

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

THANKSGIVING

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." Psalm 50:14, 23.

14-15

God's people are blessed: you see in this psalm a preview, and you listen to a pre-audition of the Judgment Day.

God is judging His people; they are those who made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

And their glorious name is My Saints.

And then: "Hear, O My people!"

And then we hear both the positive and negative speech of God; the one an instruction in the greatness and the riches of God who does not need anything from our hands, house or fields. He owns everything.

And then: the way to God.

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High.

And then it is well with our soul, for: Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.

But unto the wicked there is darkness. We hear a terrible speech of God unto those that came before His face, but with a wicked heart. To them there is nothing but everlasting damnation.

Let us see the way of God, and hear the injunction of the Most High unto thanksgiving worthy of the name.

* * * *

The setting of the psalm is the dispensation of the

Israelitish commonwealth with its service of the visible tokens of religion. We hear of sacrifices, bulls, goats, lambs, doves, etc.

They were commanded by God and were typical of the New Testament service of the love of God.

But oh, so often it deteriorated into empty forms.

God grew weary of it.

God wants the heart and not the outward manifestations of service and religion.

Hence: Offer thanksgiving!

What is it?

It is a heart that is filled with the beauteous grace of God. It is such a heart filled to overflowing. And that which flows over is thanksgiving. It is the love of God expressed by the object of that love of God: the saint. Thoughts, words, deeds, vibrant with the love of God.

And the content of all those thoughts, words, deeds are the glorifying of God.

Here is the story: God loves His people for His own name's sake.

Toward that people are the outgoings of His heart of love, and that means that He fills their heart with His love and lovingkindness.

And that people are so completely filled with all these beauties, that they can restrain themselves not for a moment: they flow over with love toward Him.

And that is thanksgiving; that is glorifying God; that is the worship demanded on every page of Holy Writ.

And that is the reasonable service which God requires of every man, but which is elicited only from the mouths and hearts of the chosen saints of God.

It is the answer of redemption. It is the gratitude of the redeemed saints. It is the exaltation of the demand of the law: Love God above all and your neighbor for His name's sake.

Glorify Me!

Pay thy vows!

Offer unto Me thanksgiving!

That, dear reader, is the only purpose of creation and recreation.

There is no other purpose for the whole history of the Universe.

Because out of Him, through Him, and unto Him are all things.

Creation is a mirror to reflect the goodnesses and the loveliness of the Godhead.

And when man, standing at the head of creation, corrupts himself, there glides a black shadow of wrath and the curse over the erstwhile beautiful creation. Even the heavens are now not pure in His sight. Creation does no longer answer to that one solitary purpose, and therefore there is the woe of everlasting curse and death.

But the responsibility remains.

The common responsibility of all men and devils remains: You should love Me and say it!

And if that is the purpose of creation, much more is it the purpose of recreation.

The first creation was a covenant with God, but it was earthly, temporal, transitory.

The second, or the recreation is also a covenant, but it is made *by sacrifice*. (verse 5) And that is Christ.

I think that this psalm is more Messianic than is usually understood.

The whole covenant of grace rests in Christ. Out of God, but through Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.

The whole recreated Universe must be unto the praise of God's glory. And again God calls to the new heaven and the new earth: Glorify Me. Offer unto Me thanksgiving. And: pay thy vows unto the Lord.

All this is fulfilled in Christ. All the praise of the new creation comes from the heart of Jesus of Nazareth.

And that includes all the thanksgiving of all the saints of God of all the ages.

Never was there a sigh of rapture, looking in the face of God, or it was first in Jesus, and through His Spirit, then in you.

It all centers around Jesus Christ.

Attend to Paul: That in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him

We are called unto a new obedience. And make no mistake: it is the obedience of Christ.

Also when you gather in the churches and have your thanksgiving's day service.

And thus it shall be when the moon shall shine no more.

The individual impetus is wrought in our hearts by Christ's Spirit and the Word Divine by showing us our redemption.

When that is seen we cry out: He has saved us from so great a death!

The curse, damnation and hell are gone, forever gone! Hallelujah!

And in their stead I see an unspeakable glory that shall permeate me and shall make me an instrument upon which God will play the songs of everlasting thanksgiving in the New Jerusalem.

* * * *

And that everlasting symphony will begin here on earth.

We hear it from our cradle: God gave Jesus. Jesus gave Himself. The Holy Spirit writes the story of salvation in a Book. And He also applies all the heavenly story of a love that will make heaven musical forever.

And the answer from the heart of the redeemed saint?

It is this: they give themselves. They are led by the Holy Spirit and the Word to make their vows unto God.

They confessed: I am His!

He owns me body and soul, for time and eternity.

I am created anew unto His glory. And I will live and sing His praises.

Such are the vows of the children of God.

And they pay these vows. Oh, how they pay them. God Himself is the Guarantor that they shall pay these vows. It is included in the work of salvation.

Yes, yes, I did read my text which speaks of the ordering of a man's conversation aright. And that then the Lord will show him the salvation of God.

Some people might speak here of the *conditio sine qua non*.

But it is nonsense.

What does it mean that a man ordereth his conversation aright?

For that matter: what is a man's conversation?

It is his life as he lives it from the heart, including all his thought, desire, will, imagination, speech and works. A man's conversation is the same as his pathway, his way or his life.

And to order that conversation aright means that by an effort of the will and the avowed purpose of the heart he directs all that heart and life toward the heart of God.

I ask you in all seriousness: where does that leave every cursed son and daughter of Adam and Eve?

You have already supplied the answer: every one of us has chosen his own way, and we have turned backward from the Lord.

That is the plain testimony of the Bible, of history and of the experience of the heart of man, of every man.

Oh, there is only one Man who ordered his conversation aright, and that Man is Christ.

And He did it for Himself, for us, for all the elect saints of God.

Of course, there is no other door to heaven than good behavior. No one can approach the great white throne, and be assured of a warm welcome, than those who do the commandments of God. Rev. 22:14.

And the only One that did and that does and that will unto all eternity is Jesus. He arrived before the door of heaven full of thanksgiving, praise and adoration on the day of ascension.

And the angels sang: Lift up your heads, o ye gates!!

And the gates were lifted up, and Jesus entered heaven.

Later we hear that He went through all the heavens until He arrived before the throne of God.

And then God said to Him: Sit at My right hand!

And Jesus began paying His vows.

And He does so unto all eternity through you and me, and through all those that are the beloved of God.

Thanksgiving? To the Triune God?

You could not very well do anything else, when you are touched by the Almighty.

G.V.

"Jesus why dost Thou love me so?
What hast Thou seen in me
To make my happiness so great,
So dear a joy to Thee?

Wert Thou not God, I then might think
Thou hadst no eye to read
The badness of that selfish heart
For which Thine Own did bleed.

But Thou art God and knowest all;
Dear Lord, Thou knowest me,
And yet Thy knowledge hinders not
Thy loves sweet liberty."

— Anon.

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EDITORIALS

Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage

As has been said, it is my conviction that divorce and adultery never can break the marriage-tie. Only death can do this. It is true that, according to Scripture, fornication or adultery gives the innocent party the right to leave the guilty party, although this even does not always have to take place for forgiveness and reconciliation is always the first obligation of the Christian. But even when the man leaves his adulterous wife or the woman leaves her adulterous husband, this does not imply that the tie of marriage is broken so that the innocent party has the right to remarry.

This is my conviction.

And this conviction is based on the Word of God.

First of all, there is the general ground that marriage is a reflection of the covenant-relation between God and His people and this covenant can never be broken: God never breaks His covenant. The people may violate the covenant, commit spiritual adultery, yet God's covenant stands fast on His part. The marriage-tie between Him and His people is never broken. It is established forever in His eternal counsel of election and sealed in the blood of the cross. Thus we read in Jeremiah 3: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." vs. 1. And again: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will take you to Zion." vs. 14. And once more: "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord . . . Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding." vss. 20, 22. These verses, and many others, show plainly: 1. That earthly marriage is a picture or reflection of God's covenant with His people. 2. That this covenant can never be broken, even though, on the part of the people it is violated by idolatry or spiritual adultery. We conclude that, if this is true of the eternal reality of God's marriage-tie with His people, it certainly must be true of the reflection in our earthly marriage: it can be violated, but it can never be broken.

This is also the teaching of Rom. 7:1-4: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye

should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Notice: 1. That also in these verses human marriage is presented as a reflection of another, spiritual and heavenly marriage, this time of the Lamb and His bride. 2. That this marriage of the Lamb and the Church could not be confirmed except through death. For by nature we belong to the first Adam, to sin and death and devil, but through the death of the Lamb we are liberated from the law of sin and death and, therefore, have the right to belong to Christ. 3. That, therefore, this is also applicable to human marriage: only death can break the tie of holy wedlock, **nothing else**. This is literally expressed in the text. The woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; only through the death of her husband does she become free from that law. Hence, while her husband still lives she may not be married to another. If she, nevertheless, marries another man, she is an adulteress.

And this is also very clearly the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the verses we quoted before. For the convenience of the reader we will quote them here once more:

Matt. 5:31, 32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away **his wife**, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

This text, taken by itself, says nothing about the remarriage of a woman who committed adultery before she was divorced by her husband. Nor does it say that her husband, after he had divorced his first wife, married another woman. The woman and her husband, therefore, may both be innocent of the sin of adultery. The Lord simply presents a case of a man that leaves his wife "saving for the cause of fornication." In the abstract, therefore, it might be possible to explain the text as meaning that, if a man marries another man's wife, who did not commit adultery, whose husband divorced her while he does not marry another woman, that man commits adultery by marrying the innocent woman. In that case, neither husband nor wife committed adultery. She, therefore, still belongs to her first husband, even though he has divorced her. In other words, the text offers no proof for the proposition that the marriage-tie can never be broken except by the death of the one of the parties and that even the innocent woman may never marry again.

I say that *in the abstract* this explanation might be possible. In the concrete it is not very probable. It is most probable that a man leaves his wife for the very purpose of marrying another, and that, therefore, the man that marries the innocent woman commits adultery in spite of the fact that her first husband is already married to another woman.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the text does not say this in so many words.

Similar words of the Lord Jesus, however, state this very plainly. To these we must call your attention in our next issue, D.V.

H.H.

Election and Reprobation

The question we were discussing in our last article under the above mentioned subject is: is it true, as Berkouwer maintains, that, in the hardening of his heart, man is first and God follows so that God hardens man's heart only as a matter of righteous judgment on man's self-hardening.

Of course, if we consider this question merely from a principal point of view, it is, fundamentally, a denial of total depravity and a maintenance of a certain so-called "common grace" to maintain that the individual sinner is first in the hardening of his heart and that God follows. Reformed theologians and the Reformed Confessions maintain that every man enters into the world dead in sin and misery. That death is the righteous judgment of God upon the sin of the human race in Adam. Hence, every man is under that righteous judgment of God even before he is born. Not the individual man, but God is first. Man is totally depraved. By nature, he stands in enmity against God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. He will not, he cannot, and cannot will to love God. Now, when God, apart from the grace of Christ, brings to that man the testimony of creation, according to Romans 1:19-21, concerning his eternal power and Godhead; and when He brings to them the gospel of Jesus Christ and calls them to repentance, then they do, indeed, harden themselves, but even then God is first for: 1. They are totally incapable of heeding the testimony of creation and the preaching of the gospel; and 2. There is, accompanying that testimony of creation concerning the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ, and influence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the reprobate whereby their hearts are hardened.

But, apart from this principal consideration which, by the way, is not my philosophy but based on Scripture, we must still consider the other passages of Scripture quoted by Berkouwer.

First of all, he refers to Matt. 13:10-17. There we read: "And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and

have not seen them; and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

In the same connection, i.e. with the parable of the sower and with the teaching in parables in general, we read in Mark 4:10-12: "And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked him of the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Now, Berkouwer does not explain these verses, but merely refers to them in a footnote. Nevertheless, in the body of the text of his book, he suggests an explanation. And this suggested explanation is such that, according to him, these words have nothing to do with reprobation. Writes he:

"Every attempt to weaken the words of Christ must be rejected. They must be understood in their deep sense. But, at the same time, it must also be considered that one may not give a 'hard' meaning to these words, that is not essentially connected with them. One may plead for the sovereign power of God and its acknowledgement, but sometimes cannot prevent that unnoticeably—or noticeably!—a deterministic vision has taken the place instead of this." p. 303.

And a little farther:

"This gospel does not leave man that does not listen and is disobedient unchanged, but it drives him—in a holy unavoidable power—on the way of alienation and of judgment. On that way we behold the ripening process, and when it is said 'they could not believe' then this does not refer to an impotence which is the result of a deterministic absolute power, but to the holiness of God's judgment, that realizes itself more and more in man's unbelief. It is a terrible misunderstanding when one interprets the either—or of many words of Scripture (fall-rising again; enlightening-blinding; life-death from the viewpoint of the symmetry of election and reprobation. For the either—or is then, in opposition to the entire Scripture, interpreted by a determination abstracted from Him."

Well, let it be said once more, I do not and never believe in a sort of philosophical determinism to which Berkouwer, evidently, again and again refers, and which he attempts to apply to me as is evident from the entire context in which the above passages occur. But I do believe, on the basis of Holy Writ, that God is absolutely sovereign and that He alone ultimately determines the salvation as well as the damnation of men and that according to His eternal counsel of predestination, election and reprobation. To be sure, He does not do so without considering man's rational and moral nature, but He does so with absolute sovereignty nevertheless. Predestination is divine determinism.

This Berkouwer does not like.

But I must still explain the texts quoted in this article.

This, however, must wait till the next issue.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH LAX IN DISCIPLINE

Revelation 2:12-17

Would it not have been a dishonor of the name of their Lord and King if they had left the impression that they lacked the courage to confess Him? No, this they could never do. Over against the cry of the town, "Aesculapius is savior," they boldly maintained: "There is no other name than that of Jesus. When the world proclaimed that Caesar was god, and as such was to be worshipped by all, they could not submit; but opposing the world also in this respect, they confessed that Christ was King, that the Lord God, and He alone, is worthy of worship and adoration. And thus it is also the calling of the church today to let the testimony go forth over against the Man-worship of Humanism and Modernism: "Jesus Christ is King; and He alone is the Savior of the world!"

But still more there is implied in this faithful confession of the name of Jesus over against the world on the part of the church in Pergamos. For the Lord speaks of days of tribulation and persecution which the church had already experienced in the past, in the days of Antipas, one of Christ's faithful witnesses, who had been killed among them, where Satan dwelled. Nor does it cause us surprise that the world could not tolerate the witnesses of Christ in the city. Surely, the church may escape the bitter hatred of the world, and persecution from its side, for a long time, as long as it will only be silent and unfaithful and hide its light under a bushel, as long as it does not condemn the world in its self-made religion and Man-worship and boldly confess the name of Jesus. But no sooner does the church realize its calling, and faithfully unfurl the banner of its King, than the hatred of the world of that detestable Jesus of Nazareth and His "blood theology" will manifest itself in bitter persecution. Thus it had been in Pergamos in the past. Nothing else is known of Antipas, mentioned in the letter, than that he was a faithful witness and had been killed for the testimony he had given. But surely, this incident is proof of the fact that the church had experienced dark and evil days, days of tribulation, even as the church in Smyrna experienced. And in all this they had been faithful, and not denied the name of Jesus.

From what we have considered of the church in Pergamos thus far we would be inclined to draw the conclusion that it was a beautiful and most perfect specimen of a church, in no respect inferior to the congregation of Smyrna. And we would surely not anticipate any form of rebuke in this epistle that is addressed to it. Also here we have the picture of a church in tribulation, in the midst of a world that cannot

tolerate its existence, yet flourishing spiritually, and faithful to the Lord its King. Yet the Lord holds a few things against it. And in order to understand how this is possible, we must notice, in the first place, that there is a noticeable difference between this church and the one in Smyrna. The latter was right in the midst of tribulation. In fact, the darkest days for it were still in the future. But with Pergamos this is somewhat different. The Lord refers to the days of Antipas as belonging to the past. The church still lived in the midst of a hostile world, to be sure. It had experienced the hatred of that world, and had been persecuted for the testimony they had given. But evidently the first wave of fury had passed. Pergamos had lived through its first attack from Satan and the world. Now it was a time of relief for the church. And history plainly shows that such times are dangerous for the church of Christ. In close connection with this fact stands the other, namely, that the church in Pergamos was defective in discipline, the discipline of its own members. This is a feature not mentioned of the church in Smyrna. In fact, I imagine that there was not much occasion for discipline in that congregation, for the simple reason that it was a church in tribulation. But in Pergamos discipline had become lax while there was abundant occasion that called for strictness in this respect. No, the situation in Pergamos was not as serious as that in Ephesus. But the defect was of such a nature, nevertheless, as to call for a rebuke from the Lord. Discipline is the Christ-ordained guard in the church of Jesus. It is the sentinel, standing watch by the purity of doctrine according to the Word of God, and by the holiness of the sacraments, as well as by the walk of believers. Where that sentinel is not placed on guard, or is sleeping while on duty, the church is exposed to the evil, seducing influence of false doctrine, as well as to the degenerating influence of the world upon the life of its individual members.

In Pergamos that sentinel was fast asleep. For the Lord reprovingly calls its attention to the fact that it has there "some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication;" some that "hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" in like manner. There were, therefore, evil men in the church of Pergamos, men that did not belong to the church in Spirit and in truth. And they were allowed in the midst of the congregation.

The reason why the church was lax in disciplining these men is not revealed. Hardly would it seem conceivable that the church was not aware of their existence in its midst, for they must have labored for the spread of their evil influence. Perhaps it was afraid that since the congregation already had to cope with so many difficulties, and had a hard battle to fight against the world, the disciplining of its own members would weaken it still more. Perhaps the excuse was given which is so often offered for laxity of discipline in our own time, namely, that the church must not cast out, but save. The church must save, and not reject, — so we often hear it in our own time. Who knows whether these evil members, if they are borne with patience and longsuffering, will not

come to repentance. On the basis of such false excuses evil men are tolerated within the church of Christ. Some churches defend the membership of those that belong to secret societies on that very basis. If only they are in the church once, they may be persuaded to sever their connection with the lodge. Men that hold a false doctrine are tolerated, and the church that does not exercise discipline over them is excused, because, so they say, true faith is after all not a matter of doctrine, but of the heart, and it would be cruel and indicative of a "holier-than-thou" spirit of intolerance if such men would be excommunicated from the church of Christ. We are perhaps acquainted with the flimsy arguments that are used in defense of laxity of discipline. Jesus, however, will not have it so. And whatever may have been the cause of this laxity of discipline in the church of Pergamos, the Lord holds it against them, and in His letter speaks of it rebukingly.

Exactly in what manner these evil men in the church of Pergamos had made themselves objects of discipline the letter does not tell us. There were Nicolaitanes here, as in Ephesus, where they were hated and not tolerated. In this letter, however, we receive some more definite information about them. They are compared with Balaam, that most abominable of all false prophets pictured in the Old Testament. Second to Judas, who betrayed the Savior for thirty pieces of silver, it is perhaps difficult to think of a meaner, more abominable and debased creature mentioned in Scripture than this Balaam, this agent of the devil. You are acquainted, of course, with the history of the man. Sent for by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse the children of Israel that are encamped in the plains of Moab, the thing appeals to Balaam, though he knows it is wicked and against the will of Jehovah, for the simple reason that there is money in it. Repeatedly the hypocrite implores the Lord to let him go with the king's ambassadors, till finally because of his importunity Jehovah grants him the wish of his heart, and lets him walk in his evil way. On the way thither he receives another warning through his mute beast, but without effect. He travels on, arriving at the place of his destination, and beholding from the heights the children of Israel, he cannot but pronounce upon them the blessing of Jehovah which the Spirit gives him to speak. And in spite of his own miserly soul and the provocation of the king of Moab, he must confess that he cannot curse whom the Lord Jehovah would bless. And what now does this debased instrument of Satan do? He gives the king some practical advice; and according to Numbers 31:16, he counsels him how he may shrewdly bring destruction upon the people of God. And through his counsel he causes the people of Israel to commit fornication in the service of Baal-peor, and to sacrifice to Moab's idols. That was the advice of Balaam. And its immediate object was the obliteration of the distinctive character of the people of God, their amalgamation with the people of Moab.

In the text these Nicolaitanes are compared to that wicked Balaam of the Old Testament, who offended the people of God. It is not impossible that the Nicolaitanes were

antinomians, people who deliberately taught that it mattered not how the Christian lived here upon earth, since Christ fulfilled the law and the old Adam was doomed to destruction anyway. They were not very scrupulous as to their own lives. They would feast with the heathen and eat of their sacrifices. In a word, they were a class of people that threatened by their doctrine and life to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world in Pergamos, even as the counsel of Balaam was calculated to wipe out the characteristic difference between the people of Israel and the Moabites.

Thus the church of Pergamos, by allowing these Nicolaitanes to exist in the church, was in grave danger of losing the distinctive character as a church of Christ. The purpose and subtlety of the devil in this scheme is transparent. In the recent past he had made an attempt to wipe out the church and make it unfaithful to its Lord by subjecting it to bloody persecution. But in this he had failed. For the time being he now abandoned this course of action, in order to try the method of corrupting the church and thus wiping out the distinction between the church and the world. I think in this respect the epistle of Christ to the church in Pergamos has a great lesson to teach us. Is not obliteration of all distinction and amalgamation of the church and the world characteristic of all that the devil does today? Are we not told that it matters not what form of doctrine we embrace, if only we will all be brothers? Is he not busily engaged in socializing and secularizing the church of Christ? And on the other hand, is not the church of Christ growing more lax in discipline and weaker in its hold upon the truth of the Word every year? I am convinced that such are the conditions indeed. And therefore the church in Pergamos in this respect at least is a true picture of the church of today. And the message which the Lord instructs John to write to that congregation may also be applied to us: "Repent, therefore, or else I will come to thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth."

This sword had already been mentioned in the self-announcement with which the Lord introduces this letter to Pergamos. Of this we read in verse 12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." It is evident that these words anticipate the threat of judgment found in vs. 16. It is evident, therefore, that the threat of judgment which the church in Pergamos receives is in harmony with that self-announcement of the Lord. He presents Himself as the one out of whose mouth proceeds the sharp two-edged sword. The significance of this sword we pointed out in a former discussion. In brief, it denotes the power and authority of the one that walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks to execute judgment and destroy the evil-doers by the Word of His mouth. He is Judge supreme, and rules also against the evil men in His own church, destroying them by the sword that proceeds out of His mouth. That sword is His sovereign and powerful Word, executing judgment.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

Chapter VIII:9-13

9. *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Let your hands be strong, ye that hear these days these words from the mouth of the prophets who spake on the day the house of Jehovah of hosts, the temple, was founded that it might be built.* 10. *For before these days there was no wages for man and no wages for beast, and no peace for him that went out or came in, because of the oppressor; and I set all men each against his neighbor.* 11. *But now not as in the former days am I to the remnant of this people, saith Jehovah of hosts.* 12. *For there shall be a seed of peace, the vine shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of the people to inherit these.* 13. *And it shall be that as ye were a curse among the heathen, o house of Judah and house of Israel, So will I save you and ye shall be a blessing; fear not, let your hands be strong.*

9. *Let your hands be strong*—an exhortation to continue energetically the building of the temple that was now nearing completion. That the prophet, better said, the Lord Himself, was so insistent that His temple be built, can be explained. The Word had not yet become flesh. Christ had not yet suffered and died, and, as the resurrected Christ, entered once into the holy place. The saints had not yet come unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. For this Jerusalem was not yet. Hence, the earthly Canaan was still the heaven of the church, the earthly Jerusalem the capital of God's kingdom, and the earthly temple His house. Here in this temple alone of all places the glories of the triune Jehovah were revealed in the face of Christ as foreshadowed by the typical things of the law. This being true, the temple was the center of unity of the faithful far and near, such of them as were scattered among the nations as well as those that dwelt in Judea. All prayed with their faces turned toward the earthly Jerusalem. For all knew themselves as covered by the blood of sprinkling upon the horns of the altar that burned on the temple-mountain. And the blessing of Jehovah that went forth from out of the temple was upon them all. It is easy to see, therefore, that as yet the temple was indispensable.

The exhortation comes to them that "hear these days these words from the mouth of the prophets." They hear, do these people, the true believers in the post-exilic community. They have ears to hear, are endowed with the grace to obey. They build the temple. It is the Lord's believing people that are here being encouraged. They alone have the promise. To them alone pertain the blessed prospects that the Lord holds forth in this chapter. They hear the words *from the mouth of the prophets*. The reference is to the

prophets that *spake on the day that the temple was founded, that it might be built*, and not the prophets in general. The prophets meant are Haggai and Zechariah. Zechariah, as assisted in the beginning of his prophetic career by Haggai, had already been speaking the word of the Lord to the post-exilic community for about two years. At the time of the calling of our prophet approximately thirteen years had gone by since the turning of Judah's captivity. At that time Cyrus made a proclamation throughout his empire in which he exhorted the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the temple. Some forty-four thousand Jews responded. On their arrival in Jerusalem they went to work with a will. The altar of burnt offering was built and set on its base, the legal festivals were reinstituted, workmen were hired and the materials gathered for the construction of the temple. And according to Ezra 3:8-13 the foundation of the temple was laid in the second year. But for the following thirteen years nothing was further done. During all this time the work of building of the temple was at a standstill. This failure to build God's house was largely owing to the fact that there was little heart for the work. The people were more interested in building themselves costly homes than progressing with the work of the temple. (See my introduction to the prophecy of Haggai). Then the Lord raised up Haggai and Zechariah. They rebuked the sinful apathy of the people and exhorted them to resume building operations. They also spoke to them words of encouragement. They proclaimed to them God's Gospel. Their labors bore fruit. The people came and did the work. In the language of verse 9, *the house of Jehovah of hosts, the temple, was founded that it might be built*. This second founding of the temple was unlike the first (Ezra 3:10) in this respect that it issued in the completion of the temple.

That God's believing people may clearly perceive and be grounded in the faith that it is indeed the will of God and, therefore, their calling to build the temple, that they may continue energetically to address themselves to this task and be encouraged in the performance of it, our prophet in verses 10-12 presents the contrast between their former and present condition. How had they fared during those years of indifference regarding God's house? Their lot had been hard. *Before those days*, that is, before the resumption of building operations, *there were no wages for man and no wages for beast*. As we learn from the prophecy of Haggai, this was owing to the fact that the Lord had called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brought forth, and and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands, Haggai 1, 2. The result was that no adequate returns were had from the labor expended in the cultivation of the soil. They sowed much but brought in little, Haggai 1:6. A heap of sheaves that appeared as if it contained twenty measures, when threshed was found to contain but ten, only half of what was estimated. A quantity of grapes estimated to yield fifty measures, gave, when pressed out,

but ten, Haggai 1:16. What little did grow in the earth was often ruined by mildew or hail before it could be harvested, Haggai 2:17. And so they ate but had not enough, drank but were not filled, clothed themselves but there was none warm, Haggai 1:6. Their daily requirements were not being met. They were a famished and ill-clad people. But this was not even the whole of their sorrows. Zechariah makes the disclosure (see verse 10 above) that for *him that went out and came in*, i. e., men engaged in their ordinary occupations, *there was no peace because of the adversary*. Doubtless this must be taken to mean that during those thirteen years the remnant in the land of Judah was continually being harrassed by the heathen. The enemy was everywhere on hand, so that it was not safe for a man to venture out of doors. And finally, to climax it all, the remnant was torn by dissensions. There was perpetual strife between the Jews in Palestine. Jerusalem was a house divided against itself during those years. This is indicated by the succeeding statement, *And I set all men each against his neighbor*.

Of these visitations no mention is made in the book of Ezra. Having stated that the work of the house of God ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia (Ezra 4:24), Ezra goes on to say that then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to the Jews (v. 1). But this was thirteen years later. That during these years the hand of the Lord was heavy upon His people because of their neglect of His house we learn only from Haggai and Zechariah. Ezra passes over these years in silence.

But now not as in the former days am I to the remnant of this people, saith the Lord of hosts. In the former days, when they were neglecting His temple, the Lord was as an adversary to His people in laying His strokes upon them. Not that in those days He was *actually* their adversary and was against them. This could not be, seeing that they were His people. In His love He had chosen them in Christ, and He loved them still and was for them in those days despite their sins. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that He changes not. Just because He was for them, He was unto them as an adversary. He made them to undergo the curses of the law, yet, seeing that He had hidden them in Christ, without cursing them. And He laid His plagues upon their hearts to the salvation of their souls, so that they repented and did the work. That was an accomplishment of His grace. And, accordingly, He will be longer unto them as an adversary but He will bless them with the blessings of the law wherewith He first blessed Christ in reward of His having kept the law.

For there shall be a seed of peace, the prophet tells them. As in Gen. 8:22, seed here is equivalent to sowing, so that the promise is to the effect that there shall be to them seedtime and harvest. That this is the thought conveyed is plain from the succeeding sentence, *The vine shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield its produce, and the heavens*

shall give their dew. This good is called seed of peace because it will be had in peaceful times, when God will no longer be laying His strokes upon His people in punishment of their sins seeing that they are reconciled to Him through the cross and have peace with God. *And I will cause the remnant of the people to inherit these*. It must be admitted that when the earth, by which is to be understood the land of Canaan, was not yielding its produce, the remnant was not in the actual possession of the earth. The earth was taking itself from them through its withholding from them its fruit. That the remnant of the people shall inherit these things—the produce of the earth—can therefore only mean that it shall receive from the hand of God Canaan, in the last instance the Heavenly. The remnant shall inherit the earth and the remnant only. Unto the remnant has been given all things. The others shall be completely dispossessed at Christ's appearing.

13. *And it shall be that as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel*—The house of Judah and the house of Israel are the remnant of the people of verse 6, properly and in the last instance the true church in the world of both the old and the new dispensation at any one moment of time and not to be limited to the Jews yet including the Jews according to the election of grace. (See on verse 8). True, in the Old Dispensation, seeing that Christ had not yet died and that, therefore, the blessings of Abraham had not yet come to the Gentiles, the remnant was exclusively Jews. Not that the Jews were God's people, but God's people in that day were Jews.

In our prophet's day the house of Judah and the house of Israel, the church, was scattered among the nations as is this day the case with the church on earth. And in every place where God's people were found they were a curse. How this is to be understood is plain from Jer. 24:10 and Joel 2:17. The heathen said, "Where is their God," which shews that God's scattered people were regarded as forsaken and cursed of God, so that they became an object of curses and taunts and reproaches among the heathen, a proverb, formula of cursing. It is not any different today. The true church in the world, the remnant according to the election of grace, must needs be hated and scorned by wicked and reprobated men. But according to the tense of the verb employed by our prophet the troubles of the church of His day had ended, "And it shall be as ye *were* a curse." The form of the verb at this place is accounted for by the fact that the Lord had turned the captivity of Judah. But the troubles of the church were by no means ended. Scattered for the most part among the nations, she was still the church in tribulation as she is this day. Her warfare will not end until Christ returns to give to His little flock the kingdom.

Sion was bitterly hated by the heathen, and by all the heathen almost to a man. There were no gentiles being called and as called and saved, loving and blessing Sion. For as was said, Christ had not yet died. The blessings of Abraham had not yet come to the gentiles. All with few

exceptions were reprobated men. None, therefore, were blessing. All were cursing and accordingly were being cursed of God.

We must now consider the Lord's Gospel to His afflicted people in the world of that day and of every day. Said the Lord: *so I will save you* — so, as certainly *as ye were a curse among the heathen*. And further: *Ye shall be a blessing*.

It is not essentially a new promise added to the one previously proclaimed and contained in verses 7 and 8. It is substantially the same promise directed to the same people — the church in tribulation. The message, therefore, is as timely today as it was then. Surely the Lord will save them, the house of Israel and the house of Judah. How this sentence is to be completed is plain from verses 7 and 8. The Lord shall save them from the east country and from the west country, yea from the ends of the earth, the four points of the compass. Christ gathers His church. And the whole house shall be full. Not one place in the family of redeemed shall be vacant. And He brings them to Jerusalem in the midst of which they shall dwell. Implied, certainly, is that Jerusalem is no longer on earth but is above. The holy city was exalted. The church was set in Heaven with Christ. Micah prophesied of this. He tells us that in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains and that it shall be exalted above the hills, Micah 4:1. And according to the Hebrews we are come to the Heavenly Jerusalem, 12:2. It is to this city, the Heavenly, that all the exiles are brought, the sheep for which Christ laid down His life. He quickens them, and even now in this life while they still lie in the midst of death, they in principle dwell with God in the midst of the holy city. With their faces turned toward the city they pray. Here at the right hand of the throne Christ is seated, and here where Christ is are the things above that they seek. And when the last exile shall have been saved, they shall receive from Him life in glory.

And ye shall be a blessing — They shall have a name and a praise made them of their God. If formerly they were the object of curses and taunts among the heathen, they will then be the objects of benediction (Zeph. 3:20). All the people of the earth shall call them blessed.

Such being the blessed hope that the Lord sets before the house of Judah and the house of Israel, it is right that He should conclude with exhorting them: Fear not, let your hands be strong. As was stated, this is an exhortation to continue energetically the building of the temple. The exhortation was also laid upon the hearts of those to whom it first came. They did the work.

Zerubbabel's temple was built. But it has long ago perished. For it was but shadow. The body is that spiritual house of which Christ is the chief cornerstone. This temple is God's. It was His conception. Hence it was always before Him in His counsel. Through Christ He merited its

existence in time, and as a legally completed heavenly thing, it was set in heaven with Christ. In this point of view, the temple has been built. All its lively stones are in heaven, so that not one of them can perish. Actually, however, the temple is in process of being built. The apostle Peter speaks of the believers as lively stones built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, I Pet. 2:5. The work of building the temple is Christ's. He gathers His church by His Spirit and His word. This can be the work of no mere man.

Yet there is a sense, a very actual sense, in which the believers do and shall build the temple. The temple of the first covenant was a shadow, as has just been said. It symbolized the indwelling of the triune Jehovah in His church through Christ in His Spirit. This being the truth depicted, the temple, as symbol, was the Gospel of God as are our sacraments. It is plain in what sense God's believing people of this day do and shall build the temple. They may be said to build the temple when they bring to manifestation in this world the body of Christ through their chosen them office-bearers and placing themselves under their jurisdiction in obedience to Christ. Thus they build the temple when they submit themselves to the ruling and teaching ministry that Christ has instituted in the church and receive their word and admonition. They build the temple when through these ministries as their organs they faithfully expound the Scripture and vindicate sound doctrine against heresies and errors. They build the temple when they lay off sin, put on Christ and walk in newness of life and fight the good fight. We saw how displeased God was with His people of old for their neglect of His temple. Not to be for Christ is to be against Him. Not to build the temple is to destroy it. Let then God's people build the temple which they do by His mercy. Let them not fear but let their hands be strong. For their labors are not vain in the Lord.

G.M.O.

"Suppose a king's son should get out of a besieged city, and leave his wife and children behind, whom he loves as his own soul; would this prince, when arrived at his father's palace, delight himself with the splendour of the court, and forget his family in distress? No; but, having their cries and groans always in his ears, he would come post to his father and entreat him, as ever he loved him, that he would send all the force of his kingdom to raise the siege, and save his dear relations from perishing. Nor will Christ, though gone up from the world, and ascended into His glory, forget His children for a moment, that are left behind Him."

— Gurnall

"Divine consolations are then nearest to us, when human assistances are furthest from us."

— Cave

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 11:25-30

In the Gospel of Matthew there is no passage which is quite as well-known, perhaps, as is the passage which reads as follows, "Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This does not mean, however, that all who quote this passage or have memorized it also properly understand or interpret this passage. The very opposite is often the case. Sometimes, due to ignorance, good christians will interpret these words in such a way that the "call is to all who hear the preaching" but that the coming is "up to us." When such ignorant brethren and sisters are further and properly enlightened they surely come to a more profound and correct understanding of their salvation, and will give more praise and glory to God. But there are also dye-in-the-wool Pelagians and Arminians, who even go prating of being Reformed, maintaining the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism, etc., who with might and main hold to the untenable interpretation that in this passage of Matthew all men are viewed by Christ as "being weary and heavy laden!"

I have met such preachers during my missionary activities.

They are a great plague in the church under the sun; their work will surely be destroyed as by fire in that day!

In view of the demand of God's word that we rightly divide it, and that we be workmen who need not be ashamed, I shall carefully follow the text and try to interpret it in the light of its content and in the light of all of Scripture.

We will call attention at this time to verses 25 and 26, where we read, "*At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; yea, Father, for thus was the good-pleasure to thee.*"

When Matthew writes in verse 25, "at that time," this does not mean a certain date on the calendar, nor does this refer to a given season in the Jewish calendar, but it refers to a "season," the proper time when Christ's preaching and teaching, his performing of miracles and powers was coming to manifestation both *in faith* and in *strong and marked unbelief*. It was beginning to manifest itself clearly that the preaching of Christ was a savor of death unto death in those perishing and that it was a savor of life unto life in those being saved!

And what "a season" of preaching it had been in Israel since the days of John the Baptist.

John, the greatest of the prophets, had proclaimed the way of the Lord, and he had called Israel to repentance, and baptizing those, who thus came, confessing their sins. And this John was no reed shaken with the wind. He was not the kind of preacher that told the congregation what they

"liked to hear;" he did not ask how does the "wind blow" in the congregation, but what saith the Lord! And he was not liked!

They said of him, in their unbelief, John hath a devil!

John must be discredited as being one who is possessed, one who is beside himself.

And Jesus?

Of Him unbelief spake no better. Jesus is called a "man, who is a friend of publicans and sinners, a glutton and a winebibber. And that, too because the eyes of them were spiritually blind, and they stumbled at a Jesus, Who opened the eyes of the blind, caused the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and who cleansed the lepers, and who raises the dead to life, and who does this, that the Gospel may be preached to the poor.

On the other hand, there were those, whom Jesus calls the "violent," who take the Kingdom "by force." They saw the Kingdom of God, long foretold by prophets and bards, as soon to be realized. And they very impatiently in faith and hope, and earnest longing drank in Christ's teaching, looking for "the rest" that remaineth for the children of God.

And what is Christ's official and clearly enunciated "interpretation of this phenomena of "unbelief" on the one hand, and of "faith" on the other hand? Is it that some have their "free-will" and come to the *act* of faith as the prerequisite to enter into the Kingdom and to come to rest for their souls? Not at all!

Christ, who has come to be the chief prophet, revealing unto us the secret counsel concerning our redemption, ascribes this all, as the manifestation of the "good-pleasure," to God alone!

Is it not remarkable that Jesus lifts up this exalted praise to God, his Father, at "that time"? Would one not, speaking "according to man," be inclined to state that at this point Jesus should have hung his harp upon the willow, sat down in despondency, as did Elijah of old, when he said: "and they seek my soul"?

Those who interpret Matthew 11:28, to wit, "come unto me all ye weary and heavy laden" as referring to "all men" would surely need thus to reason. The trouble is that they have never listened to the "divine answer" which spoke to Elijah, "I have reserved unto me seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Romans 11:4.

Why have they not listened to this? Is this testimony not clear? Indeed it is. Listen! Such have not profoundly learned the implication of Romans 9:20, "Who art thou, o man, that answereth against God!"

Here we take the shoes from off our feet. Here we listen to the anointed prophet of God unfold unto us the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption and also concerning the purpose of God in the "vessels of dishonor." And we tremble in holy beauty and worship at His feet. Yes, here we worship listening to the great and sweet singer in Israel, as he sings of the eternal good-pleasure. And listening in faith we take our place in his school of music!

I hear someone whisper "Decretum Horribilis"! I say with him that it is such. Only it means that it is the "horrible decree" which is higher than my thoughts and deeper than my imagination. But which is for that reason only good, just, holy and righteous. That is my prejudice of faith as I step into the "holy place" with Asaph, Elijah, Paul, all the saints, that have found additional reason for daily humiliation at the consideration of this "good-pleasure" of the Father.

And I say with the Fathers of Dort: God had done no one injustice, had he saved no man! Calvin, Beza, Ursinus can rest at peace. They will be saved and their work can endure the hottest trials as by fire.

Yes, they have listened well to the "Sweet-Singer" in Israel, as he laid His prayer as an oblation before the Throne on the altar. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

The white Throne was not besmirked by it.

All God's virtues were honored in the revelation of His great and holy Name.

Did we listen correctly to what Jesus said in the "holy place"? Did He really say "*hid them* from the wise and prudent"? And did he thank God for this? And God heard that prayer, and it did not defile the Most Holy Place, where angels cover their faces?

That is what Jesus said, and that is what we heard!

O, that is what the most Pelagian-Arminian preacher heard, too. But that is not what he wants to hear, so he soon forgets it, tries to down it in silence if not in outright denial. He may try to convince himself and all who love the lie, that those, who correctly report what they heard Jesus say, yes, what Jesus himself had Matthew write, are "rationalists," but in his heart of hearts he must know that he is a liar! For not they, who correctly report Jesus' words, are rationalists. They are simply adhering and clinging to the "rule of faith," while the real rationalist is the Arminian. That is not simply my analysis, but it is the lesson of the history of Dogma in the church through the ages.

We do well to let this sink deep into our hearts!

It is always a bit ridiculous when Pelagian-rationalists accuse the true believers of the Word of being what they themselves are.

It is the Devil's strategy of deception!

However, we will continue to listen to Christ's Word in the midst of the din of confusion of evil men!

Let us then notice that the text does not say that the "wise and the prudent" did not see, understand, believe the Gospel. That is true in itself, and is clearly taught in many passages of God's Word. However, that is not the *whole* truth, it is not the entire reality of God's dealings in His sovereign exaltedness over all things! For notice that Jesus thanks the "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" that he has *hid* the things of the Kingdom from the wise and prudent.

We ought to try to see first of all that this is what Jesus actually said to the Father.

And then we ought to give account of its implication too, should we not?

In the text the very opposite of "hid" is to *reveal*. And "to reveal" certainly means not simply to manifest, to make visible to the eye, but it refers to the inward illumination by the Spirit also, whereby by faith we see the things of the Mystery of God. To *reveal*, therefore, refers to the *impartation of salvation*, powerful calling to faith, justification and sanctification. The opposite of this is to *hide*. This surely means that in the just judgment of God a covering of unbelief was upon their hearts, and ever more came upon their hearts while the glorious light shone in their midst.

And this is *thus* because of the "good-pleasure" of God.

This hiding also proceeds from the counsel of God. Thus it is in this text. The "thus was the good-pleasure with thee" surely refers to the "hiding" as well as to the "revealing." And even though we cannot fully comprehend this work of "hiding" and "revealing" we will nevertheless sing in doxology with Paul for out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. To Him be the praise and glory, both now and forever." Romans 11:36.

It is true that the "hiding" comes from the counsel of God in a different manner than does the "revealing"; yet, even so, both emphatically come from the counsel of God! Yes, the fathers of Dort reject that as being false teaching and misrepresentation of the reformed faith which says "that in the *same manner* in which election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief." Be it so. We heartily concur. Our fathers here speak of the "manner" in which God executes His just and holy Decree. However, even so the fact that both proceed from the Decree stands. Besides, in Canons I, Art. VI, we read "that some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, *proceeds from God's eternal decree.*"

The fathers of Dort went into the holy place.

They, too, are rationalistic and far worse according to the Arminians, who have never learned to put their hand upon their foul mouth.

Be it so. Our text teaches that both the "hiding" and the "revealing" proceed from the counsel of God.

And for this the Name of the Father must receive honor and glory for ever.

G. L.

"If a person fall and break his leg, or be burnt out of his house, most people pity and sympathize with him. But if a man live in sin, where are the neighbors that feel for his danger, and labor to reclaim him? Or, if a believer be overtaken by a fault, how few professors will commiserate his case, and endeavor to restore him?" Toplady.

"Complaining of God is one thing; complaining to God is another." Caser.

IN HIS FEAR

Giving In His Fear

(4)

Bitter pills with a sugar coating upon them.

Their bitterness we do not taste; and they achieve the desired end.

We all have, in the literal sense of the word, taken them at one time or another in our lives. We needed them. Taking them was made much more pleasant, and we got the desired effect without experiencing the bitter part of it.

It is safe to say that we all have also taken these sugar-coated-yet-bitter pills in the figurative sense.

To what do we refer?

We have in mind this widespread and much-used method of getting — shall we say extracting? — financial support for worthy causes in God's kingdom wherein man has to get something in return for his money.

It is a method whereby money is extracted from individuals when actually it should have been given by these individuals and otherwise would not have been forthcoming.

There is so little giving left today because it is made so painless for us to part with our money for kingdom causes.

The bitter part of parting with our money is sugar-coated by the thing that we get in return.

We have to eat anyway; and if fifty cents or a dollar profit can be made on the meal we buy, money can be raised for this or that worthy cause. We would pay that same price for that meal in a restaurant, anyway. And now the profit can go to a good cause. So chicken dinners, soup suppers, baked goods sales, and a host of similar projects are initiated to make it less painful for us to part with that which is necessary for the support of worthy causes in God's kingdom. By these methods we have tasted only the sugar coating of the "pill" and we find out that it was not so bad after all.

Or, if we can get honor before men, if we can get the name of being charitable before them, if by bidding a ridiculously high price for an article that is not worth anywhere near the price for which we have agreed to buy it, we can get to look good in the eyes of our fellow men, well, then it was worth it for us to part with our goods for this kingdom cause. And if it will do our business some good, if it will mean better financial returns to us in our business, if it will enable us to get the support of others in our pet projects and ambitions, well, then by all means that sugar coating tasted pretty good!

But Jesus says, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that

they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly," Matthew 6:1-4.

Note that Jesus teaches us that God loathes such "giving," for He declares that such actions do not receive a reward. Note also that He calls such giving an act of hypocrisy. It simply is not giving but a seeking of glory among men. The only reward such actions have is the temporary, worthless praise of men; while it works in the Living God an awful displeasure.

Shall we, then, condemn all sales conducted to raise money for kingdom causes?

And what about the many programs that are rendered and at which a free-will offering is taken for some worthy cause?

Such a free-will offering we will not condemn nor a program at which occasion is given for one to give in a free-will offering for a worthy cause. But if the program has for its motive the desire to induce men to give because they have received entertainment in return, we certainly will brand it likewise as more sugar-coating.

There is room, no doubt, for programs in which God's people may edify and be edified by the talents that God has given to His Church. At such programs and in appreciation of God's works an opportunity may very properly be given to remember some worthy, charitable cause and to contribute to its supports.

Nor will we pass judgment on those societies as to their sincerity when they sponsor sales and meals with a view to using the proceeds for the support of some phase of God's kingdom here below. But we maintain that it is a sad commentary on our giving when we must resort to such methods. It shows that we have never learned to give or else have to a great extent forgotten how.

The word of God has this to say, "God loveth a cheerful giver," II Corinthians 9:7.

But let us read the whole verse. Let us read it together with the one that preceeds it. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

That is language that we can easily understand. No one will question the fact that one who sows sparingly of natural seed will reap sparingly. No one, therefore, can escape the spiritual application of this principle. And giving grudgingly and of necessity are not giving in His fear.

How wonderful it would be if all these means to raise money were not necessary and, simply on being told of the need for funds, men would cheerfully and readily contribute! And that this is not the case today is evident from all the methods that are still being thought up and are being pre-

sented in a new garb as another attempt to get men to part with their money for a cause to which they would not otherwise spontaneously contribute.

And that is not the case simply of the man with only moderate means and of the man who has great difficulty making both ends meet for the needs of his family. These are usually the most cheerful givers that you will find in God's church. And in the congregation the budget for them is a far greater percentage of their income than of those to whom God has given much to sow. If it is a tenth for these, then for the less well-to-do it is nearer to a fifth.

A beautiful picture of giving in His fear you may find in the early New Testament Church. We read in Acts 4:34-37, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who was by the apostles surnamed Barnabas, (which is being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

No sugar-coating there!

They did not need it!

And it was those who had lands or houses that sold them and laid the *whole* amount at the apostles' feet. It was the hypocrites such as Ananias and Sapphira who claimed to have sold their land and given the whole amount. They did not give in His fear. They definitely gave a part in order to obtain a name such as Joses received. They gave to get. Theirs was not giving for the sake of giving. With them it was a business deal. The beautiful picture of giving is to be seen in these who had lands and houses and sold them to bring the *whole* sum to the apostles for distribution amongst the brethren.

All too soon a flaw appeared in this beautiful picture, not only in the terrible sin of Ananias and Sapphira but likewise in the fact that we read a little later in Acts that the widows of the Grecians were neglected. And we do not maintain that today the only giving in His fear is when men sell their lands and houses and bring the *whole* amount to the maintenance of the gospel and the schools or for the needs of the poor. That form of communism (having all things common) could not continue, it stands to reason. For as soon as the money of those lands and those houses was used up the only possible source of future income and support would have been the addition to the Church of more wealthy individuals at a steady rate. No, we may keep our lands and our houses and continue to run our business establishments; but then our calling is cheerfully to give of what God has bestowed upon us for the maintenance of the gospel and of the schools so that these do not suffer at the expense of our prosperity.

The reason for this selling of lands and houses no doubt lies in the fact that the early New Testament Church con-

sidered the return of Christ in judgment to be in the very near future. This may be gathered even from the epistle of Peter, the second one, in which he finds the need of warning the Church that God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. Plainly there were many in that day also that expected Christ to return in their lifetime. This could very conceivably be the reason why the early New Testament saints sold their lands and houses for the cause of God's kingdom.

This does not at all take away any of the cheerfulness wherewith they gave these things to the support of the needy. We read very distinctly of them in Acts 4:32, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

The day may come when the Church will follow the example to the early New Testament Church in regard to houses and lands. Before the days come when we cannot buy and sell them and the awful persecution of the anti-christian forces begin to torment the Church, the saints will by the Spirit Who dwells in them be drawn more closely together as they fight the good fight of faith and the matter of maintaining the gospel and the schools will be done in that same spirit of cheerfulness and love for the truth and the cause of God's kingdom.

And today that ought to be the spirit wherewith we contribute to the financial support of God's kingdom here below.

As long as we have to extract funds by sugar-coated-pill method and our giving is grudgingly and of necessity, we express thereby that our appreciation of the spiritual gifts that God gives unto us is very small. We may then have celebrated Thanksgiving Day with a feast of material things. But God knows whether our hearts were thankful to Him and whether we are appreciative of spiritual gifts.

J. A. H.

"Man's attraction of fellowmen is usually diminished in the measure they become better acquainted with each other. How marvelously excelling the love of God, before Whose eyes all things are naked and open, and Who yet loves us with an unstinted divine love!"

H. H. K.

"The Arminians think, that in conversion, God does little or nothing for men, but gives them a pull by the elbow, to awaken them from their sleep. Rather, He acts as maritime officers do by their sailors: He cuts down the hammock of carnal security in which the elect are; down they fall, and the bruises and surprise they receive awaken them from their death in sin, and bring them to themselves, whether they will or no."

Toplady.

"Better it is to go with a few to heaven, than with a multitude to hell, and be damned for the sake of company."

Parr.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

A BRIEF RESUME (continued)

We concluded our preceding article by calling the attention of our readers, briefly, to what awaits us in our discussion of the development of the doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments in the third period, 750-1517 A.D. One of the matters of our discussion will be the supremacy of the Pope of Rome which was strongly asserted.

Another matter which will be called to the attention of our readers in the development of this doctrine during this third period concerns the number of the sacraments. It was during this third period that the number of the sacraments was fixed at seven. In the early part of this period the number of the sacraments was not fixed, some mentioning two, others four, and still others a larger number. Finally, during the pontificate of Pope Eugenius IV, 1431-1437, this number was fixed at seven. This list of seven sacraments is still held by the Roman Catholic Church. These sacraments are the following: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Marriage.

Finally, although we may remark that there was no new development in the doctrine of baptism, the doctrine of transubstantiation was established as the official dogma of the Church. And I believe that we may say without fear of contradiction that there is nothing in the Roman Catholic Church which has a more powerful and effective hold upon the people than this doctrine of transubstantiation. I refer, of course, to the hold which this doctrine exercises upon the people of the Roman Catholic Church. And I may add that there is surely no teaching in the Roman Catholic Church which stresses the indispensable character of the Roman Catholic clergy more than this doctrine. There may be other teachings in the Romish Church which serve to throw greater emphasis upon the heretical deviations of that Church from the truth of Holy Writ. And now I refer particularly to their teaching that the good works of the child of God are meritorious. In fact, the Romish Church has decided, officially and ecclesiastically as at the church council of Trent, that anyone who denies this meritorious character of good works of the Christian is accursed. But it is certainly true that there is no teaching in the Romish Church which exercises a greater hold upon the people than the doctrine of transubstantiation. And, I repeat: there is no teaching in that church which stresses the indispensable character of the Roman Catholic clergy more than this doctrine. It is this doctrine which stresses the Roman Catholic conception of the indispensableness of the priest. There is according to Rome no salvation possible outside of and separate from

the Church. And when they speak of the Church they mean specifically the clergy. We will call attention to this in due time. However, we wish to make two remarks in this connection. We can understand, on the one hand, why the Roman Catholic hierarchy should wish to maintain, "tooth and nail," the doctrine of transubstantiation. This doctrine stresses the indispensable character of the priest, and the clergy will always seek to maintain a doctrine and conception which stresses and emphasizes their importance and indispensableness. And, secondly, we can also understand why this doctrine should meet with the approval of the people. To eat Christ with the mouth is surely a carnal and easy doctrine. To eat Christ spiritually, by a true and living faith, is far more difficult. This means that we must constantly examine ourselves, flee from and hate sin and darkness, place all our trust in Jesus Christ, and have a hearty and sincere desire to walk in all the commandments of the Lord. This, I repeat, is most difficult. And the Roman Catholic doctrine of eating and drinking the Lord Jesus Christ through the mouth is simpler and much easier.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

The papal rise to power easily understood.

We have already called attention, in previous articles, to the striking fact that the form of church government throughout the New Dispensation until the Reformation was episcopalian, the government of the church by a bishop or bishops. It was not until the time of John Calvin and the days of the Reformation that this form of church government became presbyterian, the government of the church by the elders or consistories. We say that this is a striking fact because it is our conviction that the presbyterian form of church government is thoroughly Scriptural and proper.

We have also already called the attention of our readers to the fact that this development of papal supremacy is easily understandable. Let us briefly review the reason for this amazing phenomenon. During the very early days of the Church of God in the New Dispensation the dependence of the people upon their leaders was very great. The light of the truth of the New Testament fulfillment in Christ Jesus had just begun to dawn; the Church of the Old Dispensation was being introduced to a new order of things, the things of the New Dispensation, namely the reality of the truth as in Christ Jesus and without the shadows and symbols and types which characterized the life of the Church of the Old Dispensation; the Church was spreading and expanding to include also the Gentiles; and we can easily understand in the light of all these things why the rule and government of the churches should be entrusted into the hands of a few. This is a danger which is ever present throughout the ages and history of the Church. It is easily understandable but dangerous nevertheless. Power and might have a tendency to make men proud and vain. It is not difficult to understand, for example, why the Roman Catholic clergy should cling to their hierarchical form of church government. And it is

a very dangerous policy because, once given this power and authority, men are loathe to relinquish it. Secondly, we must not overlook the fact that certain leaders of the church had enjoyed very close and intimate fellowship and association with the apostles. The apostles, we understand, were Divinely inspired and they had the "last word" in any dispute that might arise within the Church of God. When certain leaders of the church, then, could boast of having sat at the feet of these apostles and of having been instructed by them (as, for example, John Polycarp), is it difficult to understand that the churches should look up to these men for guidance and leadership? Would not we be much inclined to do the very same thing under the same circumstances? Thirdly, certain churches began to outdistance others in importance because of size and location. This need not surprise us. What was true then is also applicable to our present day. Large churches are considered of greater importance than small churches if for no other reason than that they contribute much more heavily, financially, to the upkeep and development of the churches in the midst of the world. The same thing was true in the days of the Church of God during its New Testament infancy. It was perfectly natural and understandable that the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome should be considered as more important than churches which were smaller and not so strategically situated. And this means that the bishops of these churches, so strategically situated, became men of power and authority within the Church of God. Jerusalem was the Mother Church, was it not? There the Lord Jesus Christ had suffered and died, the Holy Spirit had been poured out into the Church, and the Church of God as it developed throughout the New Dispensation had its beginning. Antioch was the first great missionary church. From the church of Antioch Paul and Barnabas had been sent forth by the church upon their first missionary journey, and we can easily understand why this church should assume the role of importance which characterized it. And Rome? That city was the capital city of the Roman empire, and it enjoyed its prominence and prestige in the West all alone. The other four cities were all located in the East. No city was greater in glory than this chief city of the Roman empire. It would have been amazing indeed had the bishop of the church at Rome not attained unto the power which he enjoyed. Fourthly, these bishops, in the days of the Church's New Testament infancy, were men of great learning, and they were doctrinally sound. They gave sound leadership when the Church was attacked by heresies. And these attacks by the devil upon the foundation truths of the Church were furious in those days, even as they are always furious. The "father of lies" tried his utmost to destroy the Cause of God in those early days of the New Dispensation. And we can easily understand why these leaders of the Church of God should gain the respect and admiration and gratitude of the people of the Lord. Finally, we may mention one more factor in this rise of papal power. When the city of Rome was in danger of attack by the bar-

barians, these Roman bishops would often lead the defenders of the city in battle, and play a very important role in the defence of the city and the repulse of these barbarians. Hence, the pope's rise to power is surely understandable.

The papacy reaches its pinnacle of power in this third period (750-1517).

In our discussion of this period we will call attention, first of all, to the reign of Gregory the Great. Gregory was the pope in the years 590-604. He is not called Gregory the Great in vain.

Another factor which served to strengthen the claim of the pope at Rome and establish his supremacy is known as the Isidorian Decretals. These decretals also contain what is known in history as the Donation of Constantine. It is true that it has now been established, also by the Roman Catholic Church, that these decretals constitute one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated in history. However, the danger had been done when the fraud was discovered and exposed. For centuries the people believed what these Isidorian Decretals set forth. The Lord willing, we will call attention to these decretals and discuss them in their relation to the development in power of the papacy.

Another incident to which we will call attention is the conflict of the Eastern and the Western Church and their separation which occurred in the year 1054. Until the year, 1054, the Church had been one. It was now hopelessly divided.

Another pope to which we must call attention is Gregory VII. His conflict with Henry IV and views on the papacy are of importance in connection with our discussion of the supremacy of the bishop of Rome.

Finally, we must call attention to Innocent III, Boniface VIII. All these matters will help us to understand the rise to power of the papacy, a power which reached its pinnacle during this third period, 750-1517, which, the Lord willing, we will now discuss. And in all these articles we will quote Philip Schaff.

H.V.

"Amongst the manifold blessings, distributed by the hand of grace, and which flow to us from the fountain of mercy, election (Erwahlung) occupies the first place."

— Der Throne Der Gnade, Dr. Fr. Whl. Krummacher

"In the Counsel of election the grace of our eternal King has proven itself first in this, that he has ordained Christ to be the Head, and those, who will inherit eternal life, to be His members. Election, therefore, constitutes the first link in the golden chain of our redemption; election is the cornerstone of the marvelous structure of human blessedness."

— Der Throne Der Gnade, Dr. Fr. Whd. Krummacher

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 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

There are a few departures in the above version from the original text to which we call attention. 1) “. . . and by nature children of wrath” should be: “. . . and are born children of wrath.” 2) “dead in sin” should be: “dead in sins” (plural). 3) “. . . and in bondage thereto” should be: “and slaves of sin.” 4) The modifier “regenerating” belongs not with “grace,” but with “Holy Spirit.” 5) “reform” should be “correct,” and “reformation” should be “correction.” 6) The last clause, “nor to dispose themselves to reformation,” should read: “nor to dispose themselves to its reformation,” that is, to the reformation of their depraved nature.

As the introductory word “therefore” indicates, we have a conclusion in this article, a conclusion that is drawn from the two preceding articles of this chapter. Furthermore, the fathers in this article begin to state negatively, at least, the truth concerning man’s conversion to God. As we stated before, in this chapter they are concerned with the doctrine of man’s corruption, not merely in general, but with a view to its bearing upon the doctrine of man’s conversion. In the controversy with the Arminians they face the question: can man do anything at all toward his own salvation and toward his own conversion; can he do anything at all toward obtaining the blessings of salvation, toward achieving the actual, personal possession of the blessings of salvation? Is the application of the blessings of salvation merited by Christ a matter of man’s achievement, or a matter of cooperative effort on the part of God and man, or the work of God alone? The Arminians, in their “Remonstrance” at least, had made a reasonably Reformed declaration concerning the depravity of man, and had appeared to teach the truth of total depravity. This position, however, they had compromised, and therefore denied, in the very next article, when they taught that grace is resistible, and consequently, that it is up to man whether he will or will not submit to the operations of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Now the fathers have main-

tained that man’s corruption is total, and they are drawing in this article the only possible conclusion, namely, that therefore man can do nothing toward his own conversion. Either one must cling to both the truth of total depravity and the truth that conversion is the work of God alone, absolutely sovereign and efficacious; or one must deny both truths. Another possibility there is not. And it is this position in its negative aspect, namely, that the natural man is incapable of doing anything at all toward his own conversion, that our fathers assume in the present article. This is an important article, therefore, in the chain of thought of the present chapter of our *Canons*.

The first subject of this article concerns the manner in which men come into the world. Notice, by the way, that the attention is now focused not upon “man,” or upon “Adam,” but upon the individual members of the human race: “all men.” To this “all men” the article makes no exception, although, of course, the exception of our Lord Jesus Christ, made in Article 2, still stands. But all the posterity of Adam mentioned in Article 2, and therefore all men, Christ only excepted, are included in the statement of Article 3. And concerning the entrance of “all men” into the world, the fathers here state two facts. In the first place, they are all “conceived in sin.” Hence, it is not only so that the corruption of sin first clings to a man at birth. It certainly is not thus, that man becomes corrupt after he has entered the world, through following the bad example of his forbears. But sin cleaves to him from the very earliest beginning of his existence: he is *conceived* in sin. The corruption of sin is the very sphere of his conception in his mother’s womb. From father and mother, just as surely as through generation and conception he receives his existence from them, so surely he inherits from them the corruption of sin. His very nature has its beginning in the sphere of sin’s corruption. In the second place, the article states that all men are “born children of wrath.” There is, of course, ultimately very little difference between the expression “born children of wrath” or “by nature children of wrath.” But the expression “born children of wrath” is more graphic, and more pointed with respect to the Arminian controversy. The Arminians delighted to portray Reformed theologians as feelingless ogres, so without any natural affection as to teach that little children, “poor, innocent babes,” were the object of the wrath of God, and that they lay from the very moment of their birth under condemnation. They appealed, not to Scripture, but to the emotions of men. They attacked the truth as being a “hard doctrine.” But the fathers insist here, in the face of the Arminian appeal to mere sentiment, that it is nevertheless true; all men “are born children of wrath.” Children of wrath are children who are the objects of the wrath of God. God’s wrath is the flaming manifestation of His holiness and Self-love against all sin and all sinners, — against all that is contrary to that holiness and Self-love. Under that wrath, because of original guilt, the entire human race lies. And therefore under that wrath, and thus, as a child of wrath, every man is born. Also this does not mean merely that a

man becomes a child of wrath at the moment of his birth. It certainly does not mean that man first becomes object of the wrath of God after, through imitation, he commits actual sin. But he is born *as* a child of wrath. He is born under the wrath of God. As he comes into the world, he is already under the wrath of God, because he is loaded with the burden of original guilt.

The second subject of the article is: what is man from a spiritual, ethical point of view? To this question the fathers give a fourfold answer. This answer is in substance and in language very similar to the language of both the *Heidelberg Catechism* and the *Confession Belgica*. It contains the following elements:

1) All men are "incapable of every saving good." The original is still more emphatic than our English, for it inserts the word "every." There are those who would draw from the use of the expression "saving good" the inference that the *Canons* here teach that the natural man is capable of some other good, namely, of good before God in the sphere of things natural and civil. In answer to this connection it must be noted, first of all, that this is a mere inference, and no more. It is not the language of the fathers. And it must be pointed out, therefore, that the mere use of the expression does not necessarily imply that there is such good in the sphere of things natural and civil. In the second place, we must add immediately that the inference is a false one. This appears very plainly from the rest of the article. How is it possible that one who is "prone to evil, dead in sins, and a slave of sin" can be capable of any good whatsoever? There is left in these expressions absolutely no room for any good on the part of the natural man. Furthermore, the following article emphasizes very strongly that man is not even capable of using his natural light aright in the sphere of things natural and civil. Positively speaking, we must remember that the fathers speak here in opposition to the Arminians. The latter taught that the natural man could improve himself sufficiently to make himself worthy of salvation. And over against them our Reformed fathers insist that man is incapable of such saving good. He can do nothing either to achieve his own salvation or to dispose himself to that salvation. He has no power to hunger and thirst after righteousness and life or to offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit.

2) But there is more. Man is, negatively speaking, incapable of every saving good. But positively speaking, he is, furthermore, "prone to evil." Also here there are those who would view the word "prone" (Dutch: "geneigd") as a soft term, so that it means that the natural man does not always do the evil, but is inclined toward evil. However, the meaning is the very opposite. The expression implies that all men are in their very nature given over completely to the evil,—to think the evil, to will the evil, to delight in the evil, and to do the evil. Out of such men no good can ever arise. They are evil in the very mainspring of their existence: prone to evil. Their entire nature is bent in the direction of evil. They have an irresistible propensity for evil. They can-

not rest until they have committed evil. Such are all men! To be sure, the manifestation of this proneness to evil differs according as men differ from one another. All men do not commit the same sins. They do not have the same character, do not live at the same time and in the same circumstances, do not possess the same means, the same opportunities, the same gifts and talents. But in them all, regardless of their individual differences, is that proneness to evil. And all necessarily bring forth evil fruit of sin in one form or another.

3) They are, in the third place, all "dead in sins." They are dead to righteousness, and alive unto sin, and therefore dead in sins. And notice, once again, the emphatic language. They are not sick. They are not in the process of dying, merely. All men *are dead* in sins.

4) To this the fathers add yet that all men are slaves of sin. Sin is their mistress. Sin they serve. And sin they are bound to serve. And the worst aspect of this slavery is that it is not an unwilling bondage. Man is not a stock and block. He does not serve, nay, he cannot be made to serve sin against his will. His bondage is a bondage of his very nature; his will is enslaved. He cannot will to do anything else than serve sin.

Hence, the third main proposition of this article is that there is absolutely no remedy for men apart from the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit. In consequence of his natural condition, there is but one thing to be said of man. Conversion cannot possibly be a work for him. He is not able to change himself or to correct the depravity of his nature, or even to dispose himself to such correction of his depraved nature. The trouble is in his nature. Training and example are of no avail in such a case. Man cannot in any way even prepare himself or dispose himself to the change that is necessary in him. And what is worse, he has not even the will! That means that if such a change of his depraved nature were offered him, made available to him, and if he were capable to accept it; nay, even if he had the ability himself to correct his depravity, he would refuse. He cannot even desire to be converted. If regeneration is preached to him, he cannot even wish for it, much less seek it, pray for it, or cooperate in it.

Only through the grace of regeneration can he be delivered from his corruption. And this leaves him in the hand of God, for the grace of regeneration is of the Holy Spirit. That grace is the indispensable prerequisite of all correction of a depraved nature and of any disposition to such correction.

You say: "That leaves man nothing, even less than nothing?" I reply: "Exactly!" He must be nothing and less than nothing, in order that the marvelous grace of God unto salvation may be magnified.

H.C.H.

"The great goal, worthy of God, unto which purpose God ordained all things, which His almighty Word called into being, and which each creature, among the variety of being, must serve in his own way is the Lord's own honor and the manifestation of His divine Name."

— Der Throne Der Gnade, Dr. Fr. Whl. Krummacher

DECENCY and ORDER

The Church and the State

"The consistory shall take care, that the churches for the possession of their property, and the peace and order of their meetings, can claim the protection of the authorities; it should be well understood, however, that for the sake of peace and material possession they may never suffer the royal government of Christ over His Church to be in the least infringed upon." (D.K.O. Art. 28)

The Original Article

From the Holland authorities on Church Polity, such as Bouwman* and Jansen, we learn that the original Article 28 of our Church Order was considerably longer and radically different from our present version. The article read as follows:

"Gelijk het ambt der Christelijke Overheden is, de heilige kerkedienst in alle manieren te bevorderen, dezelve met haar exempel de onderdanen te recommanderen, en aan de Predikanten, Ouderlingen en Diakenen in alle voorvallende nood de hand te bieden, en bij haar goede ordening te beschermen, alzo zijn alle Predikanten, Ouderlingen en Diakenen schuldig, de ganse gemeente vlijtiglijk en oprechtelijk in te scherpen de gehoorzaamheid, in liefde en eerbiedinge, die zij de Magistraten schuldig zijn; en zullen alle kerkelijke personen met hun goed exempel in deze de gemeente voorgaan, en door behoorlijk respect en correspondentie de gunst der Overheden tot de Kerken zoeken te verwekken en te behouden; teneinde, een ieder het zijne, in des Heren vreze, ter wederzijde doende, alle achterdenken en wantrouwen moge worden voorkomen, en goede eendracht tot der Kerken welstand onderhouden."

Translated this would be:

"Since the office of christian government is to promote the sacred services of the church in every respect, to recommend the same to her subjects by personal example, and to assist ministers, elders and deacons in every emergency and give them protection; so also are all ministers, elders and deacons indebted to zealously and sincerely urge the whole congregation to show obedience, love and respect toward the magistrates to whom they are indebted, and they shall themselves be good examples in this matter to all the church, and through due respect of the government toward the churches; to the end that each performing their own duty in the fear of the Lord, all suspicion and distrust may be avoided and concord for the welfare of the churches may be maintained."

Inasmuch as this article has been elided from our church order in 1914, we are no longer directly concerned with it. However, since its content deals with that interesting matter of the proper relation between church and state, which has always been somewhat controversial and concerning which we do have an expression elsewhere in our Confessions; and

since it was the original intention of this article of our church order to express the Reformed position with respect to this matter, we deem it proper to take up this subject in the present connection.

Jansen in his "Korte Verklaring" informs us that it is not clear just why the fathers of Dordrecht included this article in the church order but he does suggest two possible reasons. Firstly, it may be that they sought to obtain civil approbation of the church order which would virtually give the latter the force of civil law. Bearing in mind the post-Reformation circumstances, especially in Europe, we can understand that a conquest of this sort would give much prestige to and greatly promote the cause of the Reformed Churches.

Secondly, Jansen suggests that this article was incorporated into the church order so as to express clearly what the Reformed fathers believed to be the proper duties of both the government and the church in their separate as well as mutual relations for the government and the church, though related to each other, are nevertheless to be kept distinct from each other. Each is sovereign in its own sphere. Thus the Reformers would express clearly their views overagainst the Arminian conception, on the one hand, which virtually places the Government in authority over the churches, and that of the Roman Catholics, on the other hand, which makes the State subject to the Church.

To us this latter suggestion of Prof. Jansen appears to be the more plausible reason for the incorporation of an article of this nature in the church order. Whether one agrees with the content of the article itself or whether one does not agree with it, nevertheless, it must be admitted that the fact that there were such conflicting views on this question would necessitate the Reformed fathers making an expression with respect to the matter. This we have in the original twenty-eighth article of our Church Order.

Just why this article was dropped from the church order in 1914 and substituted by another which, in a certain respect, treats an entirely separate matter, we are unable to learn. Certainly it cannot be that the matter of the correct relation between the church and state is no longer of any significance. It certainly is and it may very well be that it becomes an issue of practical concern in the not-to-distant future. Perhaps this elision is to be explained from the fact that in our country the Governmental-Church ties are radically different from those in Europe. We have here neither a "State-church" nor a "Church-state" but, as expressed in our Constitution, the Government (whether right or wrong is another question) assumes an attitude of "neutral-indifference" to all churches and, consequently, the need for an article such as the one quoted above was no longer felt.

Be that as it may, however, the thrust of the original Twenty-Eighth Article of the church order is preserved by us, if not in the church order, then in the Thirty Sixth Article of our Netherland's Confession of Faith which treats the subject of "The Magistrates." In the article appears a state-

ment defining the duties of the magistrates which declares that, "They are to protect the sacred ministry; and thus remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship".

It is in regard to this statement that involves the relation of the government to the church that the Synod of 1910 made and appended the following decision which, though rather lengthy, we quote in its entirety because of things we purpose to write presently about this matter. The decision reads:

"This phrase, touching the office of the magistracy in its relation to the Church, proceeds on the principle of the Established Church, which was first applied by Constantine and afterwards also in many Protestant countries. History, however, does not support the principle of State domination over the Church, but rather the separation of Church and State. Moreover, it is contrary to the New Dispensation that authority be vested in the State to arbitrarily reform the Church, and to deny the Church the right of independently conducting its own affairs as a distinct territory alongside the State. The New Testament does not subject the Christian Church to the authority of the State that it should be governed and extended by political measures, but to our Lord and King only as an independent territory alongside and altogether independent of the State, that it may be governed and edified by its office-bearers and with spiritual weapons only. Practically all Reformed churches have repudiated the idea of the Established Church, and are advocating the autonomy of the churches and personal liberty of conscience in matters pertaining to the service of God.

"The Protestant Reformed Churches in America, being in full accord with this view, feel constrained to declare that they do not conceive of the office of the magistracy in this sense, that it be in duty bound to also exercise political authority in the sphere of religion, by establishing and maintaining a State Church, advancing and supporting the same as the only true Church, and to oppose, to persecute and to destroy by means of the sword all the other churches as being false religions; and to also declare that it does positively hold that, within its own secular sphere, the magistracy has a divine duty towards the first table of the Law as well as towards the second; and furthermore that both State and Church as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties appointed them from on high, and, therefore, have a very sacred reciprocal obligation to meet through the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from Father and Son. They may not however, encroach upon each other's territory. The Church has rights of sovereignty in its own sphere as well as the State."

Both the Article of 1618-19 and the decision of the Synod of 1910 maintain the principle of separation between the church and the state. Yet there is a definite difference in the application of this principle in these two Articles. The original Article 28 speaks of definite duties of the government in relation to the church and further defines these duties: as: (1) "promoting the services of the church in every respect, (2) recommending her to her subjects, and,

(3) assisting the office-bearers of the church and giving them protection." The decision of 1910 speaks in general terms of the "very sacred reciprocal obligations of church and state" and declares that the state has a "divine duty toward the first table of the law as well as toward the second" but these duties it leaves undefined. With respect to the church, again the original article of the church order is more clear for it expressly states that its duties are: (1) "to zealously urge her members to obey, respect and love the magistrates, (2) to engage in correspondence with the government so that her favor may be obtained and preserved, and, (3) to cooperate." Again it may be stated that historical circumstances in the Netherlands in particular in which the relation of church and state was and is more intimate than in our country may largely, if not entirely, account for these differences.

Next time, D.V., we will discuss the principle of separation between church and state itself, viewing it in the light of these decisions of the past and other opinions and viewpoints of this subject. For the present our space is filled!

*Note: If any of our readers know where Vol. II of Dr. H. Bouwman's "Gereformeerde Kerkrecht" or Vols. I and II of Dr. F. L. Rutger's "Kerkelijke Adviezen" can be purchased, or if you have a copy you would be willing to loan for a time, undersigned would appreciate hearing from you!

G. Vanden Berg
9402 S. 53rd Court
Oak Lawn, Illinois

IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church takes this opportunity to express its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Dykstra in the loss of their father,

MR. J. ZINGER

Our prayer is that the God of all grace may comfort their hearts.

Mr. and Mrs. Society
Grand Rapids, Michigan

"Even as the idea of an infinitely perfect Being demands absolutely that He allows Himself to be led in His dealings only by the highest and noblest designs, thus also Jehovah, the adorable Creator of nature and Sustainer and Ruler of all ages, has set Himself a holy goal before the beginning of time, and has computed and adapted all things toward that end."

— Der Throne Der Gnade, Dr. Fr. Whl. Krummacher

"As the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst."
— Toplady

ALL AROUND US

Hoeksema's Deistic Tendency Must Be Rebuked!

I can just see the readers of the heading of this article wiping their eyes and looking again at the above title in total unbelief of what they have read, and stymied by the fact that they have read correctly.

Perhaps, too, by this time you have already flushed with anger and are ready to take it out on the writer of this article who dared to use these words for a heading. But, hold on a moment! Do not become angry with the present writer, for he didn't say that Hoeksema had a Deistic tendency that must be rebuked. Rather this is literally what the Rev. Leonard Verduin, a Christian Reformed minister, wrote in the November issue of the *Reformed Journal*.

The complete sentence from which the above title was taken which the *learned* minister from Ann Arbor, Michigan, wrote in his articles entitled: "Toward a Theistic Creationism," is as follows: "When men in the one-sided theology of Rev. Herman Hoeksema begin to speak of the Covenant as being condition-less, then they give evidence of a deistic tendency that must be known for what it is, and rebuked."

The Rev. Verduin wrote two rather lengthy articles for *The Reformed Journal*, one each for the October and November issues respectively which I could not begin to quote in their entirety. When I called him a "learned minister" a moment ago, I meant by that that he tries to leave the impression that he is, both by the title he gave to his articles, and by the language he uses in the articles proper. My impression is that they were not intended for the common layman, but that they were intended for those who have had special philosophical and theological training.

It appears from his writings that the Reverend has to deal with university students whose instruction at the school is thoroughly permeated with evolutionistic doctrine. Though the Rev. Verduin does not adhere to the doctrine of evolution, he admits and wishes openly to acknowledge "that evolutionism has sensitized him to truths and emphases that would perhaps have remained hidden if the theory of evolution had not been promulgated." He writes further, "the purpose of this paper is to share with the reader some insights thus gained, in the hope that they may be useful and beneficial to Bible-believing Christians as they seek in the contemporary scene to find their way in regard to the problem of origins." And that his articles are not intended for the common man is plain from what he further writes: "The writer is inclined to think that what is said in this discussion may be not without usefulness to theologian and Christian scientist alike."

His article appearing in the October issue is quite well summarized by the editors of the *Reformed Journal* in the November issue as follows:

"In the earlier article Rev. Verduin pointed out (1) that in biblical usage 'to create' is not only to make something

out of 'nothing' (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3), but also to make something out of 'already existing materials' (Gen. 2:7, 11ff); (2) that creation out of nothing was 'immediate' creation whereas creation out of already existing materials was 'mediate' creation; (3) that although immediate creation out of nothing was 'with time' rather than in time, mediate creation out of already existing materials was very definitely 'in time'; (4) that mediate creation, accordingly, was 'processional' as well as 'irruptive' or 'ictic', involving a 'process' as well as an 'incursion', and exhibiting a horizontal dimension of immanence as well as a vertical dimension of transcendence; (5) that, indeed, throughout the Bible the 'irruptive' and the 'processive', the transcendent and the immanent, stand in the closest possible relation to each other, forming the warp and woof of a single fabric.' It is against the background of these definitions and distinctions that Rev. Verduin now carries forward and concludes the discussion."

In other words, Rev. Verduin tries to show in his first article (1) that the old definition for creation, namely, to create is to make something out of nothing, does not hold because we know that in some of the creative work of God He did use already existing materials. Animals and man, for instance, were created out of the already existing earth. (2) that the terms "immediate" and "mediate" creation are not his invention but an old theological distinction. The former refers to the fact that with regard to some of the creation, as for example, the light of the first day, God did not use means or already existing material. He simply by a creative word called the creature into being. While in the latter distinction of mediate creation God used existing materials. (3) that the distinction "with time" and "in time" is made to counteract the belief that time begins after all the creation was finished. Verduin believes that immediate creation is simultaneous "with time" and mediate creation is "in time." (4) that the work of creation is not only a work of God Who is *transcendent* but also a work of God Who is *immanent*. By the way, it is because of this distinction that Verduin was driven to say in the November issue of the *Journal* what he did about Hoeksema. It is the deist who puts God outside of and above His creation, and denies that He is immanent, i.e., that He is operating in His creation. Rev. Verduin explains in a footnote what he means by the terms "irruptive" and "ictic." The former is derived from a Latin verb denoting a breaching or a breaking which with the prefix "in" denotes therefore a breaking-in or a breaking-into. The latter word is from the Latin word meaning "to strike." Rev. Verduin uses these two words synonymously. What he is driving at, as I see it, is to insist that God does not quietly retire during or after creation, but He works during the creation period with and in the creation, and even after creation dwells immanently in the creation. He repudiates a conception which would have God merely break in vertically upon the creation and ascend as vertically and advocates that we must have both a vertical and a horizontal or processional relation to the creation. We must have both a transcendent and an immanent God.

Now in the November issue of the Journal he further elaborates on this point, and applies this to the miracles and various items of the Christian creed as well as to creation itself.

With respect to the miracles of Jesus, he points out: "In them the ictic or irruptive dimension is plainly in the foreground. But that does not mean that they were built on a deistic last. It does not mean that they were examples of sheer transcendence. In them there is likewise a concession to the processional dimension." This he illustrates with the miracle of changing water into wine at Cana. Writes he, "When the wine is in short supply at Cana in Galilee then He of whom it is said, that in the primeval moment 'all things were made by Him' invokes the supernatural in order to relieve the embarrassment. And what does He do? Snap His fingers in *ex nihilo* (out of nothing—M.S.) fashion and command the butlers to pour? No, this is no time for pure irruption, no time for naked transcendence. And so with a kindly nod at process He bids men fill the vessels, fill them with water, the element that plays such an important role in the production of wine whenever and wherever. The deistically slanted mind, the man that thinks that religion feeds solely upon the ictic, would have preferred a nakedly irruptive flip of the wrist, and, presto! But the genuine theist will see here again a special precaution on the part of the Scriptures, taken to keep us from doing violence to the theistic formula."

He further illustrates this point with the miracles of the feeding of the multitude, the composition of the Bible, and the virgin birth.

Then, turning to items of the Christian creed, he writes: "None must be viewed in the light of sheer transcendence, none in the light of pure immanence . . ." This he applies to the "theological item of regeneration," and "the question of the origin of the human soul," and the doctrine of the Covenant. In respect to the latter he writes the following paragraph part of which I quoted above.

"The same general situation confronts us in regard to the doctrine of the Covenant. Reformed thinkers have very soon picked up the line of the transcendence; but they have traditionally been quite as sensitive to the processional dimension. Here too the processional dimension must be recognized. Recourse to inherent potential quite as surely. When men in the one-sided theology of Rev. Herman Hoeksema begin to speak of the Covenant as being condition-less, then they give evidence of a deistic tendency that must be known for what it is, and rebuked."

Now, if to deny conditions in the Covenant, makes one a deist, then Rev. Hoeksema and those who follow him are deists, or at least have a tendency toward deism. And I would agree with Verduin that his, i.e., Hoeksema's theology is one-sided and "must be known for what it is, and rebuked."

However, when I read the above cited paragraph in Verduin's article, I immediately asked myself two questions: What is a deist? and, How can one who believes in a condition-less Covenant be a deist?

A deist is one who puts God out of His creation. He believes that God has put in creation certain laws which he calls laws of nature, and He simply allows the world of creation to run its course without interference, much like the clock-maker will make a clock, set it running, and then retire from the clock. Does Rev. Hoeksema believe that? Verduin knows better.

When Rev. Hoeksema denies that there are conditions in the Covenant that man must fulfill, and emphasizes that the Covenant is uni-lateral, not bi-lateral, that the Covenant is God's which He realizes from beginning to end, that there are obligations in the Covenant which constitute man's part in the Covenant which he by grace alone fulfills through Christ, that the Covenant has two parts not two parties, does that make his doctrine re the Covenant deistic? Verduin ought to know better.

What Verduin, and all who go along with him, wants is a bi-lateral Covenant in which God and man make a pact which rests solely on the fulfillment of conditions man fulfils before it can be realized. God promises to do something for man if man in turn will do something for God.

If anybody is guilty of deism it is Verduin. He makes God an impotent by-stander who is outside of His world. And the only way He can get in is when impotent man allows Him. This deistic tendency of Verduin et al must be known for what it is, and rebuked. Verduin's articles may be masterpieces of learning to some, but I would remind him that he surely messed things up on the point I especially called to attention.

M.S.

Acts of Synod, 1956

The Acts of Synod are off the press, and have been sent to the various Consistories to be distributed among its members.

Copies of the Acts of Synod 1956 can be obtained by all who are interested. Please send your orders to Rev. G. Lubbers, 1125 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

The price per copy is \$1.00.

There still are a goodly number of copies of the Acts of Synod 1955. These can be obtained for 50 cents each, provided at least two are ordered at a time.

Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Synod

Change of Address

The home address of Rev. G. Lubbers is now no longer 1304 Maude Ave., N. E., but has been changed to 1125 Franklin Street, S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Will the clerks of our Classes and of our Consistories please account this as if personally informed?

Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk.

CONTRIBUTIONS

A few Words

The Editor of *The Standard Bearer*
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Mr. Editor:

May I say a few words in connection with and perhaps in augmentation of the very kind words which Rev. Gerrit Vos penned in the direction of Rev. Herman Hoeksema and my humble self.

I refer to his article under the caption "Congratulations, Plus" which appeared in the November 1 issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

First of all a word of thanks to my good, old, warm-hearted friend of many, many years, the Rev. G. Vos.

During a period of some forty years or more this poetic and exuberant soul has proven to be a faithful and loyal friend.

His pleasing personality and his deep-rooted integrity have many a time warmed the cockles of my heart.

I always found him an enthusiastic defender of his honest and deepest convictions. But never did I find him small and bigoted.

The words which the late Dr. Abraham Kuyper, years ago, directed to one of his critics could well fall from the lips of Rev. Gerrit Vos, be they right or wrong, but always in good faith and conscience and conviction: "If I Err, So Have the Fathers."

In his article Rev. Vos quotes a very beautiful passage from Rev. Herman Hoeksema's Introduction to the first volume of his now completed ten-volume set of expositions on the Heidelberg Catechism, dated June 1, 1943.

These words of Rev. Hoeksema deserve repeating:

"If in God's inscrutable purpose there are left to me a sufficient number of days to work and labor, I intend to complete the work, the beginning of which I offer to the public in the present volume."

Then Rev. Vos continues, "Well, dear reader when Hoeksema wrote that sentence God said: Amen! God knew that He would multiply his days in order to give to the Church of Christ this wonderful Commentary on the Heidelberg."

In 1947 the Rev. Hoeksema had a heart attack. One day I called on him. He laid outstretched in a garden chair on the lawn of his house. After a few words of greeting Herman said: "Well Bill, this looks as though I will never pen another paragraph."

At that time he had finished about one third of his Com-

mentary. However the good Lord gave him sufficient healing and strength, so that now, nine years after his heart attack, he has finished the work he in 1943 set out to do.

The friendship between Rev. Hoeksema and me dates from the days we were together at Calvin. We differ, but our honest differences have never broken our friendship. In the spirit of mutual esteem and respect we both proceeded . . . though with many failures and shortcomings . . . to keep on walking in the light as we were convinced God gave us to see the light.

Yes, Rev. Vos, I told you that to my way of thinking, Rev. Hoeksema writes for the ages. As a publisher I know that many God-chosen and God-gifted minds have written for the ages.

In connection with commentaries on the Heidelberg Catechism we only have to mention such names as Ursinus, Comrie, Theleman.

And I have a feeling that in the distant future (if the Lord tarries His coming) Ministers and students and laymen will still turn to Hoeksema's Heidelberg because I consider this work one of the most valuable expositions and documents in that field.

It is rich and fresh as to content. It is of great exegetical value. It illuminates and clarifies the great Scriptural (and Reformed) doctrine of the Sovereignty of our Triune God. In its sentences and paragraphs you will discover a throbbing heart pulsing and plummeting the magnitude of God's love in Christ for the sinner. Then deep down in the base section of this monumental work you will hear the awe-inspiring notes of God's justice and righteousness toward the hardened sinner. And in scintillating harmony you will hear the jubilation of a soul full of worship and adoration for Him, "Who has the whole world in His Hands."

Hoeksema's Heidelberg is of inestimable value for Preachers and students. And they seem to realize that. Because hundreds of Ministers, in all parts of the world, consult this work in the preparation of their sermons on the Heidelberg.

Yes Gerrit, God said "Amen!"

Wm. Eerdmans, Sr.

News from Doon

During the past seventeen months we in the congregation of Doon have been, through the Lord's dispensation, without a pastor. On Sunday, March 20, 1955, the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema preached his farewell to the congregation. On the evening of March 24 a congregational farewell was given to Rev. and Mrs. Hoeksema and family, at which time the congregation wished them the Lord's blessing in their new field of labor.

And even as it pleased the King of His church to take from us our beloved pastor, Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, so too after many calls He again gladdened our hearts by bringing to us another of His servants, in order that he might proclaim unto us the Word, both in the weekly service and by means of the many other pastoral labors. Thus our hearts were filled with rejoicing and thanksgiving to our covenant God when we received the tidings that Candidate G. Van Baren was coming to help us. And so it was again a memorable evening in Doon, the evening of October 11, 1956, when our moderator, the Rev. J. A. Heys, delivered the sermon for the occasion from II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word." The attention of both congregation and pastor was very vividly directed to the meaning, manner, and significance of the charge to preach the Word. After this, the Rev. H. Veldman spoke on the theme, "Pray for your pastor."

On October 14, our new pastor preached his inaugural sermon. In the morning he chose for his text Colossians 3:23, 24, having for his theme, "The life of Consecration to the Lord." In the afternoon he drew the attention of the congregation to John 10:27, 28, "Christ's Sheep." October 16 was the date of the congregational reception for the purpose of welcoming our new pastor into our midst, as well as for the Rev. Van Baren in making the acquaintance of his congregation.

With gratitude we remember the faithful labors of the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema who spent some five and a half years in our midst. Our prayer is that the Lord may bless him in his new field of labor.

We also wish to thank especially our moderator, Rev. J. Heys, for his assistance; also the Rev. H. Veldman for his part in the installation ceremony. Further, we desire to thank publicly all the ministers of Classis West, as well as Rev. B. Woudenberg and student Mulder, who supplied our pulpit during our vacancy.

By the time that this is published, the congregation and pastor of Doon will have settled down to normal congregational life. It is our prayer that we may, with our new pastor, experience a fruitful ministry of the Word under the blessing of our gracious heavenly Father. May we, with all our Protestant Reformed Churches, experience that the Lord doth prosper Zion. May we ever have grace to be true to the glorious heritage which He hath given us.

The Consistory of Doon,
Jake Vanden Top, Clerk.

"It is a good sign when the Lord blows off the blossoms of our forward hopes in this life, and lops the branches of our worldly joys to the very root, on purpose that they should not thrive. Lord, spoil my fool's heaven in this life, that I may be saved forever!" — Rutherford

ON GOD ALONE MY SOUL RELIES

On God alone my soul relies,
And He will soon relieve;
The Lord will hear my plaintive cries
At morning, noon, and eve.

He has redeemed my soul in peace,
From conflict set me free;
My many foes are made to cease,
And strive no more with me.

The living God in righteousness
Will recompense with shame
The men who, hardened by success,
Forget to fear His Name.

All treacherous friends who overreach
And break their plighted troth,
Who hide their hate with honeyed speech
With such the Lord is wroth.

Upon the Lord thy burden cast,
To Him bring all thy care;
He will sustain and hold thee fast,
And give thee strength to bear.

God will not let His saints be moved;
Protected, they shall see
Their foes cut off and sin reprov'd;
O God, I trust in Thee.

Psalm 55

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