question to speak of the superior worth of one nation over another or of the better use of natural light by one nation in distinction from another as a ground for their receiving the preaching of the gospel. All men are alike in their depravity. They have all forfeited any claim whatsoever to the favor of God. And if the gospel is preached to them, and they through it are saved, they must certainly acknowledge that this gracious blessing was communicated to them apart from, yea, contrary to their merits.

And it is certainly at this juncture that the exhortation attached to this article is applicable. It behooves the people of God to acknowledge this great blessing with humble and grateful hearts. That they have the light of the gospel is not at all due to themselves, but only to the good pleasure and gratuitous electing love of God. That they are the objects of the ministry of reconciliation cannot be due to any distinctions inherent in men and nations. Before God all are alike in absolute unworthiness and lack of receptivity for the gospel of grace. It is His good pleasure that sent them the gospel, even as it is His free and elective love that makes that gospel effective in them. Thankfulness, therefore, must fill their hearts; and humility must characterize them when they consider this awesome fact that they are the objects of God's good pleasure and unmerited love. And well may the exhortation be added, for how often do we not fail to appreciate the tremendous benefit imparted to us in the preaching of the gospel! On the other hand, it can be only considered just judgment and severe execution of justice that from the rest the gospel is not imparted. Not curiously are we to pry into this distinction, attempting to find a reason apart from God's own good pleasure as to why it should be thus, and attempting in Arminian fashion to find ground for boasting in our own goodness. But we are to adore the severity and justice of the God's judgments, acknowledging that He is God, and that He is just in all His ways.

In the second place, we may point out that this Arminian view is directly contrary to Scripture. According to Scripture, it was emphatically not the superior worth of Israel that was the cause of the fact that they from among all nations had the dispensation of the gospel. In this connection we quote, first of all, Deuteronomy 7:6-8: "For thou art an

holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." The same truth is clearly taught in Deuteronomy 9:4-7: "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware to thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." The same truth is emphasized in Deut. 32:5-12.

Thirdly, we may note that this view is contrary to the entire history of Israel. For there was no more idolatrous nation in all the world than Israel according to the flesh. And their entire history gives ample testimony to this fact. Israel certainly showed, even while they had the gospel, that they were not at all worthy of it.

But besides, what a strange picture of history we obtain in this Arminian view. How strange it is that all of a sudden, whereas formerly only Israel of all nations was worthy of having the ministry of reconciliation, now all the nations became worthy and made a better use of their natural light.

Plainly, therefore, the distinction is not due to man, but to God and His good pleasure. And the Arminian conception as to the reason why the gospel is preached to men is to be rejected.

H.C.H.

PUBLIC CONFESSION QUESTIONS

(Continued from page 257)

mitting excommunicated persons; a Form for the ordination of ministers, elders, deacons, professors of theology; a Form for marriage. Why not for this? Such a Form, as Dr. A. Kuyper points out, could include: 1. A brief statement concerning the significance of Confession. 2. Questions to be asked of them who make such confession. These could deal with three matters: a. The baptism which the confessor once received. b. Agreement with the confession of the churches. c. The promise of a Christian life. 3. A declaration in name

of the churches, that such a person herceforth has access to the table of the Lord.

Obviously, the churches in the Netherlands felt this lack. The General Synod of the Reformed Churches across the sea, covenanted at Utrecht in 1923, composed and recommended a definite Form under the heading: "Vragen te stellen aan hen, die wenschen te worden toegelaten tot het Heilig Avondmaal." With a few changes, one of them fundamental to my mind, the Christian Reformed Churches in our country adopted this "Form for the Public Profession of Faith." As a sample of what could be done in the way of improvement I quote this Form as contained on p. 87 of the Ps. Hymnal:

"Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

We thank our God concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that you were made desirous of professing your faith publicly, here in the presence of God and His holy church, and of obtaining the privileges of full communion with the people of God.

You are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

First: Do you heartily believe the doctrine contained in the Old and the New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and taught in this Christian Church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, and do you promise by the grace of God stedfastly to continue in this profession?

Second: Do you openly accept God's covenant promise, which has been signified and sealed unto you in your baptism, and do you confess that you abhor and humble yourselves before God because of your sins, and that you seek your life not in yourselves, but only in Jesus Christ your Savior?

Third: Do you declare that you love the Lord, and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

Fourth: Do you promise to submit to the government of the church and also, if you should become delinquent either in doctrine or in life, to submit to its admonition and discipline?

N-----, what is your answer?

Answer: I do (to be given by each individually).

I charge you, then, beloved, that you, by the diligent use of the means of grace and with the assistance of your God, continue in the profession which you have just made. In the Name of Christ Jesus our Lord, I now welcome you to full communion with the people of God. Rest assured that all the privileges of such communion are now yours. And the God of all grace, who called you unto this eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

This does not say that we agree with this Form in every detail. We certainly do not subscribe to the first part of the second question: "Do you openly accept God's covenant promise." Nor was this in the Form composed by the Synod of Utrecht. The latter, translated, reads as follows: "Second: Do you *believe* God's covenant promise." Why was this changed by the Christian Reformed Churches if not to leave room for the false doctrine, that the promise of the covenant is to all the baptized, which promise we ratify and accept when we come to years of discretion? We would reject such a formulation. However, on the whole we consider this Form a decided improvement over what we have. It contains a statement concerning the significance of public confessions as such. It is simple and warm and comprehensive. It contains all that need be asked about doctrine and life and discipline. It makes a bit more of what is certainly an auspicious occasion for the seed of God's covenant.

R. Veldman

DECENCY and ORDER

The Church and the State

(Continued)

With the position that favors church-domination over the state we cannot agree. The church has no more right to impose itself upon the state than the state has to impose itself upon the church. Yet, is not this the conclusion that must be reached by those who oppose "separation" and insist upon "unification" of church and state? If these two separate entities are amalgamated, it is inevitable that the stronger of the two will dominate the weaker so that either the "church-state" or the "state-church" will be practical result.

For personal reasons one who is of Reformed persuasion might not object too strenuously to the formation of a church-state provided that the church that is in power is The Reformed. This, we concluded, appears to be the position favored by the Rev. MacKay and to which we take exception. Suppose that the Roman Catholic, the Seventh-Day Adventists or some extremely Modernist Church gained control of the State? What then? To that, of course, Reformed people would object just as much as those who belong to these churches would object to the Reformed Church being thus empowered. But, you might say, the true church must receive recognition under the law. True enough but how is this to be determined? If the State is to "recognize by law," as Mac Kay desires, the true church out of myriads of denominations that fill her province, what standard will she apply to determine this other than the rule of majority membership? And, if she applies this norm the true church will seldom, if ever, gain legal recognition in this world. Is the State competent to apply any other norm? Can she, for example, determine what is pure doctrine; what is the proper administration of the Sacraments; what is true discipline according to God's Word? Can she determine the marks of the true church? We judge that in this she is neither competent nor called and should the State, therefore, seek to elevate one church above all others and give to it legal sanction, she would have to do simply on the strength of numbers which would be a very unjust determination. This church, with the largest membership, would then be in position under the law to impose its doctrines upon all other churches. Invariably an unjustified, wide-spread persecution must follow for the simple reason that the principle "might makes right" or "the majority is always right" can no more be observed than the equally false maxim that "all religions are before God equal."

To solve the problem of the proper relation of church and state is by no means easy. Perhaps it must be admitted that in the present sinful world there is no ready-made solution. Sin has so terribly disrupted all relations in this world that there is no possibility of again placing these in their proper

order. Various attempts to do this have been made but none of them have really solved anything. To arrive at a real solution would be tantamount to establishing the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on this earth and this cannot and will not be done for He said plainly, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). In the Kingdom of Christ there will be no problem of this nature. If love were perfected there would be no problem now. All the difficulties involved in this intricate relation stem from the reality of sin and, therefore, any real solution must necessitate the abolition of all evil which will not be effected until the "regeneration of all things" (Matt. 19:28).

This, however, does not preclude our saying something about the problem and consider what the proper relationship ought to be. It may not even stifle our earnest desire to strive insofar as we are able to bring all things into harmony with the ideal. We do not believe that the attitude of many is correct who entirely ignore the problem, assume the attitude that since we can do nothing about it anyway we may as well live along with things as they are and the less we have to do with the State the better off we are. Such indifference cannot be justified. Scripture does not so define the christian's calling in relation to the State. Since we live in a sinful world, our calling is not to ignore this reality but rather to combat it in all its manifestations even though we are keenly sensitive to the fact that we shall not have complete triumph over sin until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Among those who hold an attitude of indifference there is very little consistency shown for they must certainly also realize that sin has not only corrupted the relation of church and state but also *every relationship of human life*. And do they assume the same attitude and apply the same practice to family relations, business relations, social relations, employer and employee relations, relations to the schools, etc.? They know better than that!

On the other hand, equally wrong is the approach to the problem of the blind idealists who mistakenly think that we are making progress toward a real solution of this problem. These are usually quick to grasp any new idea that may seemingly contribute toward a certain phase of the whole difficulty. The broader scope of the problem they, in their blind zeal, fail to see and of the deeper spiritual cause of their problem they are obviously ignorant. Hence, to these idealists ethical values have little, if any, meaning. They are moved solely by human considerations and usually the programs they introduce for the solution of concrete difficulties result in creating many times more problems in other areas of public life. A great deal of the present mess undoubtedly has its cause in the bungling of such idealists. We aver that all such unchristian attempts are destined to failure.

We shall have to approach our problem realistically. We cannot afford to ignore certain fundamental truths which have a bearing upon the matter simply because these happen to be unpopular to the natural mind and even unpleasant to the

material complacency of many church-members. We will have to be confronted with the question concerning the application of the law of God to the institutions comprising human life as well as the application of these same laws to the individual. Since this matter involves the mutual calling of church and state, we may not be oblivious of the deep inroads sin has made into this relation. If we are to arrive at an amicable solution to the problem, we may not be moved by humanistic philosophies or influenced by temporal considerations but rather we shall have to base our judgments on sound principles taken from the Word of God. In other words, we may not ask, "What looks good or what will serve in the best interests of the most people?" in drawing the lines of church-state relations, but we must ask, "What is right?" Doing this we shall unhesitatingly be compelled to announce the sound judgment that the inability of human society to conform its practices to those principles of God's Word (the fact that the State is out of harmony with God) inevitably spells destruction. It cannot be otherwise for God is not mocked. The doctrine concerning the impending damnation of the ungodly world and the inevitable destruction of human civilization is not one that shall have appeal in this unrealistic generation that boasts itself in the achievements and conquest of MAN!

But the church is related to that state for she exists for the present in her midst. As for the church, that by grace lives in the midst of the world from the principles of God's Word, it may be said that her position overagainst the worldly state, whose principles and practices do not conform to that Word, may never be that of compromise. When, for carnal, materialistic, temporal or other reasons, she does that, she becomes apostate, corrupts her garments, looses her essence as a spiritual institution and is good for nothing but to be cast out upon the dung-hill. Essentially the same result is attained when the church discovers an area of so-called "common-grace" within the worldly state wherein she deceivingly tells herself that she can labor cooperatively with that worldly-state unto the attainment of materialistic and temporal ends. The practical fruits which bear evidence of this need not be enumerated in this connection. Only let it be observed that such policies place the church in the same category as the "blind idealists" we spoke of before.

Rather the church must "hold fast that which she has," namely the Word of God, cherishing its principles and living by the confession that "its laws are worth more than thousands of silver and gold." Doing this her problem in relation to the worldly state does not become smaller, but on the contrary, it is magnified. Throughout her relation will be one of spiritual conflict and in many areas physical conflict will be unavoidable. By the former we have in mind a conflict of philosophies and by the latter a conflict in the practical application of these philosophies to human life. Naturally, such pertinent matters as the subjection to the authorities, honoring the king, obedience to God or man, the extent to

which authority can be recognized, are all involved here. Scripture enjoins them and similar things upon the church. The church, existing within the worldly state, has a very difficult position and this difficulty is intensified as the social complexities of the modern world increase. It is no easy matter to define the proper relationships of church and state. We are convinced that this cannot be done by such terms as "subordination," "domination," "cooperation," "co-ordination," etc. Such oversimplification does injustice to the real question involved which in our mind concerns the correct definition and evaluation of "state" and "church." Unless we first understand that, we cannot arrive at a proper conception of the right relation between these two.

Of these two, it is undoubtedly most difficult to define the state. What is its essence, its purpose, and function? That the state is an institution of God is evident from Romans 13:1, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Whence this institution has its origin is perhaps a more difficult question. The common Kuyperian view, which has also infiltrated the Confessions, holds that the state was brought into existence because of and in consequence of sin. The reason for this view is not difficult to see. According to it the chief function of the state is to wield the sword power, to punish the evil-doer and to protect the righteous (Rom. 13:4). Consequently, it is reasoned, it would appear that in a perfect world-order there would remain no task or function for the state to perform. Before sin came there was no need for an authority to punish sin.

However, there are other considerations that would favor the repudiation of this view and incline one to favor the conception that places the origin of the state in the creation itself. Firstly, we might consider that there are also ranks and authorities in the angelic world even though there is found there no sin. This would seemingly overrule the contention that the function of the state arises from the fact of sin. The state, it seems, must be given a more positive purpose than that. Then we should not ignore the fact that the original relation of man and woman, husband and wife, was that of authority and subjection even though there was no sin. The interpretation given by the Catechism of the Fifth Commandment implies that the state has its origin in that very relation. Thirdly, certainly in the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein is the total absence of all sin, Christ shall be eternally manifest as King; there will be those who sit on thrones to reign and, it appears to us that the institution of the state was created from the beginning to be a likeness of this heavenly rule even after the pattern that all things earthly were made in the image of the heavenly. It would seem strange and difficult to account for the reason that such an institution was added after the "beginning." We conclude, therefore, that the State originates in creation and is, in consequence thereof, temporal and earthly.

G.V.D.B.

ALL AROUND US

Meditations of Uncle Mike.

Sometime ago a brother with a view to my making some comment in this column loaned me a little pamphlet with the above title. Who this Uncle Mike is we are not told. The Meditations are compiled and distributed by a certain M. F. Engle of Corbin, Kentucky.

Our readers, as we did, may find some of these Meditations interesting reading. We therefore quote some of them without further comment.

"If nobody is ever offended at your preaching, shut up your Bible and quit. You are in the wrong business.

He that puts the Bible in the crucible of human reason and twists it to say what his reason thinks it ought to say has no business in a Christian pulpit.

A universe without decrees would be irrational and appalling as an express train driving on in the darkness without headlight or engineer.

Regeneration and faith are simultaneous — The adoption of this theory will save us perplexities that will otherwise annoy. For instance, those insisting on the precedence of regeneration will be not a little perplexed when asked if there can be a regenerated unbeliever; and those taking the opposite view will be equally perplexed when asked if there can be an unregenerated believer.

Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almsry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and to bear up the pillars thereof, to light the lamps of Heaven, and to rule the waves of the ever moving ocean. But when God ascends the throne, then His creatures gnash their teeth; when we proclaim an enthroned God and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God on the throne that we love to teach. It is God on His throne whom we trust.

Election is injustice to none, while it is an unspeakable blessing to some. It takes a multitude which no man can number, but which God can number, out of the fallen race of Adam and raises them up to hope and Heaven.

To be born is an everlasting calamity, unless we are born again.

God is both architect and builder of the house made of living stones.

God sets the gospel table and also gives appetite for the bread of life.

The Holy Spirit fills the Father's house by compelling them to come in. This is not external compulsion which would destroy human free agency, but is an inward work of grace which produces a willingness and desire to come in.

The way to have strong faith is to have a great and mighty God. No-one's faith can be stronger than he believes his God to be. I cannot have strong faith in a God who, I think, is weaker than men. If my God is weak, then my faith, of necessity, will be accordingly weak; I cannot have much faith in God if I believe he is being defeated on most battle fields. I cannot have much faith in God if I believe he is trying and failing. If I believe His will is being thwarted by the will of men. If I believe He is doing the best He can to accomplish the most good He can, and to save as many as He can. But if like Job, I believe that, 'what His soul desireth, even that he doeth,' then with Paul I can say, 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.'

Faith is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot lift the axe of justice; So corrupt that they cannot change their own nature; So averse to God that they cannot come to Him; So blind that they cannot see Him; So deaf that they cannot hear Him, and so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them unto resurrection.

Of old, God complained to an apostate Israel, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself.' Such must now be his indictment against an apostate Christendom. Men imagine the Most High to be moved by sentiment, rather than actuated by principle. They suppose His Omnipotency is such and idle fiction that Satan is thwarting His designs on every side. They think that if He has formed any plan or purpose at all, then it must be like theirs, constantly subject to change. They openly declare that whatever power He possesses must be restricted lest He invade the citadel of man's free will and reduce him to a machine.

The lower the all efficacious atonement, which has actually redeemed everyone for which it was made to a mere remedy which sin-sick souls may use of as they feel disposed to, and they enervate the invincible work of the Holy Spirit to an offer of the gospel which sinners may accept or reject as they please. The God of this twentieth century no more resembles the God of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle, the glory of the mid-day sun.

The God who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School and mentioned in much of the religious literature of today, and preached about in many of our so-called Bible conferences, is the figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside the pale of Christendom form gods out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a god out of their own carnal mind.

In reality, they are but atheists for there is no other possible alternative between an absolute sovereign God and no God at all. A God whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity and so far as being a fit object of worship, deserves nought but contempt.

We ask the question, how shall we come to Jesus, the resurrection? How shall they that are dead, in themselves, seek and establish contact with the power of life? Shall preachers be sent to them to declare to them that Jesus is the resurrection and that He is willing to impart His life to them? That He is waiting for them somewhere? That He is watching for the signal on their part that He may go ahead and quicken them? Shall we tell men that He can do no more, and that if the dead will not come to Him, the resurrection can never come to them; and shall we thus persuade the dead to take action at once before it is too late?

That is, in substance, the gospel, or rather the corruption of the gospel, that is being preached rather generally in our day. Such a perversion of the gospel denies, after all, that men are really dead and that Christ is really the resurrection. It preaches a death that is more powerful than the resurrection. A resurrection that must fail unless death gives its consent.

I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still, I am not what I used to be, and by the grace of God, I am what I am.

To say that the destiny of the soul of one is in his own hands, reverses the very laws of nature, and implies that water can rise above the level of its source; that man can lift himself by his own boot-straps, and that the Ethiopian can change his skin and the leopard can divest himself of his spotted robe. The theory that one's destiny is in his own hands begets selfrighteousness. The belief that destiny is in the hands of God, begets SELFNEGATION.

The human will is free, but its freedom is within the limits of human nature. It is free like water; water is free to run down hill. It is free like the vulture; the vulture is free to eat carrion, but it would starve to death in a wheat field. Likewise, the sinner is free to do the things it is his nature to do, but until his nature is changed, he will starve to death in the presence of the Bread of Life.

The hog's vision is so constructed that, when he is under the acorn tree, he can never see the source from which his food comes, unless he is placed on his back.

A half truth concerning God's Holy Word is more dangerous and deceptive than a plain falsehood. One may, indeed, freely proclaim, 'over vale and hill,' that whosoever will may come, but he is unfaithful to his ministry unless he adds, 'no one can come unless the Father draws him.'

An anxious and pleading God, whose power is limited, and whose hands may be tied by the proud and stubborn

sinner, who is less than dust of the balance, is no God, but a miserable idol.

To speak of cooperation between God and man, in the matter of salvation, is like speaking of cooperation between the potter and his lump of clay in the formation of a vessel, God is God! Over him, man is never a party.

Throughout this series of meditation we have sought to emphasize a God of sovereign grace who 'does according to His will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.' This teaching stands out in bold relief against the abominable travesty of many modern preachers and self-styled evangelists of our day. All emphasis is laid on that word 'ACCEPT.' One must accept Jesus and that is all. And to do this lies in the power of every sinner. On this acceptance of Jesus by the sinner everything depends. For this act on the part of the sinner, the Saviour must wait. It is the signal which the sinner gives Christ that He may go ahead and quicken him. It is the act whereby the sinner opens the door of his heart to a Christ that stands and knocks at the door, but is unable to enter unless the sinner permits Him. O, indeed, they admit that salvation is of grace, and some even prattle of sovereign grace, but this grace is, nevertheless, presented as enervated and paralyzed if the sinner refuses its saving operation. The sinner's power to accept or reject Jesus receives all the emphasis. That the act itself is very natural and simple. All that is required of the sinner is to raise his hand, to come forward, or to kneel down by the radio and repeat after the preacher, 'I accept Jesus as my personal Saviour,' and the matter is settled.

Seeing that the thing is so natural, very natural means are employed: Hence, the highly sensational altar call climaxing the sermon. All that is calculated to arouse mere human emotions is brought into play. Sentimentalism replaces sound preaching of the Word. The audience is asked to bow their heads in silent prayer, the organ softly plays, or the choir gently sings: 'Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,' or 'Just as I am without one plea,' and in the meantime the preacher begs and pleads with voice full of emotion for sinners to raise their hand, to come forward, to let Jesus into their heart and to accept Him as their personal Saviour. He speaks of a God that begs for the privilege to come into their hearts, of a Holy Spirit that longs to make newborn children of God of them, and of a sinner upon whom depends the decision of life and death, of Hell and Heaven, of the whole matter of salvation, and of the very glory of God in Christ.

Against this evil sentimentalism and free-willism, gone wild, we raise our unqualified protest. It is high time that the church, which is the custodian of the gospel, and to whom the commission to preach the Word, should raise her voice in loud protest against this evil of presenting Jesus as the cheapest article on the religious market, that may be either received or rejected at the sinners will."

M.S.