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MEDITATION

THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." — Rev. 22:1.

There is perhaps no imagery quite so vivid in its speech as the language of water. It is a figure that is often employed by the Holy Ghost in the Holy Scriptures. Both in the Old and the New Testament we note its speech. One of the very first Psalms that we learn in our earliest infancy is the beautiful 42nd psalm with its central theme of the thirst for streams of living water. But also in other portions of the Old Testament do we find its language. Think, for instance, of Isa. 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." Also the vision of Joel in his prophecy of Pentecost we hear language that reminds us of water: "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will *pour* out My Spirit . . ." And who does not know the voices of Isaiah when he speaks in almost New Testament language of the blessings of salvation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . ."?

So also in the New Testament. More than once we have heard our Lord Jesus say: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." So also to the Samaritan woman: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And, finally, we hear the same speech of water in the visions of John who received the revelation of Jesus Christ on the isle of Patmos. Time and again does this apostle speak of water. Note the first verse of chapter 22: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

* * * *

The question arises: what is the meaning of the speech of water?

It seems to me that we should put the question in this way first: what does the idea of water tell us in the natural sense?

Putting the question that way I would say that the idea of natural water is as clear as crystal. Water is one of the two things that are absolutely essential to life, natural life. It is indispensable to man on earth. We can spare many things but not water. And the second essential is bread. If you have dry bread and water you have in these two things the two requisites for life on earth.

And as it is in the natural sense so also in the spiritual sense: spiritual bread and spiritual water are necessary for spiritual life.

For it is evident that bread and water as used in Scripture mean the same thing. Attend for instance on this text in John: "And Jesus said unto them: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he believeth on Me shall never thirst." Here we see plainly that bread and water have the same spiritual meaning. Coming to Christ and believing on Him are presented in this text as eating and drinking Christ.

* * * *

This leads us to the next question: is there a text or texts in God's Word that tell us what the exact meaning is of this spiritual bread and water? And the answer is yes. You find it in the Old Testament in Isaiah 44:3, half of which we quoted already. I will now quote the whole text: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thy offspring." It ought to be clear as crystal to anyone that in the second clause of the text we find the explanation of the first. Water and floods stand for God's Spirit and His blessings.

We hear the same thing in John 7:37b and 39. There we read: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive."

So we may safely conclude that the vivid speech of water which is employed in God's Word in a spiritual sense stands for the Holy Spirit and His blessings. And more particularly, the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ.

That water is often portrayed as finding its recipient through the further imagery of a river or of streams of the river. It is called "the river of God" or "the river of God's pleasures"; also the Bible speaks of this river as having streams that make glad the city of God. And finally there is again that text in Rev. 22 which speaks of this same river of God: the river of the water of life.

* * * *

When next we would ask what the meaning is of this speech of a river then I would say that it seems to mean distribution. I would base this opinion on Isaiah 66:12a, where we read: "For thus saith the Lord, I *will extend peace to her like a river and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream . . .*"

In this text we find the explanation of the idea there is in the river. So it is indeed also in the natural. The Lord distributes water to the land by rivers. At least, it is one of the modes of distributing water to lands and peoples.

So we may say that when the Bible speaks of the river of the water of life the extending of the Holy Spirit with all His blessings is meant.

Further we note that two qualifications are given in Rev. 22:1 of this blessed river. First that this river is pure.

It seems to me that this means that there are no foreign elements in this water. There is no darkness or evil in the Holy Spirit as He is given to Christ and as Christ extends that Spirit to the Church. You are absolutely safe in drinking this water. When traveling through our country we note sometimes that when entering a city or village there are found advertisements of the drinking water that read: The watersupply of this city is tested and approved and therefore pure. Then these people mean that there are no colonies of bacteria in the water or an undue amount of obnoxious minerals. They mean that the elements in such water are of the right kind and of the right proportions.

So also with the water of the Spirit of Christ and His blessings. You are safe in drinking of this water. It will not harm you at all. There are no impure elements in it that would endanger your soul. And as to its positive meaning, the qualification *pure*, certainly means that the elements of that water are just the thing you have need of. They are the elements that belong to your nature. And also, they comprise the medicine for your condition and state. They are a pure medicine against all your ills. This river will for instance extend peace to you like a river. And the streams of this river are so pure that they will make you

glad. The sorrowing and sighing will flee away when you walk on the brink of the river and drink of its pure water.

Moreover, this river, or rather its water is clear as crystal. That is a further descriptive qualification of the same. And I would say that it stresses the fact that this water is as virtuous as God is. Using a different imagery, the Bible states that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. That is saying the same thing as when we read here that the river of water of life is clear as crystal. It means that it is as virtuous as God is virtuous. It means that if you drink it, you receive the communicable attributes of God. You drink in peace and joy and holiness and righteousness and life and light and faith and hope and love and all the virtues that are bound up in the Holy Spirit of Christ.

What a river!

One more thing I would like to accentuate before we will ask a few questions as to its origin. And that is this that the text calls this river the river of *life*.

That means the same thing as when this river is called the river of God's pleasures. God's pleasure or His good-pleasure is His life. It is the pleasurable life of His covenant and it stresses the fact that when you drink of this water you will get drunk of the same kind of pleasure as God enjoys in His own covenant life. Of course, you will enjoy it in the measure and the quality of the creature. But it is nevertheless the life of God's covenant, the life of love and of friendship. In love we shall know Him and in friendship we shall tell Him all our heart. Does not the Bible say that this is life eternal that they (and that is you) shall know Thee and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent?

* * * *

Now another question. Where does the river spring? Where is its source?

And the text gives the answer: It proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Now we must not make the mistake to think that there are two sources: God and the Lamb. We might get that impression. And the reason is that these two names are placed alongside one another and connected by the co-ordinate conjunction *and*. We use that conjunction to co-ordinate things and persons and actions and conditions, etc. That is: by using the word *and* we place things and persons alongside of one another. But that is not the idea here. John uses here a Hebraistic way of expression. We will point to two others in Scripture. First to John 14:1. There we read: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Here the Lord does not mean: You must not only believe in God, the Triune, but you must alongside of that commendable action also believe in Me, the Saviour! But he means this, and then you have at the same time

the central theme of that which follows in the chapter, — He means to say: Believe in God, by believing in Me.

The same use of the co-ordinate conjunction we find in the same chapter verse 6. There Jesus says: I am the way, the truth and the life!

Now, does this mean that Christ is the Way, that is one concept. And alongside of this concept, I am also the truth and the life? No, but evidently Jesus means to say: I am the Way through being the Truth and the Life. That this is so is plain from that which follows: No one cometh unto the Father but by Me.

So also in the text under discussion.

The river of the water of life proceedeth from the throne of God through the Lamb. It means that the oceans of living water are first of all in God, the Triune God. All the pleasures of life eternal as are bound up in the illimitable Spirit of Life are in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the floodgates, the Fountain head, the opening through which they gush forth is the Lamb.

Note the name of the Saviour in this connection. The sacrificial Lamb. You may say: the floodgates through which the waters of eternal life are extended to me is Golgotha.

And here again we arrive at the central theme of the whole Bible: Christ Jesus and Him crucified. The water of God's pleasures shall always be characterized by Golgotha. It shall sweeten the water, it shall make you sing and warble for evermore. It is through the manifestation of a love that beggars description that you go to heaven. God, the triune God reveals through the Lamb just how wondrously gracious and lovely He is.

And, finally, who are the blessed that may drink?

Note just three words of the text: He sheweth me.

Need I say more? No, but I would pray to God: Oh, my God, show it to me, even me!

G.V.

LONGING AFTER GOD

As pants the hart for streams of living water,
So longs my soul, O living God, for Thee;
I thirst for Thee, for Thee my heart is yearning;
When shall I come Thy gracious face to see?

Why, O my soul, art thou cast down within me,
Why art thou troubled and oppressed with grief?
Hope thou in God, the God of thy salvation,
Hope, and thy God will surely send relief.

Psalm 42:1, 4

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EDITORIALS

Election and Reprobation

In our last article under the above subject we said that also the Reformed confessions teach that "just as God works out His own counsel of election by enlightening the minds of the elect and by softening their hearts, so God also works out of His own counsel of reprobation by leaving others in their darkness (infra) and hardening whomsoever He will" (Rom. 9:18).

That this is the teaching of the confessions with respect to the reprobate we have already shown in a former connection.

We still wish to show, however, that the confessions also maintain that God is absolutely sovereign with regard to the salvation of the elect and that He works out His counsel of election by sovereignly applying salvation to them.

The two, namely, the sovereign application of salvation to the hearts of the elect, and the equally sovereign hardening of the hearts of the reprobate, stand in inseparable relation to each other. If you maintain the former you must also maintain the latter. If you do not want to maintain the latter you cannot possibly teach and subscribe to the former. In the latter case you must not only teach a measure of freewill in regard to the hardening of the reprobate, but also maintain that the application of all the blessings of salvation depends on the willingness of the sinner to accept "the general offer of the gospel." This is what, principally, Berkouwer teaches in his book on "The Election of God."

But this is not the teaching of the Reformed confessions.

Let us quote a few articles from the Canons of Dordrecht which were composed and adopted by the church particularly to emphasize and to set forth the doctrine of sovereign grace over against all that teach the free will of the sinner and also over against those that would camouflage the doctrine of election and reprobation as, to my mind, Berkouwer does.

We quote first from I, 6:

"That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not proceeds from God's eternal decree, 'For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,' Acts 15:18. 'Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,' Eph. 1:11. According to which decree he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe, while he leaves the non-elect in his just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men, equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which though men of perverse, impure and unstable minds wrest to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation."

Notice here:

1. That salvation and damnation is brought in direct connection with God's decree of election and reprobation. For he that believes is saved and he that does not believe is damned. No one can believe of himself: faith is a gift of God. That he bestows that gift on some and not on others is due, not to anything in man, but only to God's decree of election and reprobation. Berkouwer must have nothing of this truth.

2. That God, according to His counsel of election, softens the heart of the elect and inclines them to believe. This is what is meant by sovereign grace of salvation. On the other hand, He leaves the reprobate in their own wickedness and obduracy. This is also according to the counsel of predestination. This is what is meant by sovereign hardening and reprobation. Again I say: Berkouwer must have nothing of this clearly expressed truth.

3. That in this discrimination among men, according to which God bestows faith on the one and not on the other, enlightens and softens the hearts of some and leaves others in their hardness of heart, is displayed the counsel of predestination, of election and reprobation. Berkouwer virtually denies this. His book does not harmonize with the Reformed confessions.

This is also the teaching of Canons I, 7, which does not speak of the hardening of the reprobate, but only of election and of the application of election by the sovereign grace of God. It reads as follows:

"Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.

"This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of his glorious grace; as it is written: 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' Eph. 1:4, 5, 6. And elsewhere: 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.' Rom. 8:30."

Also this article plainly teaches, not only that the grace

of God unto salvation is free and sovereign and that it is not based on the works of man, but also and emphatically that it is limited to a certain definite number, the number of the elect. Then, and them only, he saves efficaciously. To be sure, also Berkouwer speaks of election. He even emphasizes that election must have a place in the preaching of the gospel, although, at the same time he wants to present that gospel as a well-meaning offer of salvation on the part of God to all: in the preaching, the promise of God must be presented as meant for all that hear. But when he tells us that, in the preaching of the gospel, election may not be ignored, he does not define or describe election as the predestination of a certain limited number, in distinction from others, the reprobate, as do the Canons; this to him is a deterministic mutilation of the doctrine of election. But he merely describes election "as that election of God, which does not rest on our works, but is election of free grace." To such a definition of election any Arminian can subscribe. Also they teach that election is, not of works, but of free grace. In their own five articles, to which the Canons are a refutation, they teach:

"Art. 1. That God by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on his Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through his grace, even to the end."

What is the difference between this and a preaching of the gospel as Berkouwer recommends and this teaching of the Arminians? There is, principally no difference whatever, as everyone can see. According to Berkouwer, election must be described "as that election of God, which does not rest on our works, but is election of free grace." According to the Arminians, election is that eternal and unchangeable purpose of God according to which He saves those who believe in Christ through free grace and who, through that same grace, persevere in the faith and the obedience of faith. It is all of grace. But, according to Berkouwer and the Arminians, that grace is freely offered to all with the invitation to accept, while, according to the Canons, it is not an offer to all men, but the sovereign, free gift of God, bestowed on a limited number of men, the elect, sovereignly chosen from before the foundation of the world, while others, the reprobate are rejected.

This is the Reformed view of election and reprobation, which to Berkouwer is determinism and a deterministic mutilation of the doctrine of election.

The Remonstrance of the Arminians, 1610, teach further:

"Art. 3. That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his freewill, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostacy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, or do anything that is truly good (such as saving faith eminently is); but that it is needful that he be born again

of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, will, and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John XV:5: 'without me ye can do nothing.'"

What is wrong with this? Nothing, as far as it goes. It is all of grace. Nothing is of man or of the works of man. Berkouwer subscribes to this, too. But again the question is: who receive this grace of the Holy Spirit. And how do they receive it? Do they receive it by way of a free offer on the part of God, as Berkouwer would have it, or do they receive it irresistibly, which Berkouwer denominates determinism.

Let us also read the next article:

"Art. 4. This grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting, awakening, following, and co-operate grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ . . ."

Nothing wrong with this either, as far as it goes.

But this is not the end. The article continues:

"But as respect the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, inasmuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost, Acts VII, and elsewhere in many places."

There you have it. The grace of God is not irresistible. Man hardens his own heart. To teach otherwise would be sheer determinism.

That is the teaching of the Arminians.

And, fundamentally, this is also the conception of Berkouwer. H.H.

QUESTION BOX

B. J. M. of Redlands, California, asks:

If someone brings a private matter to the consistory, before walking with the accused according to Matt. 18, (Art. 72 Church Order) may the consistory inform the accused party of the matter?

Answer:

In my opinion, the consistory may not only do this, but is really obliged to do so, for the following reasons:

1. By reporting the matter to the consistory and thus violating art. 72 of the Church Order, the accuser, whether wittingly or unwittingly, has already made the private matter public, at least as far as the consistory is concerned.

2. By not dealing privately with the accused, the accuser was guilty of backbiting, and if the consistory does not inform the accused, they themselves would become guilty of the same sin.

3. The consistory has the calling to see to it that the offences, both the first sin, reported to the consistory by the

accuser, and that of backbiting, are removed from the congregation in the proper way.

From the above we may also learn how important it is to observe Matt. 18 and art. 72 of the Church Order, and not hastily to report private matters to the consistory. We understand, of course, that Matt. 18, to which art. 72 of the Church Order refers, is based on the principle of brotherly love, and anyone who reports a matter to the consistory, without first speaking to the brother concerned, violates this most important principle. H.H.

Mrs. G. Vanden Berg and Mrs. C. Haak, Vice President and Secretary of the Ladies' Society of Oak Lawn, Ill., ask, in the name of the above mentioned society, the following questions:

Since Circumcision and Holy Baptism are both signs and seals of the covenant and since, on the basis of Scripture, both are administered to the seed of believing parents in the line of the covenant, why:

1. Is baptism administered to both, male and female, when circumcision in the Old Dispensation in the very nature of things was administered only to the male child?

2. Was it not essential that the female child in the Old Dispensation receive the sign of the covenant?

3. What reason is there, if any, that female children receive the sign of baptism today and does this have any significance as far as the place of the woman in the church today is concerned as compared with the place of the woman in Israel in the Old Testament?

We will appreciate some discussion and clarification of these points in the *Standard Bearer*.

Answer:

This, to my mind, is not an easy question. It chiefly concerns the difference between circumcision and baptism as signs of the covenant. I will attempt to answer the question to the best of my ability. If the answer is not satisfactory, or should, perhaps, arouse other questions, do not hesitate to come again.

1. First of all, then, I will deal with the question concerning the sign of circumcision and its significance.

There can be no question about the fact that circumcision was a sign of the covenant as God established it with Abraham and his seed and, at the same time, with all the nations of the earth. Before the flood there was, as far as we know, no sign of the covenant although the covenant had been revealed immediately after the fall. After the flood, the sign of the rainbow had been given to Noah and his seed, as a sign of the covenant. But to Abraham the covenant of circumcision was given. This is evident from Gen. 17:10-14: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every male child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he

that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

We may note here that the sign of circumcision was, indeed, emphatically given as a sign of the covenant so that itself is even called God's covenant. And we may also note that it was not strictly limited to Israel but that it included the strangers that were bought with money and thus received a place among the seed of Abraham.

As far as the sign of circumcision as such is concerned, it consisted of the cutting away part of the organ of procreation of the male child of the covenant when he was eight days old. What is the meaning of this sign as such?

According to some it signified, on the one hand, that after the sin of Adam, spiritual and ethical corruption of the human nature which had been inherited from our first father, was concentrated, as it were, especially on the sexual organs, even as it is evident that sin manifests itself particularly in the corruption of sexual life. On the other hand, circumcision signified that, for the redemption and sanctification of the human nature, the purification of the sexual organ by which life is propagated is especially required. With this I cannot agree. My reasons are, first, that this explanation presents sin too much as something physical and residing particularly in the body; and, secondly, that, in that case, there is no explanation of the fact that only male children received the sign of the covenant.

We would rather concentrate our attention on the idea of procreation.

Israel must bring forth the holy seed, the seed of the covenant. For God establishes his covenant in the line of continued generations as is perfectly evident from Gen. 17:7. This holy seed is centrally Christ and culminates in Him as the apostle explains in Gal. 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

But of themselves and by nature, they could not possibly bring forth the holy seed of the covenant. They were under the curse and under the curse they could only bring forth children that were totally depraved, wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. By nature, therefore, they were uncircumcised in heart. But circumcision signifies circumcision of the heart, righteousness by faith and sanctification, as all Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament, plainly teaches. Thus we read in Deut. 10:6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And in Rom. 2:29 we read: "And he received the sign of circum-

cision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Hence, only when God would circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their seed could they bring forth the holy seed of the covenant. In the case of Christ this is further emphasized by the male factor being eliminated altogether, for Christ was born of a virgin.

2. This, to my mind, is the reason why the female child did not have to be circumcised. Not only was it in the nature of the case that she could not be circumcised but it was not necessary that she received the sign of the covenant. If, as we did, we concentrate our attention, with respect to circumcision, on the element of procreation of the holy seed, we may consider that the woman, who received the circumcised seed, so the speak, shared with her husband the sign of circumcision as a sign of the covenant so that it was not necessary that she should, personally, receive a separate sign.

This, I think, answers the main thrust of your questions.

3. Baptism is come in the place of circumcision, and both male and female are baptized. Why? Because circumcision is a typical sign: it looks forward to the realization of the promise in Christ. Baptism, however, is the sign of fulfillment: it looks backward. Christ has come, has died for the sin of His people and was raised again for our justification. This is signified and sealed unto us in baptism. In circumcision, as sign of procreation of the holy seed of God's covenant, the woman shared with her husband in the sign of the covenant. This is no longer the case, hence, both the man and the woman must be baptized.

As to your last question, whether the sign of baptism also means that, under the new dispensation, the woman has a greater place, a place of freedom in the church, my answer is that, for various reasons the woman occupies a greater place in the church under the new dispensation than in the old. For this I would like to refer you to Gal. 3:21-29. But this is not really connected with the question as to the difference between circumcision and baptism, except in so far as circumcision was a sign of the covenant under the law.

Well, this is my answer to your questions. If more questions are provoked by my reply, be free to send them to me.

H.H.

NOTICE!

The Free Christian School Society of Edgerton, Minnesota, is in need of two teachers for its next school term. One to teach the lower grades one through four, the other as principal to teach the four upper grades, five through eight. Need we plead? Please send enquires or applications to the Board of the Free Christian School Society.

H. Miersma, Secretary, Woodstock, Minnesota

ON THE THEORY OF COMMON GRACE

(Concluded)

In the second place, the theory raises, in the light of Reformed theology another problem, far more serious than the one whose solution it pretends to offer. The question arises immediately: Does God show grace to the wicked? As Dr. Kuyper emphasizes repeatedly when speaking of the covenant of grace: can God make a covenant with sinners? As you all know, Dr. Kuyper repudiates the idea, to my mind correctly, as if the covenant of grace were established with the sinner. He emphasizes for the very reason that God cannot establish a covenant with sinners, that the covenant of grace was established with Christ as the Mediator, and that His people are chosen in Him. But we would ask the same question in connection with the theory of common grace. God establish a covenant with sinners? You remember, that according to Dr. Kuyper the covenant established with Noah is the covenant of common grace, a covenant that is established with all men, outside of Christ Jesus. Now, then, how is this possible? There is a principle at stake here, so important that it strikes at the very root of orthodox theology. The sinner is guilty. He deserves nothing but God's wrath. God's justice demands satisfaction before he can bless that guilty sinner with His grace. And now we assert, that God, without satisfaction shows grace? I have never received an answer to the question how this must be harmonized with the righteousness of God. The problem the theory of common grace promised to solve it failed to explain. But in the meantime a much more serious problem is raised, solution of which is absolutely necessary. You say, that these are but temporal blessings? This makes no particle of difference to the principle at stake. Fact is, that God assumes an attitude of grace and good will to the sinner that rises in rebellion against him, and this fact must be explained.

Thirdly, it remains to me a mystery, how a check upon sin can possible be productive of any good. The sinner is dead in sin and misery. He is incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. That is the confession that is directly based on Scripture. The thoughts, the imaginations of man's heart are at all times only evil. The carnal mind is enmity, mark, enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, can be. Now, given such a totally depraved man, who thinks of nothing but enmity against God and his law, whose thoughts, the imagination of whose heart are wholly and at all times corrupt. Given further, that upon this totally depraved man some check or bridle is placed. Then I ask the question: how will that totally depraved man ever produce any good because of that check. Again, the clearest illustration you have in Melchisedec. There you have a totally depraved man, the thoughts of whose heart are enmity against God. Yet, he is priest of the Most High God! Dr. Kuyper uses the illustration of a

lion in a cage. The cage is the power of common grace. But does the lion reveal himself as a sheep because of the cage? How a mere check upon sin can possibly be productive of any good at all is to me a mystery. In vain have I looked for an explanation of this problem. In the light of all this, we may well conclude that the theory of common grace is by no means as simple as it looks at first sight. It does not explain what it promised to solve. It raises significant problems that seem to me incapable of solution.

II. But we must hasten to present to you in general lines our own view of the matter. And then we state in the first place, that there is but one kind of grace. You will understand that it is not doing justice to our view to say that we believe in special grace only. The term special grace presupposes common grace. They that hold to the theory of common grace limit the sphere of the special grace to the salvation of the elect only. To believe in that sense of the word in special grace alone would, indeed, mean a separation of nature and grace and would lead to anabaptism. The world, then, goes to destruction under the dreadful weight of God's curse. But from that world God saves a few elect. That is not our view. And to forestall any such impression we state from the outset, that we simply speak of grace. There is but one grace. Essentially this grace of God is His favor, his good will, his covenant-friendship. Man, who was created after the image of God was a creature that was with his whole being adapted to receive this grace, to live in such a relation of friendship to his God. Just because he was made after the likeness of God, in other words, because of the very fact that in man there is a creaturely, finite likeness of the infinite God, man is adapted to live in a creaturely sense on a level with the Most High, to commune with Him as a friend with his friend. But still more. He was not merely adapted to this relation of friendship to God, but he was in very deed placed in that living covenant relationship. Adam was created with positive knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. He was not a neutral creature, that had to work himself into the relation of friendship with God. He had life. He possessed knowledge. He was righteous and holy. He received the grace of God. His whole nature the operation of his entire being, with mind and heart and soul and strength turned in the direction of his God. God assumed the positive attitude of friendship, favor and good will toward Adam, and with his entire nature Adam responded, by turning in friendship toward his God. It was in that relation of friendship that Adam received blessing from God. It is God's favor that blesses. And since Adam was not an isolated creature but along a thousand lines was organically connected with the world in which he was placed; since, moreover, he was given a place in that world as king under God, as the servant of the Most High who was to have dominion over all things under the sovereignty of the Creator, all the world received blessing from God in man, the friend of God. As long as the king stood in the positive relation

of friendship and received the grace of God, the dominion of that king was blessed with him and for his sake.

Sin changes the relation. Adam was created with a uniquely free will. Not as if he were neutral, so that he faced neither God nor the devil. Thus the popular impression of Adam's freedom often is. God had made of him a sort of a neutral being. God stood at his right and the devil at his left, but man was facing neither. He was created thus that he was adapted to face God. But he had the power to turn either way. But this is an error. No, once more, God had made man not simply the creature in his image, but he had placed that creature from the beginning in such a relation to Himself that with His whole nature he faced God. But Adam's freewill signifies, that he had the power to face about and turn the direction of his entire being toward the devil. This is actually what took place. Man turned his neck upon God. Thru Adam's sin the human nature radically faced about in enmity against God and friendship toward the devil. In that relation man could no more receive the favor of God. The Most High is unchangeable. The creature that stands in harmonious relation of friendship with Him receives blessing from Him. But just as inexorable a fact it is, that the creature who turns in enmity against God, who opposes Him must receive the curse. That Adam was separated from God thru his sin does not express the whole truth. No creature, even in hell, is absolutely separated from the Omnipresent. No, but the same God that blessed Adam with his favor as long as he faced Him in friendship, now turned against Him with His cursing wrath. And what was true in regard to the flowing of God's friendship and favor and blessing upon all creation for man's sake as long as he stood in his state of rectitude, is true also with respect to the cursing wrath of God. Creation is cursed because of the sin of man. Thru man the world was a kingdom of God. Thru the same man the world became a kingdom of the devil.

It is perfectly evident, that there would have been no hope for man and for the world under the destructive power of the Almighty's curse, had it not been for the immediate operation of grace. But the moment man sinned grace operated. The same friendship, the same covenant grace that operated before the fall was victorious even thru the fall, though in different form and with greater splendor. It now manifested itself as redeeming grace, as grace that was greater than sin and the devil, as grace that was powerful to overcome both. Adam was not sent to hell. The world was not made desolate. And it is perfectly evident that this is due only to God's grace. For it is only in that grace that man and the world can receive blessing from God. But it is by no means evident, that this could only be what is called common grace. Repeatedly the statement is made, that were it not for the immediate operation of the common grace of God the whole world, man included would have been sent to everlasting woe and destruction and desolation. We con-

fess that we fail to see this necessity. Did not God have his eternal counsel? Was it not according to that counsel that the human race, organically considered, as the elect race was given to Christ? Was it not according to that counsel that ultimately all things should be gathered together again in one, namely Christ Jesus? Was it, then, not according to that counsel that all creation should be redeemed by Christ Jesus, that for its sin He should suffer, that its curse He should bear, that its misery He should remove? And if back of creation and back of sin and back of the curse stood the Mediator, annointed from all eternity, destined to be heir of all things, why, pray, is there any necessity of presupposing the operation of a certain common grace, that does not flow from Him and that is not based on his atoning work? We fail to see. And, therefore, we maintain that back of the fall stood Christ, the Head of the covenant, to whom all the world was given from eternity. It was He that covered the world from the very moment of the fall with His own person. It was the operation of grace thru Him that saved Adam, the human race and all the world from destruction. Adam, and in him the human race, and with the human race the world falls on the Christ that stood back of it all and is thus saved from ruin.

Hence, there is but one grace. That one grace is the covenant-favor of God. That one grace flows toward Adam directly as long he stands in the state of rectitude. That same grace, however, now flows upon the human race and upon the world as redeeming grace, victorious over the power of sin and death, thru Christ Jesus, the head of the new covenant. It is for his sake that humanity, that the world is spared after the fall. It is because of this grace that humanity develops, that the rain falls and the sun shines, that the powers of nature are brought to light and development and service, that the institutions of the home, of society, of the state continue and come to development. In a word, it is because Adam falls on Christ Jesus, that he is not destroyed, but becomes the father and root of the organism of the human race and all that this implies.

Thus far, I think there can be no difficulty. It may be supposed that it is entirely clear that the grace in Christ Jesus does not need the help of any other grace to save the world and bring humanity and the world to development even in time. If that grace is powerful to redeem the world, it is certainly powerful to keep the world till the time of full redemption has come. But, you object, that thus we must come to the conclusion that all humanity, the wicked and the righteous alike receive this grace of Christ Jesus. For there are two peoples in the world, the wicked and the righteous, believer and unbelievers, the elect and the reprobate. And if there is but one grace, and if all the development of this present life is due to the operation of this grace, the conclusion would seem inevitable that grace is universal and that all men receive what we now call special grace.

Now this we deny. And here we wish to express the

principle that the reprobate, the wicked, the unregenerate receive no grace from God at all, and that for the simple reason that they receive no grace subjectively. This is perhaps the most important point in our discussion and our meaning must be made entirely clear. We do, of course, not deny, that the reprobate develop with the elect. They certainly do. They are in this dispensation organically connected with the elect in Christ. The elect and the reprobate were together created in Adam. Adam is their natural father and their natural root. In Adam the whole human nature is present, and he is bearer of that entire human nature. We do not deny that because Adam is saved in Christ, the reprobate as well as the elect develop from him. We do not deny that also in the wicked the powers and talents of human nature come to development in science and art and industry and inventions of all kind. We readily grant once more that in them they even come to greater development than in the elect. Neither do we deny that the reprobate live in the same world with the elect, that they receive the same rain and the same sunshine, that they enjoy the same products of the world's harvest. The forms of life develop along both lines, the line of the reprobate as well as the line of the elect. The institutions of the home, the various relationships of society, the institution of the state, and in the new dispensation even the institution of the church in its outward sense exist for both. They even listen to the same Word of God, and they partake of the same sacraments. They are baptized with the same baptism outwardly, and they eat of the same bread and the same wine they drink. This therefore, we do not deny. We go a step further and say that we do not deny that these things are good in themselves. They certainly are. The powers given to man in creation are good. And metaphysically considered, apart from its sinful character, the ingenuity and power displayed by man in the history of the world are good. The material upon which he exercises that ingenuity is good. To take the illustration of Greek art. The marble and ivory that constituted the material for Greek sculpture is good. And metaphysically considered, the aesthetic taste and ingenuity displayed in the art of sculpture is a good gift. Rain and sunshine are good in themselves. Gold and silver are good. The institutions of the home and of the state and of the church are good. As long as you consider these things in the abstract, metaphysically, as they were created by God and as they come from God, they are all good. Nothing evil comes from God. But, and this is the principle that must be clearly seen: to the unregenerate they are a curse. Just because the unregenerate receives no grace subjectively, just because, in other words, his whole corrupt, totally depraved nature turns against God at all times and against all that comes from God, these things, in themselves good are to him at all times a curse. And, then, the principle works according to the proportion of the greatness of the gifts. The greater the gifts the greater the development of sin and corruption, the

greater the curse. This is true of nations as well as of individuals. The highest developed nations with regard to culture wallowed most horribly in sin and corruption. We speak of Greek art and admire it. And, indeed, the human power that is exercised in art was present among the Greeks as among no other nation. But what did Greek art produce? A gallery of idols. The greatest power of government was present in the Roman nation. But it was Roman government that killed Christ, it was Roman government that persecuted the early church, it was Roman government that found its culmination in the worship of Cesar. And, therefore, we maintain, the unregenerate receive no grace. All things are a curse to them. The nearer they live to the central current of grace the greater the curse becomes to them. Scripture announces this principle with regard to the Word of God when it says, that the Word is a savour of life unto life, but also the saviour of death unto death. The Word is good. Yet, that one Word, always good becomes a savour of death unto death. And as it is with the Word so it is with all things. The rain is good and the sunshine is good, the home is good and the institution of the state is good, and all the powers of creation as they come from God are good. But the reprobate receive no grace and they turn all these things into evil and into a curse for themselves. If this is not born in mind you must draw the conclusion that even the devil receives grace. He is allowed to work. He is not cast into outer darkness as yet. He no doubt enjoys to go about like a roaring lion. He is ingenious. He is a great artist. He exercises authority and rules. Yet, the devil would never have been so great a devil had he been cast out into the pool that burneth with fire and sulphur from the moment of his insurrection. And lastly, if this principle is not clearly seen, you must also speak of a common curse. Just as the unregenerate receive the outwardly good things, so that elect people of God receive the evil things. War, famine, pestilence, destruction and devastation are evils that strike the people of God together with the people of the world. Yet, these very evils are grace, are turned into a good for the people of God. For them all things work together for good. For the wicked all things work together for evil.

You still object that sin is checked in its course, and that the unregenerate still do much good? This we deny most emphatically. And over against this statement we maintain, that the unregenerate do no good, that all their mind is enmity against God, and that sin develops as fast as possible. Nay, we wish to go a step further and assert, that sin develops more fully and more quickly exactly because of what is called common grace. When we say that there is still much good in the world of the unregenerate we do not express our own meaning correctly. As long as you hold that man is totally depraved, as long as you believe with scripture, that man's whole nature turns continually against God and his law, as long as you accept that man by nature is not subject to the law of God, you must conclude that he performs no

good. We mean that sin has not reached its fullest development. And this we admit. But the fact that sin in the life of the world, after six thousand years has not reached the fullness of its development and manifestation is not due to any check upon the course of sin from without. We must remember, that God created the human race an organism. He did not create all the individuals of the human race at once. He created of that human race a root. That root was Adam. In him was the whole human race, but in him the life of that race with all its relationships did not come to fullest manifestation. In Adam was the root of all human life. In him was the root of the home, of life in society, of the state. But this life of mankind could only develop gradually and organically. For the same reason sin can only develop along the lines of organic development. Adam committed a root-sin. Sin could not come to much expression thru him. Surely, he was totally depraved the moment he turned against God. It was grace that saved him. But this total depravity could express itself only in a very limited way. Adam could not steal, kill, commit adultery, covet his neighbor's house or wife. Sin, in other words, develops and comes to final manifestation only along the line of organic development. According as life develops, according as the various relationships of life come into existence, sin lays hold upon this life, and enters into these relationships and corrupt all things. The man of sin could not come, till all of life in the world have reached its fullest development, the number of man, 666, shall be realized, and upon all of life sin shall have had its fullest influence. And this organic development of sin thru the history of the world is not halted or in any sense impeded, but takes place as quickly as possible. Were Adam in paradise immediately after the fall sent to destruction, sin would never have reached its fullest development. But now it is different. Just because the human race is permitted to develop, and exactly under the influence of what we call common grace sin comes to its full manifestation. It is exactly upon the good things of God that sin feeds. The greater the good the stronger the reaction of sin, the faster the development of the latter. It is, for this same reason that Antichrist will appear not from heathendom, but from the midst of Christianity. The man of sin is the ultimate reaction of the corrupt nature against all that is of God. Hence, over against the proposition that sin is halted we place the other that sin develops as quickly as possible along the organic line of development of the human race.

There is, of course, in the world of sin a certain imitation of, and borrowing from what the people of God possess thru special revelation. The outward influence of Christianity in the world of today is very visible. Thus it was in the ancient world. I have no doubt, that what is now discovered in such ancient documents as the code of Hammurabi must be explained in the same way. It is a reflection of the light of special revelation upon the world of darkness, which however, the world corrupts and turns into darkness itself. And

the same is true today. In the world of Christendom where people have long discarded the fundamentals of the Christian faith, where the light of special revelation is ignored and despised, they still continue to employ the terms that are borrowed from that special revelation. They still speak of righteousness and peace and brotherhood and love and christian sympathy. Yea, they often assume a leading position in the christian world and would feign enlighten us as to the essence of the christian religion. But it is plain, nevertheless, that the light of Christianity as they possess it, or rather seem to possess it, is not due to any influence of grace within them or upon them. It is simply the infidel world, borrowing the outward form of christianity and turning its real light into darkness.

I want to conclude by calling your attention to the fact, that the view I have developed in this paper is the view of the Word of God. And to be entirely certain I will select the three passages which according to Dr. Kuyper are the classical passages for the conception of common grace. I refer to John 1, Rom. 1, and Acts 14. In the first mentioned passage we have the well-known prologue of St. John on the Logos in the world. The Word so John tells us is the light of the world, the light of every man that cometh into the world. That Word Logos was in the world and the world was made by Him. But what of the darkness? Did man know the Logos? Did they see the light and live? Emphatically John denies this. "The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not," he assures us in the 5th verse of this passage. And again: "He was in the world, and the world was made thru him, and the world knew him not." There was light, therefore, but the darkness of sin knew not the light. Much clearer and much more emphatic is the passage from Rom. 1. There the apostle reasons that from the beginning of the world on, and therefore, up to his own time, all thru the old dispensation the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being perceived thru the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." It is not thus, therefore, that there was no revelation of God in nature. There certainly was. The things of God are clearly seen thru the things that are made. God was manifest. The purpose of this manifestation of God in creation is stated by the apostle in this wise: "that they may be without excuse." It is, in other words, because of this clear revelation of God in the things that are made, that sin becomes clearly manifest as sin and inexcusable guilt. For what did man do? Did they comprehend the light? Did they see God's revelation and serve Him? Listen: "Because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man and of birds and of four-footed beasts, and creeping things." The light was there. There was

a revelation of God in nature. God became plainly manifest. But in the imagination of their senseless heart they corrupted the light into darkness. A strange form of grace, indeed! And as far as Acts 14 is concerned we have the same idea expressed: "Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways, and yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." The same contrast is expressed. God worked good from heaven. He always does. He left not himself without witness, therefore. But in spite of this witness of God the nations walked in their own ways, and God let them walk therein. The good things of God were by them corrupted. And God certainly did not check them from walking in their own ways. And it is this same idea that is expressed in the Confession, Art. XIV and the Canons III, IV, No. 4.

Summarizing we maintain the following propositions:

1. There is but one grace, the grace which in the dispensation of sin flows thru Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the covenant.

2. There are in the world two peoples, the elect and the reprobate, the regenerate and the unregenerate. They live under the same external influences in the same world. But while all things are grace to the people of God all things are a curse to the people of the world.

3. Sin is not checked, but develops as fast as possible along the organic line of the development of the human race, and that exactly under the influence of the good things of God.

H.H.

Notice about Rev. Ophoff

At the time of this writing, our beloved brother, the Rev. G. M. Ophoff, is still in the hospital. He has been operated and the Lord has been with him. Moreover, the way it appears at present, he may look forward to complete recovery. For this we are all thankful to our God. May the Lord spare him for some time to come for his wife and family, but also for our churches which, as far as we can see, still have need of him.

The editor.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, Wednesday, March 20, 1957, in Doon, Iowa.

The consistories are reminded that all matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the stated clerk not later than thirty days before the date of Classis.

The Stated Clerk,

Rev. H. Veldman,
Edgerton, Minnesota

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 11:25-30

V.

(Matthew 11:29, 30)

We now come to our final article on this beautiful and instructive passage from the Word of God.

Before we enter upon a more positive exposition of this passage, we wish to call attention to the fact, that, in our former article, we noticed the fact, that, in our text, we have a quotation from Jeremiah 6:16 where the prophet speaks of the "old paths" in which Israel is to walk, and which they are to seek, and thus they shall find rest for their souls.

We also notice that when Jesus here instructs the Israel of His day to "come to Him and find rest for their souls" this is simply Israel asking after the same "old paths"; only now Israel, the babes, must seek this rest in the Word made flesh, God-with-us, Immanuel. Such seeking and finding is fundamentally a matter of the *heart*; it is a question of regeneration, which shows itself in true conversion. And, therefore, we are here dealing with a "soul-care" which is neither the duty nor the proper sphere of a psychiatrist. For the Son of God works faith and conversion by His Spirit through the preaching of the Word and strengthens it by the use of the Sacraments, and not by a electro-therapy with the accompanying jargon of split personality, etc. There is a fundamental difference in the approach of the preacher of the Gospel and the devoted elder, and that of the physician, whether he treats the patient "somatically" or "psycho-somatically." The latter only touches the body and the natural soul while the former administers the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit works the grace of meekness and lowliness of heart so that the humble, the babes, find rest for their souls.

Just what application this has concretely in life as pertaining to the treatment of believing children of God is another question. That would call for a separate discussion. Meanwhile the children in whom wisdom is justified need not wait for the "rest for their souls," which is received in the way of learning "meekness." We will let no one interfere with their "rest" by the misapplication of a treatment which cannot possibly be of benefit to their "souls."

Hence, we will press forward in this interpretation of Matthew 11:29, 30.

We first of all wish to notice, that the "taking up of the yoke" of Christ is not something merely *additional* to the "coming to me" of verse 28. The "taking up" of Christ's

yoke is really *implicit* in our coming to Him. Possibly it is more correct to say that the "taking up" of the yoke is a further explanation of what is implied in the believing coming to Christ and to follow Him in life.

That it is not merely something additional to the "coming to me" is evident from the fact that in both cases we find "rest" and "rest for our souls." Hence, we are of the conviction that this "taking up" of the yoke of Christ is a further explanation of the "coming to" Christ. It is somewhat like in the Hebrew parallelism.

However, we cannot take this yoke of Christ upon us except we "learn" something. We *must learn* a very important lesson. And this learning which is here spoken of is far more and different than what one can learn merely intellectually. It is a learning, which is foolishness to the natural man. Only the *spiritual man* can learn it. He has eyes to see and ears to hear. And he alone has a heart to discern the wondrous and perplexing ways of God, God's pedagogical dealings with His children.

What must we learn then?

We must learn the truth in Jesus. We must learn *what* the Son of God, who reveals unto us the Father in his sovereign good-pleasure, *is*. We must know what the spiritual-ethical *quality* of His heart is in relationship to God. We must learn *that* he is meek and lowly of heart.

Just a word about the construction here. The conjunction "oti" can in Greek be translated either by "because" or by "that." If the former be the correct translation then the fact that Jesus is meek and lowly in heart is the reason and ground why we should learn from him. This is in itself quite possible. If the latter be the correct rendering then the fact that Christ is meek and lowly is the *subject of the lesson* which we must learn.

Now both are good interpretations.

They are both Scriptural teachings.

The question, however, is whether the context allows for the interpretation which holds that Christ's meekness is the ground for our learning from him. After some consideration of this question we agree with those, who interpret the conjunction "oti" as being "recitative," that is, as introducing an object clause. It is then the subject of the lesson which we must learn. It is the "aufgabe," it is Christ's assignment to us, by which he will teach us an aspect of the Father in His dealings with us as sons in the world.

We hold to this interpretation, in the first place, because the real reason why we must learn from Him, according to the context, is, that He reveals to us the Father, and we are to *hear* Him, and hear *Him* alone! All the good-pleasure of God is in Him. Besides, according to this interpretation the spiritual pedagogy becomes quite real in the church. Thus there is something which the Belgic Confession calls "study unto salvation." With the interpretation which holds

that the *reason* for learning from Christ that He is meek and lowly you learn the ground for the learning, but you have really *nothing* to learn. Now the *lesson* is clear.

And what must we then learn about the truth in Jesus? We must really learn what a well-developed and matured christian is, as he lives out of Christ by faith, as a living member in the body of which Christ is the Head. The German translates this thought, as expressed in Eph. 4 very beautifully in "wie ein rechtschaffenes wesen in Jesu ist!"

And learning this lesson we are the militant christian in the world, fighting the good fight against sin and all unbelief.

Then we must learn, first of all, in order to take Christ's yoke upon us, to walk in the "old paths": that Christ is "meek."

It is of very great importance that we understand what "meekness" is. Unless we understand this we will never really take Christ's *yoke* upon us and find that it is an easy, a useful, profitable one, and find rest for our souls exactly because we have and are *taking it up*. If we do not understand what meekness is, and what it is in Christ, we shall forevermore fret in the vain attempt to get rid of every yoke, and say with the world of unbelievers: let us shake off the chains of the Almighty; I refuse to humble myself under the mighty hand of God!

But when we learn what "meekness" is in Christ, the Head, and in us His members, then and then only will we love the "yoke of Christ."

The Gentiles, who did not know the Gospel, also employed the term which in the New Testament denotes "meekness." However, they gave a wholly different meaning to the term "meekness." It really did not denote any *positive virtue* in relationship to God. For them it was simply the happy mean between two extremes, that is, between the extreme of quickness to anger and lack of all ability to anger. It was really the ethics of unbelief which says: not too wicked less we die to soon, and not too pious less one get little out of life. It really meant nothing more than: Poise, self-control. It only took in the scope of the term the outward act and manifestation, and it said nothing about the deeper motives. Thus Plato made it the opposite of *untamed* fierceness. Thus Bishop Trench informs us.

In the New Testament, however, the term "meekness" has a new content. It is the content of the Word made flesh, of God in the flesh, learning obedience to God from that which He suffered. It is the Son in the flesh who has the hearing ear, of whom it was written in the Scroll "behold I come to do Thy will, o God."

And, therefore, meekness is first of all not merely man's outward behavior, nor merely man's relation to his fellowmen (Carnegie's "How To Make Friends") nor is it a matter of *natural disposition*. Some men are not born with innate meekness in distinction from others. Meekness is a matter of the grace of God in regeneration!

Says Trench "Meekness is that temper of spirit (notice" spirit and not merely "soul" G. L.) in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and, therefore, without disputing or resisting, and is rooted in lowlimindedness, does not fight and struggle against God nor contend with Him."

Such meekness in the text is closely associated with "lowliness of heart."

We should notice, therefore, that both "meekness and "lowlimindedness" is a matter of the *heart*. From the heart are the issues of life. With the heart one believes; in this heart God sheds His love abroad. As the heart is so is the man. It is the spiritual center of man. From the unregenerate heart proceeds adultery, fornication, whispering, backbiting, and all manner of bitterness. And from the heart also proceeds the good fruit of the Holy Spirit in thankfulness.

And lowliminded, or lowliness of heart, is certainly a virtue which is wholly unknown even in the vocabulary of the Greeks. They could speak of large souledness, magnanimity, but did not know what lowlimindedness was. The reason was that they did not know of God, who alone is great! Him they did not worship! They did not kneel and worship at His foot-stool!

Now such lowlimindedness is also a matter of the heart. It is not merely a matter of the intellect. It is a matter of both mind and will as they are motivated by a heart in which the love of God reigns.

Such was Jesus. The man Jesus, the Son of God in our flesh!

He humbled himself even into the depths of hell. And from out of the depths and anguish of hell he cried: Thou alone art great and marvelous, o, God! He said: Not my will, but thine be done. He was lowly. He did this bearing the burden of our sins. He was that meek and lowly of heart!

And now that is what we must learn in Him.

We must see that he became servant, willing to bend the knee to God. And the same mind is to be in us.

And when we learn this secret of grace, this mystery of faith, that Christ, who is our life, is meekness and lowliness of heart — ah then we have not learned the "sweet mystery of life," but we have found the pearl of great price, the key to happiness, yea, happiness itself!

Then we see that the "yoke" is not hard and galling. His commandments are then not grievous. It is a light, a pleasant, a useful yoke. And the burden is not heavy! What one then does is performed in love for the neighbor.

We then love God whom we have not seen, and, therefore, will reveal this in the meekness of wisdom toward one another.

Surely wisdom is then justified of her children!

And God is all and in all!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Respect and Obedience

(3)

"Fear God, and keep His commandments."

That is "the conclusion of the whole matter" according to Solomon in the wisdom that God gave so abundantly unto him.

In Ecclesiastes 12:13 where we find these words of Solomon we find this reason added to the observation that the conclusion of the whole matter which he had been studying is that we should fear God and keep His commandments, "for this is the whole duty of man."

We are not interested in a worldly, outward politeness. The purpose of our writing is not to conduct a "clinic" of proper etiquette for addressing those of superior age and social standing. We called your attention before this to the lack of respect that Harold's four year old son displayed by calling his father by his first name. An avowed unbeliever could frown on such behaviour and call the child impolite and accuse his parents of failing to teach their child the "refinement and polish" that our social order so greatly desires today. With these things we have no interest at the moment in these articles.

It is our firm conviction that a child who learns the Fear of the Lord will respect all those whom God has placed over him; and his behaviour will be such that, though he might blunder in some of the man-made rules, practices, and regulations of a man-made social order, he will not be an offensive child but one that will conduct himself honorably before all men.

When, therefore, we write about "Respect and Obedience" we have in mind what Solomon wrote in the verse which we quoted above. Respect and Obedience to a child of God means "Fear God and keep His commandments." What is more, in these words of Solomon we believe we have the proper relationship between respect and obedience. Solomon is not expressing two unrelated matters that we are called upon to do by God Himself when he states that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. Rather are these two so related that the only way to keep His commandments is to fear Him as God. The same thing we have in mind when we write concerning respect and obedience. Without respect there will be no obedience. The respect which we have in mind is that respect for those whom God is pleased to place over us and which can be practiced only as we fear Him. And the obedience which we have in mind is not compliance to changeable, sentimental rules of etiquette, and decorum devised by the minds of carnal, godless, man-exalting men but that

obedience which is nothing less than keeping God's commandments.

A point in case is found in the life of the Apostle Paul when he appeared before the high priest Ananias, who commanded those that stood by to smite Paul on the mouth for having said that he lived in good conscience before God until that day. Paul replied to this with the words, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest thou me to be smitten contrary to the law?", Acts 23:2, 3. When told that he was addressing the high priest Paul hastened to add, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." This again is a reference to Exodus 22:28, "Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor curse the ruler of thy people." That respect for those whom God has placed over us we have in mind.

A child, surely, who calls his parents by his first name does not have that respect which God demands. Such a child does not judge his parents to have the honor that God has given to him. Such a child does not render to God the honor that is due to Him. He lacks the fear of the Lord. The same may be said of much of the behaviour not only of children but also of adults in our modern age that rebels against authority, rule and regulation. The primary cause of the disrespect that today is lauded as liberty and freedom is exactly that "there is no fear of God before their eyes," Psalm 36:1.

Consider that before any disobedience entered into this world man's respect for God had to be taken from him. His fear of the Lord had first to be changed into the proud and haughty opinion of self that he had the right to be like God; and then to attain to this proud goal he would transgress the command of God.

The plan of action of Satan was a carefully devised one. And though his goal was to make man break God's commandment, he began by breaking down Adam's respect for God. Truly, in this light, Solomon speaks the words of wisdom when he declares, "Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man." And surely it follows that before man can keep God's commandments, the fear of God must be in him. So in the relationship between men, respect for those whom God has placed over us is essential for obedience to God.

And where there is no fear of God, there will not be this respect for those whom God has placed over us in authority. Webster makes a fine point of it that respect means, "regard for something, especially a person or quality, as worthy of honor or confidence; it does not imply, and is sometimes even contrasted with, warmth of feeling; as, he won the respect of all." Indeed, often one whom God has placed over us behaves so that you would lose all respect for him. If, then, we do not have the fear of God in our hearts we will sin because these authorities live sinfully. We must have

respect for the authority God has been pleased to exercise through men even when we cannot help but lose all respect for the man personally.

Respect in the home as the children are obliged to show it unto their parents requires the fear of God. Respect in the state for the authorities that God has ordained requires fear of God. Respect for the offices of Christ in the Church require the fear of the Lord.

In all these spheres there is that which unregenerated men do and is called obedience by them. In all these spheres there is that which men call respect. Yet that behaviour called obedience and that attitude that is called respect is carnal and an abomination in God's sight. When we obey men for man's sake, we ignore God, and that surely does not please Him at all. Rather does it fill the Almighty with wrath when men rule out His existence by obeying man for man's sake. And having respect for men in the fear of man does not please God. It is respect for the authorities because they represent Him and His authority that pleases Him. All other honor and respect that is shown to men displeases Him and is visited in His righteous wrath.

We are sometimes amazed while at the same time provoked at the respect that is shown to man where the primary consideration should be the honor of God. We are amazed that man can practice such folly and provoked because of the wickedness of it. One such act of wrong respect and foolish behaviour is the act of refraining from cursing and swearing in the presence of a minister, an officebearer in the church or a parent.

What are these more than God?

If we feel free to take His name in vain while there is no minister, office bearer or parent within hearing distance, we surely should not stop our wickedness merely for the sake of man! What folly to be cautious while another sinful creature of the dust is within range of hearing and to be bold to shout it out when the Living, Righteous God hears it and hates it far more deeply than any man ever could! What wickedness to show respect for the presence of man (or perhaps of a woman) and to have no concern for the honor and glory of God! We say "or perhaps of a woman" because there, too, what men might hesitate to say because "there is a woman" around they will be bold to say in the hearing of God!

Fear God and keep His commandments.

But let us not raise men to the level of God or even exalt them above God, so that his presence makes the difference between clean and holy speech and cursing and swearing. Let us have respect for men that is rooted in the fear of the Lord. That is why the flippant remark, "The minister must be going by, it is so quiet" expresses a wicked thought. We must not avoid sin because of men. When our behaviour is due only because of the fear of men it is sinful behaviour even though we may be obeying men. Fear God and keep

His commandments. Our parents we must honor, the authorities in the state we must obey and those who are over us in the Church we must honor with obedience in the fear of the Lord. Otherwise whatever we do is sin.

Harold's boy undoubtedly made a breach of etiquette; and by calling his father by his first name performed an act that brought frowns of disapproval from unregenerated, unbelieving men.

But that is not the serious thing about his behaviour. Harold's little boy sinned against God!

He did not honor his father as God commands him to do in the fifth commandment. And Harold and his wife plainly made no attempt to train their child to keep God's commandments.

We want to leave it just exactly that strong!

The form in which the fifth commandment is presented to us by God Himself gives us to understand that keeping God's commandments and learning His fear begins in the home. Of course the commandment means that we should honor all those that are in authority over us. But the principle upon which the commandment is based is that, when as children we do not know any other authorities than father and mother, we must be taught to honor and respect those in authority. A little child, before he can even be taught the fear of God's name and knows no rule yet but father's and mother's rule must very definitely be taught obedience and respect to father and mother. We can begin too late with that rather than too soon.

Therefore we said that Harold and his wife made no attempt to teach their child to keep God's commandments and used the plural. He who does not teach his child to obey authority does not teach his child to observe the first table of the law; nor does he teach his child to respect the good name, lives, and property of others.

We must fear God in order to keep His commandments.

If we fail to teach our children to honor those whom God is pleased to place over us we do not teach them God's fear.

Then we encourage them in the way of disobedience.

J.A.H.

OUR UNSLEEPING GUARDIAN

To the hills I lift my eyes;
Whence shall help for me arise?
From the Lord shall come my aid,
Who the heaven and earth has made.
He will guide through dangers all,
Will not suffer thee to fall;
He Who safe His people keeps
Slumbers not and never sleeps.

Psalms 121:1

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE THIRD PERIOD (750-1517 A.D.)

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

THE GREAT SCHISM OF 1054 (1).

The Consensus and Dissensus between the Greek and Latin Churches.

No two churches in the world are at this day so much alike, and yet so averse to each other as the Oriental or Greek, and the Occidental or Roman. They hold, as an inheritance from the patristic (pertaining to the Church Fathers) age, essentially the same body of doctrine, the same canons of discipline, the same form of worship; and yet their antagonism seems irreconcilable. The very affinity breeds jealousy and friction. They are equally exclusive: the Oriental Church claims exclusive *orthodoxy*, and looks upon Western Christendom as heretical; the Roman Church claims exclusive *catholicity*, and considers all other churches as heretical or schismatical sects. The one is proud of her creed, the other of her dominion. In all the points of controversy between Romanism and Protestantism the Greek Church is much nearer the Romans, and yet there is no more prospect of a union between them than of a union between Rome and Geneva, or Moscow and Oxford. The Pope and the Czar are the most powerful rival-despots in Christendom. Where the two churches meet in closest proximity, over the traditional spots of the birth and tomb of our Saviour, at Bethlehem and Jerusalem, they hate each other most bitterly, and their ignorant and bigoted monks have to be kept from violent collision by Mohammedan soldiers.

I. Let us first briefly glance at the consensus.

Both churches own the Nicene creed (with the exception of the Filioque), and all the doctrinal decrees of the seven oecumenical Synods from A. D. 325 to 787, including the worship of images. The Filioque Controversy was a dispute which concerned one of the principal differences between the Eastern and the Western Churches, arising from the fact that the latter adds the word *filioque* to its creed. The Apostles' Creed has simply, "And in the Holy Ghost," to which the Constantinopolitan Creed added, "Who proceedeth from the father." There the Greek Church stopped, while the Latin Church, without the sanction of an ecumenical council, or even consultation with the Greek Church, added, "and the Son" (filioque). The Greek Church protested as soon as it discovered the addition; and attempts which have since been made to reestablish union between the two churches have been wrecked chiefly on this word.

They agree moreover in most of the post-oecumenical or mediaeval doctrines against which the evangelical Reformation protested, namely: the authority of ecclesiastical tradition as a joint rule of faith with the holy Scriptures; the worship of the Virgin Mary, of the saints, their pictures (not statues), and relics; justification by faith and good works, as joint conditions; the merit of good works, especially voluntary celibacy and poverty; the seven sacraments or mysteries (with minor differences as to confirmation, and extreme unction or chrism); baptismal regeneration and the necessity of water-baptism for salvation; transubstantiation and the consequent adoration of the sacramental elements; the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead, with prayers for the dead; priestly absolution by divine authority; three orders of the ministry, and the necessity of an episcopal hierarchy up to the patriarchal dignity; and a vast number of religious rites and ceremonies.

In the doctrine of purgatory, the Greek Church is less explicit, yet agrees with the Roman in assuming a middle state of purification, and the efficacy of prayers and masses for the departed. The dogma of transubstantiation, too, is not so clearly formulated in the Greek creed as in the Roman, but the difference is very small. As to the Holy Scriptures, the Greek Church has never prohibited the popular use, and the Russian Church even favors the free circulation of her authorized vernacular version. But the traditions of the Greek Church are as strong a barrier against the exercise of private judgment and exegetical progress as those of Rome.

II. The dissensus of the churches covers the following points:

1. The procession of the Holy Spirit: the East teaching the single procession from the Father *only*, the West (since Augustin), the double procession from the Father and the Son (Filioque). This doctrine of the Filioque, incidentally, is a tremendously important doctrine, inasmuch as it maintains the absolute equality between the Father and the Son, teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (H. V.).

2. The universal authority and infallibility of the pope, which is asserted by the Roman, denied by the Greek Church. The former is a papal monarchy, the latter a patriarchal oligarchy (a form of government in which the absolute authority and power is restricted to a few — H.V.). There are, according to the Greek theory, five patriarchs of equal rights, the pope of Rome, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. They were sometimes compared to the five senses in the body. To them was afterwards added the patriarch of Moscow for the Russian church (which is now governed by the "Holy Synod"). To the bishop of Rome was formerly conceded a primacy of honor, but this primacy passed with the seat of empire to the

patriarch of Constantinople, who therefore signed himself "Archbishop of New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch.

3. The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, proclaimed as a dogma by the pope in 1854, disowned by the East, which, however, in the *practice* of Mariolatry fully equals the West.

4. The marriage of the lower clergy, allowed by the Eastern, forbidden by the Roman Church (yet conceded by the pope to the United Greeks).

5. The withdrawal of the cup from the laity. In the Greek Church the laymen receive the consecrated bread dipped in the wine and administered with a golden spoon.

6. A number of minor ceremonies peculiar to the Eastern Church, such as trine immersion in baptism, the use of leavened bread in the eucharist, infant-communion, the repetition of the holy unction in sickness.

Notwithstanding these differences the Roman Church has always been obliged to recognize the Greek Church as essentially orthodox, though schismatic. And, certainly, the differences are insignificant as compared with the agreement. The separation and antagonism must therefore be explained fully as much and more from an alienation of spirit and change of condition.

Note on the Eastern Orthodox Church.

For the sake of brevity the usual terminology is employed in this chapter, but the proper name of the Greek Church is the HOLY ORIENTAL ORTHODOX APOSTOLIC CHURCH. The terms mostly in use in that church are *Orthodox* and *Oriental* (Eastern). The term *Greek* is used in Turkey only of the Greeks proper (the Hellens); but the great majority of Oriental Christians in Turkey and Russia belong to the Slavonic race. The Greek is the original and classical language of the Oriental Church, in which the most important works are written; but it has been practically superseded in Asiatic Turkey by the Arabic, in Russia and European Turkey by the Slavonic.

The Oriental or Orthodox Church now embraces three distinct divisions:

1. The Orthodox Church in Turkey (European Turkey and the Greek islands, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine) under the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

2. The state church of Russia, formerly under the patriarch of Constantinople, then under the patriarch of Moscow, since 1725 under the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg and the headship of the Czar. This is by far the largest and most important branch.

3. The church of the kingdom of Greece under the Holy Synod of Greece (since 1833).

There are also Greek Christians in Egypt, the Sinaitic Peninsula (the monks of the Convent of St. Catharine), the islands of the Aegean Sea, in Malta, Servia, Austria, etc.

Distinct from the Orthodox Church are the *Oriental Schismatics*, the *Nestorians*, *Armenians*, *Jacobites*, *Copts*, and *Abyssinians*, who separated from the former on the ground of christological controversies. The Maronites of Mount Lebanon were originally also schismatics, but submitted to the pope during the Crusades.

The *United Greeks* acknowledge the supremacy of the pope, but retain certain peculiarities of the Oriental Church, as the marriage of the lower clergy, the native language in worship. They are found in lower Italy, Austria, Russia, and Poland.

The *Bulgarians*, who likewise call themselves orthodox, ground of christological controversies. The Maronites of Mount Lebanon were originally also schismatics, but submitted to the pope during the Crusades.

The Causes of Separation.

Church history, like the world's history, moves with the sun from East to West. In the first six centuries the Eastern or Greek church represented the main current of life and progress. In the middle ages the Latin church chiefly assumed the task of christianizing and civilizing the new races which came upon the stage. The Greek church has had no Middle Ages in the usual sense, and therefore no Reformation. She planted Christianity among the Slavonic races, but they were isolated from the progress of European history, and have not materially affected either the doctrine or polity or cultus of the church. Their conversion was an external expansion, not an internal development.

The Greek and Latin churches were never organically united under one government, but differed considerably from the beginning in nationality, language, and various ceremonies. These differences, however, did not interfere with the general harmony of faith and Christian life, nor present cooperation against common foes. As long and as far as the genuine spirit of Christianity directed them, the diversity was an element of strength to the common cause.

Having quoted Philip Schaff until now, and intending to continue these quotations in subsequent articles, we wish to make a few remarks. The reader may recall that the learned author designated the differences between the Western and Eastern Church as insignificant in comparison with the points of agreement between. And he also states that the Roman Church has been obliged to recognize the Greek Church as essentially orthodox, though schismatic. Now, in the first place we wish to remark that we question whether a church can be schismatic and continue to remain orthodox. Secondly, the reason for the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic Church lies in its hierarchical form of church government, its being ruled by powers without rather than by inner spiritual forces. And, thirdly, the denial of the "Filioque" is by no means an insignificant departure from the truth.

H.V.

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 5 (continued)

We must keep in mind the subject. This article does not deal with the relation of the Christian to the law. Even then, of course, there is much of truth in what this article states. Certainly, also the Christian, who is already in possession of the grace of salvation, does not *obtain* grace, and does not even obtain more grace and further grace, by keeping the law. Certainly, the Christian discovers through the law the greatness of sin, even after his conversion, so that he continually grows in the knowledge of his sin, and confesses with the *Heidelberg Catechism*, Qu. 114, that "even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of (this) obedience." And that same Christian realizes that he has need of the preaching of the law, "that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ." *Catechism*, Qu. 115. The Christian therefore certainly realizes too that in the law itself there is no remedy pointed out for sin, and that the law as such imparts no strength to extricate him from his misery. He will acknowledge that the law as such leaves the transgressor under the curse. But above all, the Christian will understand and view the law as an integral part of the gospel of grace. He hears, and desires to hear, the commandments of his God, but always in the light of the gospel as it is briefly proclaimed even in the very introduction of the Decalogue: "I am Jehovah thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." That, you must remember, is the gospel. The law of the Ten Commandments is addressed not to the natural man, but to the saved man. The keeping of the law follows the obtaining of saving grace; it does not precede it. For only in the grace of salvation is the possibility of keeping the law.

However, the question here concerns the natural man, and his relation to the law. Can he, the natural man, who is devoid of any grace whatsoever, obtain through the law the grace of God unto salvation?

We must note that the opening proposition of this article is a comparison: what is true of the light of nature is also true of the law. This is a very important comparison too. It applies not only to the conclusion, namely, that the natural man is unable through the law to obtain saving grace, just

as he is unable through natural light to obtain saving grace. But the comparison speaks of the entire explanation, accounting (*ratio*), of the law.

First of all, we must observe what is here compared. The comparison is between natural light and the law. It is between what is often called "general revelation" and "special revelation," — terms which have their disadvantages, but which we may here use for the sake of distinction. For, you understand, there is a difference between the light of nature and the law, a difference which the fathers also note. All men have the light of nature; but the law was delivered by God to His peculiar people the Jews by the hand of Moses. In other words, the fathers point out that if you would make a comparison here, there is already a distinction which precedes the very giving of the law. The law was not given to all men. And therefore, the law could not possibly serve for the obtaining of saving grace for all men. Besides, how is it to be explained that God gave the law only to some? This very fact already presupposes a good pleasure of God, according to which He revealed His law to some, but not to others. In the third place, do not overlook the fact that the Jews, God's "peculiar people," are the church of the old dispensation, the very same church to whom the promise of salvation was given. And the law came four hundred thirty years after the promise, was imposed upon the promise. And this fact must certainly not be ignored in any consideration of the law. But nevertheless, we may make the comparison. All men have natural light; the whole nation of Israel had the law. Furthermore, there is an objective aspect both to this general revelation and this special revelation to God's peculiar people, the Jews, the church. The objective element in the one is God's testimony through the things that are made; the objective element in the other is God's testimony in the Scriptures. Finally, we must note that both indeed shed light upon man, upon his way, upon his deeds. Through the light of nature, man has the light of a natural knowledge of God, of things about him, and of the difference between things good and evil. Through the light of the objective testimony of the Decalogue light is also shed. That law speaks of God and of man. That law speaks of the difference between good and evil. Hence, it is indeed possible to make a comparison.

In the second place, we must note the point of comparison. As we pointed out, it concerns the natural man, unregenerated, unconverted, devoid of grace. And it concerns the question whether he is able to obtain the grace of salvation.

And in the third place, we must note the conclusion:

1. Neither by the light of nature nor by the light of the law is man able to obtain saving grace.

2. Both by the light of nature and by the light of the law man is left without excuse. For the article we are now treating tells us that the law leaves the transgressor under the curse.

3. Both the light of nature and the light of the law the natural man renders wholly polluted and holds in unrighteousness. In the present article this is not stated, but it is implied in the comparison, and it is certainly true.

4. Both the light of nature and the light of the law discover the greatness of sin and convict man thereof, so that he stands responsible before God.

All this becomes plain if we but consider the law for a moment. Why cannot the law save? What does the law do?

The law can only demand. It says "Thou shalt . . ." and, "Thou shalt not . . ." And centrally, its demand is that man shall love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength. If man obeys this demand, the law holds forth to him freedom and life: "The man that doeth them shall live in them." If man disobeys, the law curses him unto death, a death which includes the spiritual slavery to sin: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." More than this demand there is not in the law.

Hence, the law discovers sin, and discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof. This certainly follows. When a man comes into contact with that standard of the law, he finds that he is not in harmony with that standard. And the more the law is applied to him and to his life and walk, the more he stands exposed as a sinner. Still more: he stands convicted of sin before his own consciousness also. We found this to be the case with the man who has only natural light, and who by natural light knows the difference between good and evil. This is still more the case with the natural man as he comes into contact with the Decalogue. He has more light, is accordingly more clearly a sinner, and stands more responsible before the bar of God's justice. We must remember this. The trouble with the natural man is not that he is intellectually a fool. He is not ignorant of the law. He can understand the law when it says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," or when it says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." He understands this far more clearly than the Gentiles, which have not the law, but which do by nature the things of the law, and which are a law unto themselves. But the natural man stands spiritually at enmity against God and His law. He will not obey it, cannot obey it, and cannot will to obey it. In fact, the promulgation of the law excites him to sin. The more the law of God obligates him to live holily, and threatens transgression with death, the more the natural man, unwilling and unable to keep the law, sets himself against it and hardens himself in sin.

At the same time, the law points out no remedy for sin. It speaks neither of salvation nor of a Savior. It does not even indicate a possible way of salvation. Nor does it impart strength to him that hears the law to extricate him from his

misery. The law demands. And as it demands, it exposes, convicts, condemns. And it does no more. Hence, being weak through the flesh, it leaves the transgressor under the curse. Here the *Canons* make a partial quotation of Romans 8:3. The flesh is the human nature in which sin is committed. And through the flesh the law is weak, that is, it stands powerless to do anything else than curse man. It cannot save him. If the law were to do anything to save him, it would have to be able to condemn not the sinner, but the spiritual dominion of sin in the sinner. The law must, with its "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," assign the guilty sinner to the power and dominion of sin and death. The law exactly stands on the side of sin in its claim to rule the sinner. And when our mistress sin claims that she has the right to make of the human nature her dominion, then the law upholds her in this claim. Man is guilty. And upon the basis of this guilt he is justly assigned to the dominion of sin and death. And therefore the law leaves the transgressor under the curse.

There is no possible way for the natural man to obtain the grace of salvation through the law.

Finally, we must remark that if the law is even to be a teacher of misery in the real, spiritual sense of the word, grace is necessary. Even as it is true that the natural man is able intellectually to understand the law and its sentence of condemnation upon him, and therefore stands convicted as a sinner also before his own consciousness, so it is also true that more than that mere intellectual understanding is necessary if a man is to have true, spiritual conviction of sin, so that he confesses his sin, is sorry for it, and cries out to God for mercy. For this knowledge of our misery, the knowledge of which the *Heidelberg Catechism* speaks in its first section, more than the objective revelation of the Decalogue in the Scriptures is necessary. A man must not have only the mirror of the law to behold himself. He is in need of eyes to see the image of himself in the law. He needs grace in order that, beholding himself in the mirror of the law, he will not straightway forget what manner of man he is, but will confess, "I am that sinner. O God, be merciful unto me!" And therefore we must remember that also through the law there is a two-fold operation of God: an operation of grace in the elect, and an operation of wrath and hardening in the reprobate. The latter, discovering their sin in the light of God's law, rave and rage the more in sin and enmity against God; the former, beholding themselves in the mirror of the law, become confessing and sorrowing sinners, and are driven out by the law to seek their salvation in the free grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Article 6. What therefore neither the light of nature, nor the law could do, that God performs by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation: which is the glad tidings concerning the Messiah, by means whereof, it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old, as under the New Testament.

We have but one minor correction to make in the above translation. In stead of "good tidings" the translation might as well have been "gospel" or "evangel." Apart from this, the above version is faithful to the original Latin.

This article forms the transition from the subject of the corruption of man to that of his conversion, and it sets forth the fundamental proposition of this entire section of the *Canons*, namely, that salvation is of the Lord alone. From this point of view it is an important paragraph, even though it is brief and intentionally lacking in detail. The details are supplied in the articles that follow and which explain this main proposition. Let us briefly note the setting and the implications of this article.

In the first place, we must bear in mind that the present section of our *Canons* deals with salvation as far as its subjective application is concerned. The first section dealt with predestination. Over against the Arminian error of conditional election, the Great Synod maintains sovereign predestination. The second section dealt with the atonement. Over against the Arminian error of so-called general atonement, which actually is no atonement at all, the fathers of Dordt maintain that Christ died for the elect alone, and that by His death He merited all the blessings of salvation, including faith, for them, and for them only. Now we have arrived at the third main issue. The Arminians teach, quite in harmony, of course, with their teachings concerning predestination and atonement, that the natural man obtains actual, personal possession of salvation in Christ through his own free will, whereby he fulfills the conditions of faith and repentance. His conversion is, at least as far as its beginning is concerned, to be ascribed to himself. Over against this, the fathers maintain, first of all, that the natural man is wholly corrupt, conceived in sin, by nature a child of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, in bondage thereto, so that without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, he is neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of his nature, nor to dispose himself to reformation. This is indeed the foundation-stone of any true doctrine of man's conversion. There is no danger, if this truth be maintained, that man's conversion can be ascribed to himself. On this basis there is no possibility of conversion outside of the grace of God. And thus the fathers found it necessary also, over against the rather general teachings of the Arminians concerning the corruption of man, — teachings which were confusing just because — they had the sound of truth, — to be very painstakingly specific on this subject of man's corruption. They sought to lay a sound foundation. Next, because the Arminians liked to employ the language of the truth, as heretics always do, and because they persisted in speaking of God's grace even while they boasted of man's goodness, the fathers found it necessary to gainsay two further errors of the Arminians, errors which agreed in

this, that they both taught that somehow man himself obtains the grace, of God unto salvation. This is the perfidy of Arminianism. It speaks of grace, but at the same time denies grace, making it ultimately dependent on man's will and man's work. And we must understand that then grace is no more grace. Hence, the fathers strive to emphasize that as far as man is concerned, there is no way out. Grace is free, and must be left free. There is no possible way for corrupt man to become worthy in himself of the grace of God, to merit the grace of God, to attain to that saving grace. He can do so neither by the light of nature, nor by the law. All man can ever do is to stand as a guilty, corrupt, damnable sinner, inexcusable before God. Such is the setting of this article, as its opening words also indicate.

But now, if such is man's situation by nature, how is he saved? To this question the article we are now discussing gives the answer. And notice that the answer is really that what man cannot do, God does. Moreover, notice that the article connects this work of God with His good pleasure, that is, with His sovereign counsel of predestination: "It hath pleased God to save such as believe . . ." In connection herewith the fathers already make mention of the agency and means of this divine work of salvation, namely, the operation of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of reconciliation, or the gospel concerning the Messiah. As we said, the details follow. But it is important to note here already that over against the Arminians, who always came with all kinds of false accusations on these matters, the fathers take pains to mention the preaching of the gospel and faith along with the operation of the Holy Spirit. These are some of the matters at issue. And concerning them the remaining articles of this chapter will give full explanation. What is the significance of the preaching of the gospel? What is the relation between the gospel and faith? How is the gospel effective unto salvation? What about those who do not believe the gospel? What is the nature of the operation of the Holy Spirit through the gospel in the corrupt sinner? On these matters, and others, the Reformed Christian must have a clear understanding, lest he fall into the Arminian lie.

Finally, the article adds that God's way of salvation was never any different than here stated. It is not true that in the old dispensation men were saved by the law and its works, while in the new dispensation they are saved through the gospel. Always, both under the old and under the new dispensation God performed the work of salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation. God Himself, and He alone, — whether you speak of that aspect which is called the operation of the Holy Spirit, or whether you speak of that aspect of His work which is called the ministry of reconciliation through Jesus Christ, — God Himself saves His people from the beginning to the end of the world.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Church and the State

(Continued)

In evaluating the position of the Rev. M. MacKay on the question of the proper relation of the church and state, it may be well to firstly point out that there are many things which the author writes in which we wholly concur. His emphasis upon the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God and his expressed determination to maintain that truth at all costs is very commendable. This characterizes more of the Reverend's writings and it is indeed refreshing and "soul-warming" to hear from voices outside our own churches that speak fervently against any kind of repudiation of this important truth, including the doctrine of common grace, as MacKay does. He correctly observes that Predestination, consisting of absolute election and absolute reprobation, cannot be maintained with the doctrine of general grace. Where the latter is maintained the former must and is denied. Likewise God's sovereign determination of the eternal destiny of all His moral creatures precludes the possibility of the so-called "offer of salvation to all men without distinction" (as well as the Promise of God to all). In this we happily extend to brother MacKay the hand of fellowship.

We can also agree with the Editor of *The Contender* when he opposes the view of Roman Catholic domination of the State for it is also our conviction that it is not the prerogative of any church to rule in civic affairs. And when MacKay in strong terms condemns the current conception of the so-called "religious freedom" that places all religion, true or false, on the same par; which gives atheism and christianity the same legal sanction; which is the doctrine of appeasement and compromise; we agree that said philosophy cannot be sustained by the teachings of the Bible. Although this erroneous conception is Constitutionally defended in our own country, we unhesitatingly brand it as false and agree with the editor when he points out that if this practice were consistently persued, no church could criticize or oppose the false teachings of another church without committing a "legal, moral and logical sin."

Neither do we wish to disagree with the author when, in his last article, he holds forth the truth that the Scriptures teach: (1) The civil magistrate is a minister or servant of God and that he has been placed in his office of authority and power by the sovereign decree and act of God, and (2) God is the supreme ruler of the nations, that Christ is the King of kings, and that, for this reason, all nations are under obligation to God and Christ. We have no argument on these points for Scripture clearly expresses these truths in various places.

Romans 13:1, 4: "For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God . . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good." Psalm 96:10, "Say among the

heathen that the Lord reigneth." In Revelation 1:5 Christ is called, "The Prince of the kings of the earth" and in Revelation 17:14, "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings."

Nor can it be denied that many of the kings in Israel exercised themselves directly in religious affairs. This was shown in our previous article and, as was then pointed out, this does not even have to be confined to Israel's kings for also men like Cyrus and Darius did so. That kings in the Old Testament acted to promote the true worship of God is plain from many examples but that they also acted to promote false worship is evident from the example of king Nebuchadnezzar with his golden image and fiery furnace as we read in Daniel 3. Need we then be reminded that we are approaching that time in God's plan when "that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:3, 4). That political beast will also intermeddle in religious affairs; the beast and false prophet will combine forces (Revelation 13:12); the church and state will then be one and "will cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:15b). All these actions of the God-fearing kings, such as David, Hezekiah and Josiah, as well as those actions of unbelieving despots, whether they promoted the service of God as did Cyrus or whether they opposed it as did Nebuchadnezzar, only confirm the indisputable truth that "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1).

All of this, however, does not mean that we agree with all of the conclusions which the author of the articles we have been quoting arrives at to give credence to his principle claim that the doctrine of the separation of the church and state is false. Let us consider some of these conclusions briefly before we express ourselves more fully on this matter.

Firstly, MacKay concludes that the doctrine of the separation of church and state necessitates a denial of the truth concerning the absolute sovereignty of God. Writes he: "So in reality anyone who holds to the doctrine of the separation of Church and State does not believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, but only in a limited sovereignty of God, — which is no sovereignty at all."

Only with the very last part of this statement can we agree. This quotation contains a very strong indictment. If it is true, our Protestant Reformed Churches are guilty of denying God's sovereignty in the thirty-sixth article of our Confession. This, however, we fail to see. MacKay leaves with us the impression that God's Sovereignty is conditioned by or dependent upon man's acknowledgement of the same. With this sort of conception of sovereignty we cannot agree for it seems to us that this would certainly be a limited sovereignty which indeed "is no sovereignty at all." Writes MacKay: "Hence, the great basic truth of the Reformed faith,

namely, the absolute sovereignty of God over all men, is denied before the eyes of men in the case of those nations who refuse officially (by law) to acknowledge God to be the God of their nations."

Does this mean that if the United States would pass a law or write an amendment to the Constitution to the effect that the God of the Reformed faith is acknowledged as the God of his nation, that would in effect make Him the Sovereign of this land? Or, if the legislators forbear to do so, God is not sovereign? We do not follow that reasoning. Does it perhaps mean that because a nation does not express officially that it acknowledges God, the church within that nation is guilty of denying God's Sovereignty? We do not believe that the author means this but to avoid misunderstanding let us express briefly our view of this matter.

Our view is that God's Sovereignty is absolute, conditioned by nothing, dependent upon no one. GOD IS GOD! His Sovereignty is unlimited. He does with all creatures, small and great, as it pleases Him irregardless of whether or not that creature acknowledges that He is God. As for nations, God sets them up and He casts them down at His own pleasure. He exalts Capernaum to heaven and casts her down into hell (Matt. 11:23). "For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies; He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter" (Is. 34:2). "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity" (Is. 40:15-17). To these may be added countless passages from Scripture. God IS Lord of all the nations and no act or lack of act by a Congress or Parliament or Kremlin can alter this.

In this connection we recall the distinction that is often made between God's "Lordship of Power" and His "Lordship of Grace." The latter is true only with respect to His Church. Over her He rules sovereignly by grace, making His people willing subjects. His church He has not only chosen from eternity but He also redeems her in Christ, gathers her, defends, delivers and preserves her through all the ages until that day comes in which she shall be glorified forever. This is His work of Sovereign Grace and so *sovereign* is that grace that the "gates of hell cannot prevail against His church."

On the other hand God is sovereign over the world by His Power. He is omnipotent Lord. Upon the ungodly, whether as individual or as nation, He bestows no grace. Nevertheless He rules over them even though they will not acknowledge Him, rebel against His rule and seek always to cast His yoke from them. This truth is expressed in the Catechism by these words: "All creatures are so in His

hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move." (Lord's Day 10). They are but the ax in His hand wherewith He heweth (Is. 10:15). His purposes they fulfill even as did Pharaoh in hardened rebellion. So glorious is this sovereignty that all the nations are so held in God's power that, even though they in their deeds aim at the destruction of God's cause, in verity they move always in such a way that they serve His cause and further His purpose. It is no more the prerogative of the nations to determine whether God will be their sovereign than it is within the power of the sinner to determine whether he will permit or not permit God to save him. And, "the nation and kingdom that will not serve Him shall perish; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Is. 60:12). God is not mocked. He does not ask the nations whether they will permit Him to be their Sovereign nor beg them to acknowledge Him as such. He proclaims through His church unto all the world, "I am God and there is none else" and "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker" (Is. 45:5, 9).

God's absolute sovereignty is an established FACT that no creature or creatures can eclipse or abrogate in the least. Although it is not yet fully revealed so that "every knee is bent and every tongue confesses that He is Lord," nevertheless, the day is approaching when that shall be perfectly manifest and that in the gracious salvation of His elect church as well as in the righteous judgment and damnation of the ungodly world. Certainly the purpose of Divine Predestination with its component parts of election and reprobation is to manifest that absolute sovereignty of God "of Whom and through Whom and to Whom are all things, to Whom be glory forever" (Rom. 11:36).

Hence, to bring this Sovereignty to its fullest manifestation it must be evident also that man (and the nations) in his fallen state of sin and rebellion will not acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Man believes the lie for he is spiritually the child of the father of lies. He denies God. He erects idols to his own fancy and presumptuously exalts himself as God. He makes a god of his belly and he serves his flesh. In his utter depravity, his mind is always enmity against God and his will is totally perverse. He is a rebel who willfully opposes God. "The heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing; kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed" (Ps. 2:1, 2). Such is the situation in the present world.

Overagainst that world the church stands — not in unity — but in opposition. Boldly she proclaims "The Lord reigneth." By faith she maintains His Absolute Sovereignty even though the things that are seen seemingly contradict her testimony. And she does not seek political asylum in the world nor does she permit the worldly state to infringe upon the royal government of Christ in her midst. She fights the Lord's battles as a spiritual entity in the midst of a worldly state and is even now assured of her glorious victory, for her King is Sovereign over all.

G.V.D.B.

ALL AROUND US

Crumbs from the Master's Table.

Such is the subject of a sermon which appeared in a little magazine entitled *Zion's Witness* which a brother called to my attention. The sermon was preached by Mr. Knill at The Temperance Hall, Andover, England, on the evening of January, 7th, 1874. It was based on the text found in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

The form and method of his preaching is not above criticism, but the sermon as to contents contains some rather striking sayings which I feel our readers will find refreshing not only in the light of modern preaching but especially in the light of our recent controversy. Naturally, the sermon is too long for me to quote all of it in my allotted space. We therefore give you snatches here and there which indicate what we have in mind. I quote:

"We live in a solemn day of wide spreading empty profession of Christianity. Our Lord's words are being fulfilled: 'For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect' (Matt. 24:24). Also, when the words uttered by the prophet Isaiah are being fulfilled: 'And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach' (Isa. 4:1). The greater part of the preaching in the present day is *a gospel*, not *the Gospel*, — a mixture of free will and free grace. In this epistle, the apostle is led to show the utter impossibility of salvation by works, either in whole or in part. And in his epistle to the Galatians he gives an account of the way in which he became an apostle ('not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.') (Gal. 1:1) . . .

"What, then, is the Gospel of Christ? It contains good news, glad tidings, to poor perishing sinners. It originated in the sovereign good will and pleasure of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — who, for the manifestation of their own glorious attributes and perfections, entered into covenant to bring about and secure the redemption of a number of the fallen race of Adam, upon whom the love of God had been from everlasting fixed. In this blessed covenant of life and peace, the Son of God was set up from everlasting as Mediator, Testator, and Surety. The fall of man, through the transgression of Adam, hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Consequently the whole of Adam's posterity were involved in ruin, standing in themselves amenable to law and justice for their transgression.

"But the union between the Lord Jesus Christ and the objects of his everlasting love, was not broken or dissolved

through the fall. The church was the bride of Jesus from everlasting; therefore he, in order to redeem her from her state of sin and degradation, assumes her nature, or as it is written: 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' (Heb. 2:14, 15) . . . In short, the Gospel is a revelation and a proclamation of the everlasting love of a covenant God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, fixed unalterably, upon a portion of the fallen race of Adam before the world began, according to that beautiful golden chain of truth recorded in the eight chapter of the Romans: 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, etc. . . .'

"Some persons may say, 'If, then, this church or people were chosen in Christ to salvation from everlasting, so that there is no peradventure respecting their safety and ultimate glorification, whence arises the necessity of preaching what is called the Gospel?' To this I reply, that God ordains both means and end. And 'what, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' It pleases God 'by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Or, as it might be said, by the ministry of the word of truth God is pleased to convey unto his chosen the knowledge of salvation in its doctrines, promises, precepts, invitations, admonitions, and exhortations, as well as their individual and personal interest therein.

"Under the Old Testament dispensation, the prophets may be called preachers for 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Also he was preached in the various types, offerings, ect., under the Mosaic or Levitical dispensation.

"But when the Great Antitype himself appeared, he preached in his own person his own Gospel. Thus did that prophecy receive its fulfillment, which we find in Isa. 61:1, 2, 3; also we read of Christ ordaining and sending out his disciples to preach, giving them instruction where to go and what to preach; and at that time in order to establish their authority, he gave them power to work miracles in his name . . .

"The day of Pentecost was indeed a marvellous day, when there was such a display of almighty power attending the simple statement of Peter in reference to the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of the despised Nazarene, the Lord Jesus . . . Thus was the preaching of the Gospel made instrumental in conveying to them a knowledge of their state as sinners; and also of their salvation by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Gospel of which the apostle in my text declares he is not ashamed, having found it brought salvation into his own soul. And this is the Gospel which has been preached since that day up to the present time, by every one of those whom Christ by his Spirit, has

taught the knowledge of their utter ruin by the fall, and of their entire redemption therefrom by the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, 'counting them faithful, putting them into the ministry.' . . .

"Seeing this is the case as respects good and gracious men, what can be said of those who stand up in this day as professed preachers of the Gospel? Men who have never been even called by grace, much less to the important and solemn work of the ministry . . . These are called by our Lord and Master, 'Blind leaders of the blind.' These are those presumptuous characters whom Christ will address at the last day with the awful words: 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' And yet they had the audacity to say to Christ, Have we not prophesied (or preached) in thy name and in thy name done many wonderful works?" The apostle knew them in his day, and styles them deceitful workers, transforming themselves as the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, as Satan himself is transformed as an angel of light. The enemy of souls is not just now going about as a roaring lion, but as a deceiver, deceiving poor sinners with an empty show, a mere outward form of godliness; thus 'blinding the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' *The Gospel of Christ, therefore, is not a conditional or a contingent Gospel; that is, it is not offered to man for his acceptance or rejection; but it is 'the power of God unto every one that believeth.'* (Italics mine — M.S.) O, say some, the word declares that he that believeth shall be saved. That is true; nevertheless *faith is not a condition*, but a grace — a free-grace gift. It is a fruit of the Spirit of God wrought in the hearts of God's elect — the faith of the operation of God that worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world: 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed. 'And the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'

". . . It may then be asked, how we shall know whether we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this Gospel of Christ has been *to us* the power of God unto salvation?

"This is to be known by its effects. 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.'

". . . Therefore, my friends, if you have known the Gospel to be the power of God to your salvation, a mighty work has been done *in you*, as well as a wonderful work done *for you*. When the word of God comes with power, it casts out the devil and the reigning power of sin; that whereas, previous to this, the man was either wrapped up in a delusive, empty profession, or living altogether in profanity. . . .

"Not so with the poor sinner in whose heart God, by his Spirit, begins to work. The axe (of the law) is laid to the root of the tree. It must come down. God brings down the high tree, but exalts the low tree. Nor does the Lord leave his work thus begun, but goes on to deepen in that man a conviction of sin, until he is brought to see and feel he is utterly ruined both by original and actual transgression, and as such, by the deeds of the law, there can be no justification. In the stripping room a man learns the need of a better righteousness than that of Scribes and Pharisees; and also being under the sentence of condemnation, with a load of guilt upon his conscience, he finds all his efforts vain in removing that burden. There is but one way in which that condemnation and guilt can be taken away, and that is by the application of the blood of atonement — the precious blood of Christ. This, however, cannot be apprehended nor received but by faith, and this faith the gift of God . . .

"He now can sing 'the song of Moses and of the Lamb.' 'Old things are passed away; all things are become new.' Some people think none can know that they shall go to heaven before they leave this world; that a man cannot know the forgiveness of all his sins, for it would have a tendency to beget carelessness in attending to the means or ordinances of God's house; or that he might sin that grace may abound. Those who thus think or speak show plainly that they are as yet unacquainted with the Gospel in the power of it . . .

"Now, my friends, do you know this Gospel in its effects? Wherever the Gospel comes in power, it not only *saves* but *sanctifies*. A man who rightly receives the Gospel desires to live and act under its influence. 'For,' says the apostle Paul, 'the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, all they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' The precepts are regarded equally with the promises, knowing that, although our salvation does not depend in any way upon our works, yet notwithstanding, our comfortable walking with God and peace of conscience cannot be had or maintained in a breach of any part of God's revealed will for our obedience. Indeed, the child of God has a nature implanted in regeneration that loves holiness . . . But as grace in this life does not annihilate or destroy sin, but subdues, resists, opposes and overcomes it, there must necessarily be a daily warfare between two such opposites as sin and holiness, light and darkness, good and evil. Nor will this warfare end but with our natural life. It is, however, our mercy to find that whilst sin 'hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' (Rom. 5:21). Amen."

M.S.