

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF

*"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

*Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.*

*Behold, Mine angel shall go before thee."*

EXODUS 32:1, 32, 34b

The great Rock of offense to all the wicked world is this: God justifies the ungodly!

Oh, if only we preach a gospel according to man: then we will believe and be saved. But when it is all of God, and nothing of us, if we are saved by grace alone, we are offended.

A clear case of this great truth is found in the worship of the golden calf. If at any time, it is plain here that God justifies the ungodly: Moses realized that there was nothing to plead on but God's faithfulness. The people had forfeited all consideration.

In order to see the picture of this event clearly, you must go back to Chapter 24 of Exodus.

Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, together with 70 elders were bidden by God to approach unto Him. And they saw a beautiful manifestation of God: "under His feet as it were paved work of sapphire stone." It was the heavenly blue of covenant faithfulness. And although they approached so close to the heavenly vision: "He laid not His hand upon the nobles." That is, He did not kill them.

Thereafter, Moses receives the commandment to come up to God on the mount. Leaving Aaron and Hur to rule and to guide the people of God, Moses and Joshua proceeded to climb the mountain of God. And there they spent 40 days and nights. And all the while Moses and Joshua were

in the mount of God, there was a manifestation of God on top of the mountain within sight of the whole camp of the Israelites: the sight of the glory of God like a devouring fire.

Then from chapter 24 to chapter 31 they received instructions from God with regard to the whole cultus of Israel's religion, namely, instructions to make the tabernacle and all its furniture, the institution of the priesthood, their service, and the sacrifices. In short, they received instruction regarding the whole economy of salvation. Moses and Joshua were shown the pattern of God's salvation in heaven.

\* \* \* \*

And at the conclusion of that 40 days the great sin of Israel occurred. A mob gathered, under the leadership of some influential men, of course. They gathered themselves, and after agreeing on their intent and purpose, they went to Aaron: Up, make us gods! And let those gods go before us and lead us. Because this man Moses who brought us here from Egypt: we do not know what became of him!

There you have the great sin of Israel.

That sin was first of all base ingratitude. Moses did not redeem them. God did. The Great Deliverer was forgotten. The loving God was denied.

Even the facts which testified of this miraculous deliverance were forgotten. What about the wondrous miracles at the exodus from the land of bondage? They had forgotten the ten plagues on the one hand, and the march through the midst of the Red Sea on dry ground on the other hand. Then too, there were the miraculous acts of God since they were on the way from Egypt to the typical land of Canaan.

All is forgotten.

And in the stead of worship because of all the acts of lovingkindness of God, they lusted after idolatry and image worship: the abominable thing they had seen so often in Egypt.

The thing is promptly done. Aaron commands them to strip their wives and their children of all their golden ornaments and to bring them to him. A golden calf is made, and all this wickedness is climaxed by filthy play: Moses found them naked in the sight of their enemies.

And what makes this sin so great is that it is done in the sight of the glory of God on the mount. In the sight of God they changed this glory of God into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

The covenant with their God (see: Exodus 24:5-8), when they were sprinkled with the blood of the Old Testament, was utterly broken.

\* \* \* \*

Of course, the Lord knew what had transpired on that 40th day of Moses and Joshua in the mount. And He tells them. And when God's wrath waxed hot, Moses intercedes for the people three times. First he points really to God's faithfulness. Then, He reminds God of the danger that Egypt and the wicked nations will blaspheme Him for bringing the people out of Egypt to the mount, only to destroy them. And third, Moses reminds the Lord of His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the oath namely, when He had promised to bring them to Canaan.

And then Moses and Joshua return to the people.

Seeing the wanton idolatry and filth, Moses in great anger calls on the faithful Levites to destroy the ring leaders, of whom 3000 are slain.

Then he returns to God.

Listen: Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

All sin is not great sin. There is a tremendous difference. David prays against "presumptuous sins." This was a great sin. It amounted to a severance from God. The covenant was decidedly broken.

And then comes something very strange and unique: Moses' attempt at being the mediator, the savior, the deliverer from sin through self sacrifice.

You find it twice, and perhaps, three times in the Bible.

The form in which Moses brings his intercession to God is also passing strange. I do not believe that you can find another instance in the Bible where a sentence is cut short in mid-air. Listen to Moses: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive sin . . ." The sentence is not finished.

How are we to explain this half sentence?

I think I know the solution. Moses realized in the very middle of the sentence that *mere* forgiveness is not possible with God. Moses realized that God is a HOLY GOD! And God's holiness cannot allow mere forgiveness. Moses realized that as soon as a sin is sinned, there is a sure, a certain reaction in the Holy God, a reaction of consuming wrath that *must be satisfied!*

Beloved reader, let this sink in: it is fundamental. We hear much of the concept of forgiveness, and of the forgiving God and His Christ which is contraband.

And if all confessing Christians would understand this fundamental truth, they would all gladly and joyously embrace the doctrine of election and reprobation.

Attend to this: God cannot merely forgive: the debt must be paid. Well, from a thousand pulpits we hear the answer: Christ paid the debt! But He paid it for the whole world! And if that is true then the whole world is saved! For God will never ask the payment of the debt twice. Neither is this possible. If the debt of the whole world is paid, then there is no more wrath in God, and hell is impossible.

However, let us return to Moses. His sentence hangs in mid-air. He realizes that God cannot merely forgive without an atonement being made. He also must have realized that atonement by the blood of animals could not suffice either.

And so we come to his attempt of being the savior of Israel: "Blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written!"

What must we say, what must we confess of this attempt at mediator?

It was not defiance of God, as though he wanted to say: If they cannot live, I want to die too! Because God had said to him that He would make a great nation of him.

No, it is this: the Spirit of the Christ who was to come was in Moses. The great love of God was the driving force in Moses. The same driving force of the love of God prompted Paul to say many centuries later: I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh . . .

Note also that Moses went further than Paul. Paul could wish. Moses said: Blot me out of Thy book! Paul could wish, but he did not. And why? Because he knew better than to wish. He stood behind the cross and much additional revelation. But the same Spirit prompted both men.

However, Moses was refused. And that was right, beautifully right.

He was refused, I think, for but one reason: No man, being a sinner, can bring the sacrifice for sin.

So, forgiveness, *mere* forgiveness is impossible. Moses realized this in the middle of his first sentence, and stopped half way.

And the redemption by savior Moses is impossible also. He is a sinner himself.

Here is God's answer: it is twofold.

First: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." It is the inexorable law of death to the sinner.

This fundamental law is so inexorable that it even strikes the very Son of the Godhead when He hangs on the Cross in the stead of His elect people. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him!" Understand that if you can.

And, second, God makes answer positively by the Gospel words: Mine Angel shall go before thee!"

That is the Gospel.

Listen to God: "Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee."

Well, that place is Canaan, that is, the typical heaven.

In other words: I have found a solution. And here is My solution: Mine Angel shall go before thee!

There is beauty in that sentence, but also horror. That is, horror for that Angel, and beauty for chosen Israel.

We know the sequence: Israel went to Canaan, and lived there under their fig tree and olive tree. But the Angel of the Lord, the pre-figuration of Jesus Christ preceded the Israel of God on the accursed tree. (See: Isa. 63:9)

And there he suffered the wrath of God.

For the worship of the golden calf of Israel.

But also for you and me, and all those that have loved His appearance. Amen. G.V.

### CALL TO SYNOD

According to the decision of the last Synod, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, notifies the churches that the 1958 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene on Wednesday, June 4, D.V., at 9:00 A. M. in the above mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, June 3, at 8:00 P. M. at First Church. The Rev. C. Hanko, president of the previous Synod, is scheduled to preach at this service.

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

Those requesting lodging are to contact Mr. P. Decker, 108 Mayfield Ave., N. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Consistory of the First  
Protestant Reformed Church  
Rev. C. Hanko, President  
Peter Decker, Secretary

### NOTICE!

The Editorial Staff of *The Standard Bearer* will meet, the Lord willing, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the First Church, on Thursday evening, June 5, 1958. The members of the staff will please regard this announcement as an official notice.

Rev. H. Veldman, Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### The Declaration of Principles

Also article 15 of the first chapter of the Canons stands opposed to the notion of a general conditional promise as maintained in the First Point of 1924 as this is explained by the leaders of the Christian Reformed Church, and it is also very concretely maintained by those that left us and departed from the Protestant Reformed faith. The latter all preach the false doctrine contained in the statement: "God promises every one of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved."

Art. 15 of Canons I speaks of reprobation as follows:

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

From this article it is plain:

1. That God does not promise salvation to all men, to the reprobate, but only to the elect. That, therefore, we can never say: "God promises salvation to every one of you."

2. That the conditional sentence: "if you believe" does not help matters. For faith is of God. If, therefore, we say: "God promises every one of you salvation," we must also be able to say "God promises faith to every one of you," which is not true: He does not promise faith to the reprobate.

3. Hence, the sentence: "God promises every one of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved," is sheer nonsense except in the Arminian sense of the word. In this sense only, faith or believing is excluded from the promise and the promise can be made a general declaration based upon a condition which man must be willing to fulfill.

Besides, this and similar statements are literally condemned in the Canons.

In Canons I B, the rejection of errors, we read in I:

"The synod rejects the errors of those:

"Who teach: That the will of God to save those who would believe and would persevere in faith and in the obedience of faith, is the whole and entire decree of election unto salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decree has been revealed in God's Word."

We would almost be inclined to ask: What is wrong with

this? Is it not true that it is the will of God to save those that believe and that persevere in the faith? Suppose that the statement we quoted above and to which those that departed from our churches subscribe, would be changed into this form: "God wills that every one of you that believe and persevere in the faith and in the obedience of faith shall be saved," would anyone object to this statement?

But the Canons object, not because the statement as it stands is not true, but because it is not the whole truth, it is not "the entire decree of election." The trouble is that you omit the truth that faith is a gift of God and that He bestows that gift only on the elect. Hence, in the same article, the Canons continue:

"For these deceive the simple (as is, indeed, their purpose, H.H.) and plainly contradict the Scriptures, which declare that God will not only save those who will believe, but that he also has from eternity chosen particular persons to whom above others he in time will grant both faith in Christ and perseverance, as it is written: 'I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world.' John 17:6. 'And as many ordained unto eternal life believed.' Acts 13:48. And: 'Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love.' Eph. 1:4."

Those that have left us are, evidently, very fond of "conditions" and "conditionally." But from the above you may notice that it is not even necessary to employ the term condition. All you have to teach is that the decree of election is that God wills that all that believe and persevere in the faith shall be saved and you are not Reformed but Arminian.

From the rest of this part of the Canons, however, it is very evident that the Arminians use the term "condition" very often and are, in fact, very much in need of it.

Thus in Canons I, B, II the fathers of Dordt reject the errors of those who teach different kinds of election, one of which is "incomplete, revocable, non-decisive and conditional." In the next article, III, the fathers reject the errors of those "Who teach: That the good pleasure of God, of which Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election, does not consist in this, that God chose certain persons rather than others, but in this that he chose of all possible conditions (among which are also the works of the law), or out of the whole order of things, the act of faith which from its very nature is undeserving, as well as its incomplete obedience, as a condition of salvation."

You understand, of course, that as the order of salvation is in the counsel of God, thus it is also in its realization in time. If faith and its incomplete obedience are a condition of salvation in the counsel of election, they are also conditions which man must fulfill unto salvation in time. And this, too, is exactly what those that left our churches teach and preach. For they maintain that "our act of conversion is a prerequisite (or condition) to enter into the kingdom of heaven." This implies, therefore, that also in the counsel of election, God chose those unto salvation that would perform

the act of conversion. It is this doctrine of the schismatics that is condemned here by the Canons.

But, of course, even the Arminians with all their free-will doctrine would not dare to teach openly that man has the saving faith of himself. Scripture teaches too plainly that faith is the gift of God. In order, therefore, to leave salvation, nevertheless, ultimately in the power of man they invented the theory of natural light. Of this we read in Canons I, B. IV. There we read that the fathers of Dordt reject the errors of those "Who teach: That in the election unto faith this condition is beforehand demanded, viz., that man should use the light of nature aright, be pious, humble, meek, and fit for eternal life, as if on these things salvation were in any way dependent." This is a very necessary proposition of all Arminian theology. Consider: 1. God did not choose any particular persons unto salvation in Christ; all men He wills to be saved. 2. Faith and the obedience of faith are, however, conditions unto salvation. 3. But faith is a gift of God which no man has of himself. 4. To whom does God give this faith? He is willing to give it to all men. But they must show that they want that gift of faith by using the light of nature aright, by being pious and fit for the gift of eternal life.

Also I, B, V speaks of conditions. There we read that the errors are rejected of those:

"Who teach: That the incomplete and non-decisive election of particular persons unto salvation occurred because of a foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, godliness, which either began or continued for some time; but that the complete and decisive election occurred because of foreseen perseverance unto the end in faith, conversion, holiness and godliness; and this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, for the sake of which he who is chosen, is more worthy than he who is not chosen; and that therefore faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election unto salvation, but are conditions, which, being required beforehand, were foreseen as being met by those who will be fully elected, and are causes without which the unchangeable election to glory does not occur."

We see, therefore, that according to the Arminians there are conditions on all the way of salvation, from beginning to end, from the right use of natural light unto faith to perseverance unto eternal glory. How downright dishonest it was for them still to speak of election! Honest it would have been had they simply denied that there is such a thing as election.

It is in opposition to the conditional theology that, over against the "Three Points" of 1924, adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, the Declaration of Principles was adopted. For, especially the first of these Three Points maintains, not only that there is a grace of God to all men, including the reprobate, manifest in the common gifts to all men, but also that the promise of the gospel is a gracious offer of salvation on the part of God to all that ex-

ternally hear the preaching of the gospel. And our Declaration maintains that the grace of God is always particular, for the elect only, never for the reprobate. And it declared, too, "that the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer on the part of God to all men, nor a conditional offer to all that are in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that will infallibly lead all the elect unto eternal glory through faith."

Those that have departed from the Protestant Reformed Churches have rejected the Declaration officially.

The reason is that they prefer the conditional theology of the Arminians. They teach that the promise of the gospel is for all that hear the gospel. And they also teach that, even before anyone can ever enter into the kingdom of heaven, he must first fulfill the condition of converting himself.

All this is not Reformed according to the Confessions. And, therefore, it certainly is not Protestant Reformed.

We now come to the second chapter of the Canons which treats of the death of Christ and the redemption of men by that death.

The first article teaches that sin must be punished with temporal and eternal punishment and, unless satisfaction be made, we can never escape this punishment. The second article has it that God gave His only begotten Son in our stead in order that He might make satisfaction for us. The third article speaks about the infinite value of the death of the Son of God, "abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world." Article 4 explains why this death of Christ is of so great and infinite value. All these articles, though important in themselves, are not directly related with our subject and, therefore, we may pass them by merely mentioning them.

Next, however, appears an article that is important because it has been quoted in defense of the First Point of 1924 as teaching "common grace."

To this article we will, therefore, call your attention in our next issue, the Lord willing. H.H.

### A Letter from South Holland

Before we continue our discussion under the heading "Shall We Re-unite?" I publish the following letter from our congregation in South Holland.

The readers will, undoubtedly, be interested in this.

The contents speak for themselves so that comment is not necessary.

Here follows the letter:

South Holland, Ill., April 17, 1958

Dear Members of our Congregation:

Your Consistory is reporting to you in this letter concerning an incident that took place at last night's consistory meeting. We report this matter to you because we want you to be acquainted with the facts. We report by letter, rather than by bulletin or pulpit announcement, for the fol-

lowing reasons: 1) We do not care to fill your hearts and minds with these matters on the sabbath day. 2) We want you to know the facts of this matter before you hear all kinds of rumors and partial reports from others. 3) By means of a letter we can give you a more detailed report. Our report here follows.

The Consistory was somewhat surprised last night when a group of schismatics, headed by the Rev. B. Kok, appeared at our door, claiming to be a committee who wanted to talk to us. After considering the matter, the Consistory decided to receive any of these men individually, and the chairman so informed them. We did this because we do not recognize their group, certainly not as they have recently represented themselves under our name, and also because we recalled that all the schismatics left us also *individually*. It was therefore only proper to receive them as individuals. We left it to these visitors whether or not they wanted to enter our meeting in this way. And the Rev. Kok was the first, — and we may add, the only one, — to come. The substance of the conversation we recorded carefully in our minutes, and we report it to you from our records, supported as to their correctness by the witness of all eight consistory members.

Upon being asked to state his business, the Rev. Kok soon gave evidence that he after all did not mean to speak as an individual, but that he wanted to involve the Consistory in a discussion of a property settlement with the local schismatic group. We mention the following main items in Kok's remarks.

1) He claimed to represent as moderator the consistory of "what is nominally called the Orthodox Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland." (we quote his words here.) This was Kok's answer only after the chairman questioned him as to what group and what consistory he was continually talking about without ever mentioning them by name. We may also note that there seems to have been another change of name, since in the mimeographed letters which they sent to you they signed our church's name to the letters.

2) Kok claimed that he and his group had addressed letters to our consistory, but had received no answer.

3) He professed that he and his group were grieved by the separation.

4) He claimed that in the light of recent legal history they believed themselves legally and morally entitled to our church property.

5) He said that if our consistory would not answer their request for a discussion of property settlement by the end of the week, there would be no other way open for them than to take legal action. And in the course of his remarks he spoke of "perhaps" taking the matter to court.

Through its chairman the Consistory replied to these remarks in substance as follows:

1) The chairman reminded Kok that he was evidently not speaking as an *individual*, as we decided to allow him to do, but for a group.

2) We reminded Kok that he lied when he spoke of addressing letters to our consistory (since these letters were never addressed to us) and that therefore his whole conversation was based on a lie from the beginning. We further informed him that our consistory was always ready to receive any correspondence properly addressed to us and to consider it.

3) We called Kok's attention to the fact that it was a lie that they were grieved by the separation, since they gave no evidence in their actions of any such grief. The chairman then, under witness of the consistory, called upon Kok to repent of his evil church political and doctrinal way, reminding him that it was terrible sin against God and His church. This, however, Kok did not want to discuss, he stated. And when, right before he was dismissed, Kok made a veiled threat of possible court action, we reminded him once more that if they did that, it simply meant that they would go farther in their wicked way and were responsible before God for these actions.

When Kok was dismissed from our meeting, having given his message, the men who at first had appeared with him at our door had disappeared, and so we had no more of these "individual" visitors.

That, beloved, is a brief factual report of what took place at our meeting. We need add no comments, except to point out:

1) That the Consistory will not allow itself to become involved in a property settlement discussion. We deny that anyone but our own congregation has any legal or moral right to our church property.

2) That the Consistory is diligently making preparations to face any possible legal action.

3) That as far as our attitude toward the schismatics is concerned, the Consistory took the only possible stand, namely, to call them to repent and to return from their evil way.

4) That it stands to reason that in that way of repentance there would simply no longer be any property question whatsoever. We should not forget that the real question is not the property matter which the schismatics try now to introduce, but the spiritual issue of their departure from the truth and from the way of righteousness in the church.

In the meantime, let us not be disturbed about these matters, but commit our way unto the Lord, in the confidence that He is for us, no matter what the future holds for us as congregation.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

The Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church,  
South Holland, Ill.

was signed:

H. C. Hoeksema, president  
J. Van Baren, clerk

Done in Consistory, April 16, 1958.

H.H.



## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Zechariah

*The Destruction of the Hostile nations*

Chapter 14:12-15

12. *And this shall be the plague with which the Lord shall smite all the people who fought against Jerusalem; his flesh shall consume away while he stands upon his feet, and his eyes shall consume away in his holes, and his tongue shall consume away in their mouth.* 13. *And it shall be in that day that there shall be among them a great confusion from the Lord, and they shall seize each his neighbor's hand, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.* 14. *And Judah shall also fight at Jerusalem, and the riches of the nations around shall be gathered, gold and silver and apparel in great abundance.* 15. *And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the cattle that shall be in these camps, even as this plague.*

The prophecy of these verses is important. It describes in figurative language the end of the reprobated wicked. It therefore meets a real need of the saints in tribulation—the need of being told of the Lord not alone that they shall inherit eternal glory but also that the wicked shall be destroyed. The consideration of the last judgment is, according to the Confession, “most desirable and comforting” to the saints. “For then they shall be crowned with glory and honour; and the Son of God shall confess their names before God His Father and His elect angels. All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes. And for a gracious reward, the Lord shall cause them to possess such glory, as never entered into the heart of man to conceive.” But, says the Confession, God’s believing people “expect that great day with ardent desire also because then their innocence shall be known to all, and their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates, as heretical and impious, will be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted.”

The psalms of David are replete with prayers for the destruction of the wicked. “Destroy thou them, O God; let them all fall by their own counsels. Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions. Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Break thou the arm of the wicked, and the evil man; seek out his wickedness till thou find none. Let them be as chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; let them melt away as waters which

run continually. Consume them in thy wrath; consume them that they may not be.”

So the prophets of God of old prayed. And likewise the saints of this Christian dispensation. “Destroy the works of the devil,” so they pray, “and all violence which would exalt itself against thee,” and, “Do thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory.”\* Victory over whom and what? Over the devil, the reprobated world and sinful flesh. The souls under the altar cry with a loud voice, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.”

What are all such prayers but petitions that the Lord destroy the reprobated wicked, in the verses under consideration, “the peoples who fought against Jerusalem.” Surely the consideration of the last judgment is “most desirable and comforting to the saints.” They expect that great day with ardent desire as knowing—for God tells them—what this day has in store for them and for the wicked. This desire is rooted in the love of God. It is love of God and of the heavenly and therefore of necessity hatred of the world and all that is of sin including surely the body of this death to which the believers are chained in this life and under the impulse of which they lay off sin and put on Christ and weepingly declare, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity of the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” and jubilantly exclaims, “I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.” A man may say that as moved by love of God he hates all workers of iniquity; but if that man in passing judgment on himself concludes that he has no sin and does not confess that in himself he is no better than the others whom God according to His sovereign good pleasure decided to hate, he may be sure that his hatred of the wicked is not love of God at all but hatred of God and inordinate love of self which is idolatry. And no idolater will go to heaven unless he repents. And the same is true of the man who loves those who love him, that is, loves such persons for the sole reason that they love and do well unto him. This man, too, is an idolater as is also evident from the fact that he will not love, bless and pray for *his* enemies, that is, pray for the wicked persons that, as crossing his path, spitefully use and persecute him. Instead of doing good unto such wicked ones, instead of blessing them and praying for them, he insists that they are reprobated and accordingly damns them to hell for the sole reason that they spitefully use *him*. This man may imagine that in hating and cursing his enemies, he is moved by the love of God, but if he will

\*Quotation from *Heid. Catechism's Commentary on Lord's Prayer*.

only engage in some earnest heartsearchings, if he will examine himself in the light of the Scriptures, he will discover that he deceives himself and that the truth is not in him. Discover he will that what moves him is sheer carnal hatred of the enemy. That the enemy in his wickedness is also an enemy of God does not concern him in the least, not really. What incites his carnal rage is solely the consideration that the enemy misuses *him*. It means that the man is prostrated before the shrine of his own ego, that he is a worshipper of self and not of God, that, in a word, he is an idolater. Yet he is telling himself that he is moved by the love of God; he may even succeed in convincing himself with the Scriptures. But he deceives himself certainly. The basic question here involved is whether we may say of any individual wicked man that he is a reprobate, — mark you, I say of any individual *living* man, definitely of that wicked man who daily crosses our path and does us much injury. Let us give answer. Through the Scriptures God has revealed that there is a people whom He sovereignly hates. These are the reprobated. We know from the Scriptures that the race that perished by the waters of the flood was reprobated, and that the Canaanites were reprobated and likewise Esau the older son of Isaac and Rebecca. God revealed it to them. And therefore they knew. But the Scriptures do not tell us who among the present living are reprobated. Certainly He does not make known to us that our personal enemies are reprobated. Hence we do not know. If anyone says that he knows, he must explain how he knows. He surely cannot know it from the Scriptures. Did he receive a special revelation, that is, did the Lord tell him by a voice from heaven? Surely this is knowledge that the Lord withholds from His people, and with reason. Seeing that they do not know, He can now try His people, discover them to themselves by mandating them, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." And He also gives to His people grace to do as He mandates; He puts this mandate, His laws, into their mind, and writes them in their hearts. And thereby they know that they are children of their Father who is in heaven. For He, too, loves His enemies; He loves His chosen people by nature haters of God. He commends His love toward them in that even while they were sinners, ungodly, without strength, Christ died for them. If we can't love *our* enemies, if we can't call them to repentance with the fervent prayer in our hearts and upon our lips that, could it be, the Lord also give them grace to repent, if instead we curse them to hell as taking the position that they are reprobated, we may be sure that we are being led not by Christ's Spirit and not by the Scriptures but by our own carnal judgment, self-love and carnal anger and hatred of God and of His commandments. Then we are idolaters, worshippers of another god, that god being our own carnal self. And it bears repeating that he will not go to heaven except he repent.

But one will say: Is it true that God is not making it

known who among the living are reprobated? Can't this be known in many cases? And can't we in all such cases be sure? One will point to the words of Christ, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" etc. Mat. 7:15ff. The sole point to this reasoning is that a false prophet can be known by his evil works. Whether he is also reprobated, God only knows. Hence the disciples of the Lord, besides calling him to repentance, may and must desire his conversion and pray for the same.

Then there is that passage in the Hebrews, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they should fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing that they crucify unto themselves the son of God afresh and put him to open shame." The Lord wills not to give unto these apostates the grace of repentance, and therefore they cannot be renewed to repentance, which indicates that they are reprobated; they commit the unpardonable sin. But who are we to judge whether the description applies to the apostate that crosses our path? The sacred writer in penning these words did not mean to provide us with an instrument for the detection of the reprobated among the living; his purpose is rather to put his readers on the alert each of them with respect to himself. This is clear from the context. Though by this time they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God. They do not go on unto perfection, are not able to come to the knowledge of the truth, grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but are always learning, again and again laying the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God and of the doctrine of baptism, etc. Let them take heed unto themselves lest they end up in repudiating the whole Gospel, crucifying Christ and putting Him to open shame as they once had done in their ignorance; for then it will be impossible to renew them unto repentance, seeing that they are now enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, etc. Let them then by all means go unto perfection, for it is impossible to renew unto repentance those who were once enlightened, should they now crucify Christ as they once had done in their ignorance before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Such is here the reasoning of the sacred writer, Heb. 5:12ff. It is clear that in penning these words it was not the purpose of the writer to provide us with an instrument for the detection of the reprobated among the living. Who the reprobated are among the living was not revealed to us; this is known to God alone. We can and must therefore love and bless and pray for our enemies. Such is the will of God. "Accordingly, let him be unto you as a publican and a sinner," says Christ. He does not say, "Let him be unto you as a reprobate." The reference is to the brother who trespasses against us, and will



not repent and is therefore excommunicated out of the church. The church must not take the position that he is a reprobate but a fallen brother and can and must therefore continue to admonish him and pray for his conversion. This was also the teaching of our reformed fathers as is clear from the following statement contained in the Form of Excommunication, "Further we exhort you, beloved Christians, to keep no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but at all times admonish him as you would a brother."

But one may ask: how is this teaching to be harmonized with the fact the consideration of the last judgment is most desirable and comforting to the saints and that they appear in the Scriptures as praying for the destruction of the wicked. They pray for the destruction of the reprobated wicked and leave it to God who the reprobated are. They pray for the destruction of this people as holding the promise that, in the language of our prophet (verse 1), the Lord shall smite "all the people (the reprobated) who fought against Jerusalem." Let us observe that the verb here is in the past tense — *have fought*. No longer can they fight against God's people. For the church is now in glory and the enemy is in the place of eternal torment, where their worm never dies and the fire is not quenched, and where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth everlastingly. In the figurative language of our prophet, "his flesh shall consume away while he stands upon his feet, and his eyes shall consume away in his holes, and his tongue shall consume away in their mouth."

13. In this verse the scene changes. The church is still militant here below; the enemy is presented to view as still fighting against Jerusalem. But its hour has now struck. There is among them a great confusion of the Lord. The hand of each is against his neighbor. They turn their weapons against one another. And the result is disaster. The defeat of the nations is made complete by God's people who rush upon the helpless remnant (verse 14). With the army destroyed, the camp with all its riches falls into the hand of the victors. A plague as disastrous as that which smites the men will destroy the beasts of the hostile army. What is here foretold again in language borrowed from forms and conditions of the old dispensation is the destruction of the hostile world-powers at the second coming of Christ.

### *The Conversion of the Remnant of the Nations*

#### Chapter 14:16-19

16. *And it shall be that all that is left of the nations which come against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of the tabernacles.* 17. *And it shall be that whoso of the families of the earth shall not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, Jehovah of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain.* 18. *And if the family of Egypt go not up and come*

*not, upon them shall be none, upon them shall be the plague with which Jehovah shall plague the nations which go not up to keep the feast of the tabernacles.* 19. *This shall be the sin of Egypt, and the sin of the nations which go not up to keep the feast of the tabernacles.*

16. The armies of the nations will perish before Jerusalem. Few, if any will escape from the catastrophe described in verses 12-15. But the nations as such, the noncombatants at home, will be spared for the sake of the remnant among them — the remnant according to the election of grace, the "all that is left of the nations" (see verse 1). Should the Lord destroy this remnant, he would be unfaithful to His promise to Abraham that in him all the nations, principally the elect, are blessed. Upon the remnant therefore He will surely have compassion in that day. These He gathers by His Spirit and His word through the ages of this Christian dispensation — He the King, the Lord of Hosts, our Lord Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of the Throne. As saved of Him, they honor Him as their Lord and king and they believe in Him and through Him in God. The conversion of the remnant among the nations is depicted under the figure of yearly pilgrimages to the temple. From year to year they go up to worship the king, and to keep the feast of the tabernacles. This feast was one of the three occasions mentioned in Deut. 15:16. It was a great and solemn feast. The males repaired for its celebration to the place where God might put His name. It lasted eight days and was begun and ended by a day of holy convocation. It also bears the name "the Feast of Ingathering in the end of the year when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field"; for it took place immediately before the winter months and after the labors of the harvest were past. This Feast of tabernacles should be rather, of booths, for during the continuance of this feast the people dwelt in booths, that is, in slight and temporary dwellings, light and movable, and easily pitched and as easily taken down, and therefore the proper abodes of the children of Israel during their wanderings in the desert. It was in such structures that the people of Israel were required to dwell during the Feast of Tabernacles. The reason assigned for this ordinance is stated. The people had to dwell in booths, "that their generations might know that the Lord made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt." Thus it was designed to keep alive the remembrance of this fact and of all the goodnesses and mercies and loving kindnesses of the Lord toward His people associated with this fact. Should the remembrance of His mercies have been permitted to die, the praise and worship of His name would have ceased for lack of knowledge. And this could not be allowed to happen. Because for this very purpose had He so marvellously befriended His people, namely that they should declare His praises forever. It is plain that our prophet had a special reason for mentioning the Feast of Tabernacles. His declaring that the nations will keep this feast was his way of

saying that the souls of the redeemed will bless Him, the God of their salvation as never forgetting all His mercies. If in this life their abode is a tent, they will have a building with God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

17. Upon all those of the nations of the earth—the reprobated among them—who will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord of Hosts, there will be no rain. The withholding of rain symbolizes the withholding of all the spiritual blessings of Christ's cross. Unto His chosen ones God gives all things, so that all He has, can have, is curse and damnation for the others.

18. And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not, upon them shall come the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite. Egypt is mentioned separately because of the peculiar condition of its climate. It is not dependent directly on rain for fertility, but on the overflowing of the Nile, caused by rainfall in Ethiopia, south of Egypt. The judgment of verse 18, therefore, has no special terror for Egypt, and some might conclude that Egypt could refuse to worship the Lord with impunity. But such is by no means the case. Egypt, too, must go or be cursed. But Egypt will go, for God has His people also in this nation as we learn from the discourses of some of the other prophets.

19. This shall be the sin of Egypt, and the sin of the nations which go not up. As is clear from the context, this verse views the nations from the angle of their reprobated shell. As so viewed, none of them shall go up to keep the Feast of the Tabernacle. And this will be their sin—this, namely that they worship not the King, believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ but rebel against Him. All men of this Christian dispensation shall be judged according to the attitude that they take toward Christ. This is so, because Jerusalem has been exalted above the mountains, and because, accordingly, the sound of the Gospel now goes forth to the ends of the earth.

G.M.O.

### **An Allegory**

Once upon a time, when the land was young, a family of Whites settled in the land and grew into sixteen Clans spreading over the whole country. After many moons a Big Chief from across the great waters came to visit, and showed his beautiful warpaints, tomahawks and poisoned arrows. These looked inviting to some of the young heads of Clans, who tried them on for fun and soon came to love those instruments of war. They practiced so often with the new tomahawks and poisoned arrows, and painted their faces with red paint until, miraculously, they finally turned into real Indians!

In some Clans, especially the First Clan, the newly formed Indians outnumbered the Whites two to one and

forced them out of their Log Cabin by sheer numbers. Then the newly formed Indians from the Clans organized sixteen Tribes who made war with their brethren in the Log Cabins. The Tribes called a Pow Wow to be held in the First Log Cabin and there decided to send their best Medicine Man to the Agent of the Great White Father of the land to make incantations before the Agent in order to blind his eyes and mind to the truth. The Medicine Man made powerful medicine with which he was very successful. His medicine showed the Agent that because they, the Tribes, held their annual Pow Wow in the First Log Cabin they, the Redskins, must be Palefaces.

The Agent, while under the influence of the medicine, ruled that because the Pow Wow was held in the First Log Cabin the Reds were to be considered White. And when the Medicine Man asked the Agent what the Whites should be called, the Agent answered, "I pronounce them Indians!"

The Medicine Man went back to the Tribal Chiefs and received much wampum for making them happy, and they held a great celebration around the campfire. The young Braves seated at the edge of the firelight practiced the difficult words of their new ceremonial chant: Reds are Whites, Whites are Red, wrongs are rights, stones are bread; Day is night, nights are days, dark is light, slander is praise.

Then the Indians (called Whites) sent smoke signals to the Whites (called Indians) inviting them to smoke the peace pipe in the Log Cabins to become one again, and all may be called Indians—no, Whites. Powerful Medicine!

J.M.F.

### **THE LOVE AND JUSTICE OF GOD**

Thy mercy and Thy truth, O Lord,  
Transcend the lofty sky;  
Thy judgments are a mighty deep,  
And as the mountain high.

Lord, Thou preservest man and beast;  
Since Thou art ever kind,  
Beneath the shadows of Thy wings  
We may a refuge find.

With the abundance of Thy house  
We shall be satisfied,  
From rivers of unfailing joy  
Our thirst shall be supplied.

The fountain of eternal life  
Is found alone with Thee,  
And in the brightness of Thy light  
We clearly light shall see.

Psalm 36:1-4

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### II.

(Matthew 24:1-3)

In our "Introductory" article, appearing in the former issue of *The Standard Bearer*, we attempted to give a bird's-eye view of these two chapters under consideration. We did not intend, from the very nature of this discourse of Jesus, to give a complete and comprehensive exposition of the subject matter with which we here deal. We merely wished to sketch for the interested reader in general the picture here given in these prophetic utterances of our Lord.

There are some very salient points which we ought to observe in these chapters. We shall attempt to single them out and set them forth in bold relief. In doing so, however, we shall try not to lose sight of the whole. At least we flatter ourselves that we shall succeed in making clear to the reader what we believe to be the instruction unto godliness which Jesus would have us take to heart!

In this essay we call attention to the verses 1-3 of chapter 24 of Matthew. This section reads as follows: "*And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came unto him for to shew the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*"

It seems to us that for a proper understanding of this prophetic discourse of Jesus, spoken on Mount Olivet, it is particularly important to trace out the *historic situation* in which they were uttered. For certainly we can write advisedly: *historic*, that is, a mentioned and celebrated point in history! Note well: not history in the sense that man writes history, but in the sense that the times and the seasons are in the authority and almight of God, who reveals the secret things of His counsel!

We notice then, first of all, that these words were uttered in the evening of the last day of Jesus' public ministry in the state of humiliation. This is the last time that Jesus ever would be in the earthly temple in Jerusalem. During this day Jesus had performed an astounding amount of labor. And these labors are recorded rather in detail in both the synoptic Gospels and in John. In all these accounts the focus-point seems to be that Jesus stopped the mouth of *total* unbelief. Do we not read in Matthew 22:46, "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions"?

It was in this *total unbelief* that we see that Jesus came to his *own things*, the temple, sacrifices, priesthood, and that *his own* received him not. John 1:11. And this unbelief would nail him to the Cross, with the very Scriptures in their hand. For does not Matthew 24:1 connect with the end of Matthew 23:37, 38? And does not this chapter end with the distant perspective of the "return" of Christ upon clouds in *His parousia*, when all shall have to say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? (Psalm 118:26). Jesus had finished speaking to the Old Testament people of God as a nation! This city of Jerusalem is, from the viewpoint of the unbelieving rulers, the reprobate element, Israel that is not Israel. Well does Rev. 11:8 read, "And their dead bodies shall die in the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified"! Here is a great deal of religiosity, ritual and formal worship, but no service of God in Spirit and in truth. Had Jesus not said to the Samaritan woman at the well, speaking of the true worship of God, "Woman, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father"? To this Jerusalem, which is spiritually Sodom and Egypt, it is said, "Behold, your house is left desolate to you." Thus Jesus had spoken on this very day. Matthew 23:28.

And now Jesus *leaves* this temple. It was a beautiful architectural structure. It was the temple of Herod. For more than forty-six years it had already been under construction. And the disciples point out to Jesus the beauty and grandeur of this temple. It approached the beauty of the Solomonic temple. However, Solomon was only David's son and not David's Lord. But here is David's *Lord*. (Matthew 22:41-45). He is the Son of God, very God in our flesh, Immanuel, God-with-us! Is he not the King-Priest after the order of Melchizedec? Will he not build the Lord an house of living stones? I Peter 2:4-6. And will in that new Jerusalem, in His Parousia, there be a need of such a temple as this, built of stones formed by man's hand? Does not John say in Revelation 21:22, "And I saw no temple (naon) therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it"? Then will the tabernacle of God be with man! Rev. 21:3.

In the light of all this, Jesus' *leaving* the temple signals a very historic moment, does it not?

We do well to keep it in mind in our interpretation.

Well may the stones of this temple of Herod be made an utter ruin. Shall man build the Lord an house to dwell in? The heaven of heavens cannot contain God. How much less a temple of this earth? Hebrews 9:1-11 contrasts the "worldly sanctuary" with the "greater and more perfect tabernacle." This even Solomon understood. I Kings 8:26, 27.

This reply of Jesus concerning the utter destruction of the temple of Herod made a profound impression on the disciples. Especially on Peter, James, John and Andrew. They

sense that in the question of Jesus, "See ye not all these things" he does not merely have in mind the *stones* of the temple. He has in mind, evidently, all that these stones stood for in the mind of the Jews, the architects and all of unbelief. It all called for the judgment of God. The "that" it shall come to pass is clear to these disciples. But the "when" is not clear. Fact is, this is a point which had not been disclosed to Daniel. The disciples also sense the great import of the destruction of the temple. From their, *as yet, Old Testament perspective*, the destruction of Jerusalem was really the consummation of the ages. When Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed, then we have the parousia of Jehovah to come and dwell forever with his people.

For these disciples this matter is connected with the hope of Israel, the final redemption of God's people. Hence, Peter, James, John and Andrew come to Jesus privately on the Mount of Olives with their questions, which show that they would, in faith, scan the future!

"Tell us" they say, "*when* shall these things be?" And "*what* shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world." Verse 3.

Concerning these questions of the disciples to Jesus we would make the following observations:

In the first place, we should notice that when the King James Version speaks of the "Sign of thy *coming*" the term for "coming" in the Greek is "parousia." Now the term *parousia* in both classic Greek and in the Greek New Testament does not mean "coming." It really means more than *coming*. It means: a being present. In classic Greek, according to Liddel and Scott's Lexicon it means: to be present for the purpose of assisting. In the classics it refers to the presence of man. However, in the New Testament it refers also to the presence of men. Paul employs it in II Cor. 10:10 where he quotes his adversaries as saying: Paul's presence (parousia) is weak while his letters are strong and weighty. Paul contrasts the term *presence* (parousia) with the term absence (apousia) in Phil. 2:12. Hence, in our passage here in Matt. 24:3 the term "parousia" refers to the final return of Christ to judge the living and the dead. He shall then leave his church no more, but shall forever dwell with us and we with him, in the glorified state of the new heavens and the new earth. Parousia means Christ's arrival upon which there follows no farewell and departure anymore!

Secondly, we should notice that the disciples believe and understand that this coming, this parousia will be signalled by a "Sign" in which it will be perfectly clear that the time of this "final arrival" is at hand. And in their mind this is connected, as we stated earlier in this essay, with the destruction of Jerusalem. Now as to the "time element" the disciples were certainly mistaken in connecting the two, namely the destruction of Jerusalem and the Parousia, as if they would come at the same moment in history. From the perspective of Daniel and the prophets the two fall together. That the disciples are in error is ipso facto clear from their questioning Jesus, itself, as well as from the prophetic dis-

course of Jesus. Does not Jesus speak of a long history intervening between the Mt. of Olivet and the final Parousia? And is it not also clear from Acts 1:6 that the disciples needed further instruction in this matter—that even with this instruction of Matthew 24 in mind, they still needed the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. And will not the church need the entire book of Revelation given on the isle of Patmos? However, apart from this misunderstanding of the disciples, it is perfectly clear that Jesus' remark concerning the destruction of the temple calls for the next great event of Christ's work: His final return, the *Parousia*!

Thirdly, we should notice that this Parousia of Christ must not be separated as sometime preceding the end of the world, but rather as being that which exactly is the *end* of the world. Also here we should observe that the term "end" in the King James Version really does not do justice to the term which Matthew employs in the Greek. The term is not simply "telos" but is "sunteleia," that is, *being brought to an end together*. It is not simply a termination of history in a haphazard and arbitrary fashion. God does not simply stop history anywhere in time. He brings all things from Alpha to Omega. All things have their God-appointed end. It is the harvest time. The time is ripe. The season is ended. History can go no farther. The things which must come to pass are realized. They are all so summed up that they are a *consummation*! Compare Matthew 13:39, 40, 49, where Jesus explains the parable of the Tares and the parable of the Fish Net. It is the *harvest time*!

For this reason the text also speaks of the consummation not of the "world" but rather of the "ages." These are the present ages, the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.

This harvest time, this consummation of the ages, falls at the time of the Parousia. When Christ comes to dwell forever with His people, when He comes to raise all His own out of the grave, then shall be the end, when He shall give the Kingdom to God and the Father. Then shall it be fully manifested that God is all and in all; that all things in history are out of Him and through Him and unto Him! I Cor. 15:23-28, Rom. 11:36.

Concerning these matters Jesus will instruct His own disciples and us in these chapters.

The Lord willing, we shall continue this exposition in the next issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

G.L.

#### ASSURANCES FOR EVIL DAYS

Jehovah's promises are sure,  
His words are true, His words are pure  
As silver from the flame.  
Though base men walk on every side,  
His saints are safe, whate'er betide,  
Protected by His Name.

Psalms 12:4

## IN HIS FEAR

### Freedom From Fear

(4)

David says, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

Solomon writes, "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

David seems to rule out all fear whatsoever and to ask us, yea to challenge us, to mention one thing, one person whom he ought to fear. Solomon, however, comes to us with the sound, sanctified advice and instruction to fear God, and presents this as our solemn duty.

Is there conflict here?

Does David disagree with Solomon?

Has Solomon a deeper insight and a greater wisdom in these matters than David?

That we dare not say. For the Scriptures are the infallible record of the Word of God. Although there is development of the truth in the Scriptures, and the New Testament writers did have deeper insight into and greater wisdom concerning many of the truths of Scripture, David was not so lacking in spiritual knowledge that he did not know that of which Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13.

David knew that it is man's duty to fear God. He wrote of that fact more than once in the psalms which God gave us through him. In Psalm 34:9 he writes, "O fear the Lord, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him." A few verses later, verse 11, he gives this counsel which breathes the truth of which Solomon wrote, "Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Or again, if you will, we find this prayer of David in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth: Unite my heart to fear Thy name." And all these were written long before Solomon came to the throne and long before he wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes. We may safely conclude that it was from David that Solomon, as a little child already, learned the truth that man's sole duty is to fear God and to keep His commandments.

Therefore we do well to understand that freedom from fear cannot possibly mean that a man is freed from his obligation, his duty to fear God. Man is made to fear God. By virtue of the very fact that he was made in the image of God, man was created to fear Him in Whose image he was created. Listen to a few passages from Holy Writ that underscore this truth! "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever," Ps. 111:10. The very principle upon which all true wisdom rests is the fear of God. He who does not fear God is a fool. And God did not create man as a fool but in true knowledge and as exceedingly wise. Adam in Paradise,

before sin entered into the world, feared God. Indeed, he was filled with fear after he sinned and therefore hid under the trees. His fear took a new form. He had a guilty conscience before this God Whom he had also feared in the state of righteousness; but the very text above which declares that the fear of the Lord is the beginning or principle of wisdom certainly implies that man, created in the image of the all-wise God, came forth from the hand of God with the fear of God in his heart.

How else shall we explain the action of the seraphim, as we read of them in Isaiah 6:2, who with one pair of their wings cover their faces before God than that this, too, is due to a godly fear in their hearts? These holy beings also fear God. And so it must be according to the psalmist in Psalm 89:6, 7, "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." This is further revealed in Revelation 15 where John depicts a sign which he saw in heaven. He sees not holy angels but victorious saints. These had "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." These sang this song, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." Revelation 15:1-4.

The testimony of the three passages mentioned above is that even those who either have never fallen into sin or have through the blood of the Lamb of God gotten the victory over sin and are justified in God's sight have a fear before Him. Fear of God is not something that came into the world with the entrance of sin. The fear of the Lord is not something that is peculiar to those with a guilty conscience.

There are other texts which make this even more emphatic, texts which add to this fear the element of trembling before Him. It is often stated, and that not incorrectly, that the "fear of the Lord" in the Old Testament Scriptures is the equivalent of the New Testament "faith in God." However, we must not receive the mistaken notion that in the Old Testament the word "faith" is unknown. This is not true. When Paul writes in Romans 1:17 that "therein," that is in the gospel, "is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith," he is quoting Habakkuk 2:4. There already in the Old Testament times Habakkuk not only made mention of faith but also of the doctrine of justification by faith. We can go back further. In the days of Moses it was stated, and that by Moses himself in his song which vibrated from his lips shortly before his death, that the Israelites who worshipped idols were "a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith," Deuteronomy 32:20. And as far as believing is concerned, we will not weary you with a host of Old Testament texts wherein we read that this one and that one believed God. We will

simply call your attention to the first one, Genesis 15:6 where we read already of Abraham that "He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness," and to this same Psalm of David wherein he speaks of freedom from fear. In Psalm 27:11 David, who had used the word fear in other Psalms writes, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Therefore we do not do justice to the concept of fear in the phrase "fear of the Lord" by simply brushing it aside as nothing more or less than the New Testament concept of faith.

We will add more material to arrive at a proper conclusion.

There is, as we said, coupled with this fear of the Lord, as it is presented to us in Scripture, the element of trembling. We read in Jeremiah 5:21, 22, "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears and hear not: Fear ye not Me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence? which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar yet can they not pass over it?" To be sure this is declared of the wicked, for in verses 23 and 24 Jeremiah quotes these words of God: "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in His season: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Therefore let us turn also to Isaiah 66:2, ". . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Still more, in the New Testament we have that well known passage in Philippians 2:12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

How, then, can we ever expect freedom from fear to be freedom from the fear of the Lord?

But how can we likewise consider that fear of the Lord to be nothing more than faith in the Lord? Do we do justice to that text in Philippians 2:12 to write it thus, "Work out your own salvation by faith"? No, we feel that we are leaving out an important element that Paul, under the guidance of the Spirit, wanted included in the text. By faith or in faith does not express fully what is incorporated in the phrase "with fear and trembling."

Here is another text that makes an interesting use of the phrase, Exodus 20:18-20, "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpets, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not."

We may note here that Moses says, "Fear not," and gives the reason for all this tremendous display at Mount Sinai as

God's work whereby He would prove the people in order that they might have His fear before their faces. Fear not, and yet God wants you to have His fear before your faces. Both are stated in one short sentence.

It is plain that what the people feared, when they cried in the words of the text quoted above, was the fact that God was coming to visit them for their sins. They feared that the judgment day had come for them and that as Pharaoh and the host of Egyptians perished under such a display of His power and glory, they too are to be consumed in a moment to enter an everlasting torment in hell. The same thing undoubtedly is also true whenever we read of an angel of God coming to His people with these words, "Fear not." (There is of course a freedom from fear of that terror and that trembling.) The moment man sees an angel of God the brilliant holiness of these creatures coupled with the fact that man knows that they have come from the very face of God as His messengers causes a fear of the curse, a fear of the awful visitation of God's righteous judgment to grip him. Thus at the open grave the angel said unto the sorrowing women, "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified." Zacharias was "greatly troubled and fear fell upon him." And the angel said "Fear not, Zacharias." Surely in both instances it was not the fear of the Lord of which Solomon speaks when he calls it the beginning of wisdom that Zacharias and these women are counseled to put far from them. But surely it is all fear of the mighty hand of God to cast them into the terrors of hell which they are admonished to put away. For note especially with the sorrowing women the reason given is that they seek Him Who was crucified and suffered all of hell's terrors for them.

We would say more next time, the Lord willing, about this fear that we are to have and which is the beginning of wisdom. But at this point we want to stress simply the fact that freedom from fear is not freedom from the fear of the Lord in every sense of the word and that this fear of the Lord we are to have is a matter that belongs to faith and yet has its own distinctive quality. J.A.H.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1903-1958

On May 7, 1958, our beloved parents,

MR. and MRS. PETER DE YOUNG (nee Dykstra)

celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

We are deeply grateful to our covenant God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon them and us; and we trust and pray that according to His will they may be spared for each other and for us for many more years.

Their children: Mr. and Mrs. Victor Hosman  
Mr. and Mrs. Abe Poortenga  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred De Young  
Mr. and Mrs. John Bishop  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pohler  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Ensink  
19 grandchildren  
14 great-grandchildren

Hudsonville, Michigan



## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

THE DECLINE OF THE PAPACY AND THE AVIGNON EXILE.  
A. D. 1294-1377.

Its purpose was not to deny feudal and freewill offerings from the Church. In cases of emergency, the pope would also be ready to grant special subsidies. The document was so offensive that the French bishops begged the pope to recall it altogether, a request he set aside. But to appease Philip, Boniface issued another bull, July 22, 1297, according thereafter to French kings, who had reached the age of 20, the right to judge whether a tribute from the clergy was a case of necessity or not. A month later he canonized Louis IX, a further act of conciliation.

Boniface also offered to act as umpire between France and England in his personal capacity as Benedict Gaetanus. The offer was accepted, but the decision was not agreeable to the French sovereign. The pope expressed a desire to visit Philip, but again gave offence by asking Philip for a loan of 100,000 pounds for Philip's brother, Charles of Valois, whom Boniface had invested with the command of the papal forces.

In 1301 the flame of controversy was again started by a document, written probably by the French advocate, Pierre Dubois, which showed the direction in which Philip's mind was working, for it could hardly have appeared without his assent. The writer summoned the king to extend his dominions to the walls of Rome and beyond, and denied the pope's right to secular power. The pontiff's business is confined to the forgiving of sins, prayer, and preaching. Philip continued to lay his hand without scruple on Church property; Lyons, which had been claimed by the empire, he demanded as a part of France. Appeals against his arbitrary acts went to Rome, and the pope sent Bernard of Saisset, bishop of Pamiers, to Paris, with commission to summon the French king to apply the clerical tithe for its appointed purpose, a crusade, and for nothing else. Philip showed his resentment by having the legate arrested. He was adjudged by the civil tribunal a traitor, and his deposition from the episcopate demanded.

Boniface's reply, set forth in the bull *Ausculda fili* — Give ear, my son — issued Dec. 5, 1301, charged the king with highhanded treatment of the clergy and making plunder of ecclesiastical property. The pope announced a council to be held in Rome to which the French prelates were called and the king summoned to be present, either in person or by a representative. The bull declared that God had placed his earthly vicar above kings and kingdoms. To make the matter worse, a false copy of Boniface's bull was circulated in

France known as *Deum time* — Fear God — which made the statements of papal prerogative still more exasperating. This supposititious document, which is supposed to have been forged by Pierre Flotte, the king's chief councillor, was thrown into the flames Feb. 11, 1302. Such treatment of a papal brief was unprecedented. It remained for Luther to cast the genuine bull of Leo X into the fire. The two acts had little in common.

The king replied by calling a French parliament of the three estates, the nobility, clergy and representatives of the cities, which set aside the papal summons to the council, complained of the appointment of foreigners to French livings, and asserted the crown's independence of the Church. Five hundred years later a similar representative body of the three estates was to rise against French royalty and decide for the abolition of monarchy. In a letter to the pope, Philip addressed him as "your infatuated Majesty," and declined all submission to any one on earth in temporal matters.

The council called by the pope convened in Rome the last day of October, 1302, and included 4 archbishops, 35 bishops, and 6 abbots from France. It issued two bulls. The first pronounced the ban on all who detained prelates going to Rome or returning from the city. The second is one of the most notable of all papal documents, the bull *Unam sanctam*, the name given to it from its first words, "We are forced to believe in one holy Catholic Church." It marks an epoch in the history of the declarations of the papacy, not because it contained anything novel, but because it set forth with unchanged clearness the stiffest claims of the papacy to temporal and spiritual power. It begins with the assertion that there is only one true Church, outside of which there is no salvation. The pope is the vicar of Christ, and whoever refuses to be ruled by Peter belongs not to the fold of Christ. Both swords are subject to the Church, the spiritual and the temporal. The temporal sword is to be wielded *for* the Church, the spiritual *by* it. The secular estate may be judged by the spiritual estate, but the spiritual estate by no human tribunal. The document closes with the startling declaration that for every human being the condition of salvation is obedience to the Roman pontiff.

There was no assertion of authority contained in this bull which had not been before made by Gregory VII and his successors, and the document leans back not only upon the deliverances of popes, but upon the definitions of theologians like Hugo de St. Victor, Bernard and Thomas Aquinas. But in the *Unam sanctam* the arrogance of the papacy finds its most naked and irritating expression.

One of the clauses pronounces all offering resistance to the pope's authority Manichaens. Thus Philip was made a heretic. Six months later the pope sent a cardinal legate, John le Moine of Amiens, to announce to the king his excommunication for preventing French bishops from going to Rome. The bearer of the message was imprisoned and the legate fled. Boniface now called upon the German emperor,

Albrecht, to take Philip's throne, as Innocent III had called upon the French king to take John's crown of Frederick II. Albrecht had wisdom enough to decline the empty gift. Philip's seizure of the papal bulls before they could be promulgated in France was met by Boniface's announcement that the posting of a bull on the church doors of Rome was sufficient to give it force.

The French parliament, June, 1303, passed from the negative attitude of defending the king and French rights to an attack upon Boniface and his right to the papal throne. In 20 articles it accused him of simony, sorcery, immoral intercourse with his niece, having a demon in his chambers, the murder of Coelestine, and other crimes. It appealed to a general council, before which the pope was summoned to appear in person. Five archbishops and 21 bishops joined in subscribing to this document. The university and chapter of Paris, convents, cities, and towns placed themselves on the king's side.

One more step the pope was about to take when a sudden stop was put to his career. He had set the eighth day of September as the time when he would publicly, in the church of Anagni, and with all the solemnities known to the Church, pronounce the ban upon the disobedient king and release his subjects from allegiance. In the same edifice Alexander III had excommunicated Barbarossa, and Gregory IX, Frederick II. The bull already had the papal signature, when, as by a storm bursting from a clear sky, the pope's plans were shattered and his career brought to an end.

During the two centuries and a half since Hildebrand had entered the city of Rome with Leo IX, popes had been imprisoned by emperors, been banished from Rome by its citizens, had fled for refuge and died in exile, but upon no one of them had a calamity fallen quite so humiliating and complete as the calamity which now befell Boniface. A plot, formed in France to checkmate the pope and to carry him off to a council at Lyons, burst Sept. 7 upon the peaceful population of Anagni, the pope's country seat. William of Nogaret, professor of law at Montpellier and councillor of the king, was the manager of the plot and was probably its inventor. According to the chronicler, Villani, Nogaret's parents were Cathari, and suffered for heresy in the flames in Southern France. He stood as a representative of a new class of men, laymen, who were able to compete in culture with the best-trained ecclesiastics, and advocated the independence of the state. With him was joined Sciarra Colonna, who, with other members of his family, had found refuge in France, and was thirsting for revenge for their proscription by the pope. With a small body of mercenaries, 300 of them on horse, they suddenly appeared in Anagni. The barons of the Latium, embittered by the rise of the Gaetani family upon their losses, joined with the conspirators, as also did the people of Anagni. The palaces of two of Boniface's nephews and several of the cardinals were stormed and seized by Sciarra Colonna, who then offered the pope life on the three conditions that the Colonna be restored, Boniface resign, and that he place him-

self in the hands of the conspirators. The conditions were rejected, and after a delay of three hours, the work of assault and destruction was renewed. The palaces one after another yielded, and the papal residence itself was taken and entered. The supreme pontiff, according to the description of Villani, received the besiegers in high pontifical robes, seated on a throne, with a crown on his head and a crucifix and the keys in his hand. He proudly rebuked the intruders, and declared his readiness to die for Christ and his Church. To the demand that he resign the papal office, he replied, "Never: I am Pope and as pope I will die." Sciarra was about to kill him, when he was intercepted by Nogaret's arm. The palaces were looted and the cathedral burnt, and its relics, if not destroyed, went to swell the booty. One of the relics, a vase said to have contained milk from Mary's breasts, was turned over and broken. The pope and his nephews were held in confinement for three days, the captors being undecided whether to carry Boniface away to Lyons, set him at liberty, or put him to death. Such was the humiliating counterpart to the proud display made at the pope's coronation nine years before!

In the meantime the feelings of the Anagnese underwent a change. The adherents of the Gaetani family rallied their forces and, combining together, they rescued Boniface and drove out the conspirators. Seated at the head of his palace stairway, the pontiff thanked God and the people for his deliverance. "Yesterday," he said, "I was like Job, poor and without a friend. Today I have abundance of bread, wine, and water." A rescuing party from Rome conducted the unfortunate pope to the Holy City, where he was no longer his own master. A month later, Oct. 11, 1303, his earthly career closed. Outside the death-chamber, the streets of the city were filled with riot and tumult, and the Gaetani and Colonna were encamped, in battle array against each other in the Campagna.

Reports agree that Boniface's death was a most pitiable one. He died of melancholy and despair, and perhaps actually insane. He refused food, and beat his head against the wall. "He was out of his head," wrote Ptolemy of Lucca, and believed that every one who approached him was seeking to put him in prison.

Human sympathy goes out for the aged man of fourscore years and more, dying in loneliness and despair. But judgment comes sooner or later upon individuals and institutions for their mistakes and offences. And history's judgment upon this pope is not favorable. H.V.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Tena Bruinsma and family in the loss of her mother,

MRS. JERRY LENTING

May the God of all grace comfort and sustain the bereaved in their great sorrow.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, President  
Mrs. S. Vroegh, Secretary

## 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

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

#### Article 7 (continued)

3) In the third place, the Arminians take a very definite position as to the efficacy of this moral grace. It is indeed essential to understand this. This is stated as follows in this article: "and that the efficacy of the divine working, whereby it surpasses the working of Satan, consists in this, that God promises eternal, while Satan promises only temporal goods." Here again, of course, there is an element of truth in the Arminian presentation, which makes it all the more deceptive. The element of truth is that God promises eternal goods while Satan promises only temporal goods. This is certainly Scriptural. The Bible teaches us everywhere that it exactly belongs to the hope of the children of God that it reaches beyond this present time and this present world, over the chasm of death, unto eternal life. And it also certainly teaches us that it is exactly this that distinguishes the hope of the people of God from any carnal hope of the world; and we also understand, of course, that this resurrection-object of the Christian faith and hope appeals very strongly to the child of God and is calculated to spur him on in a life of conversion. Thus, for example, Scripture often draws a direct contrast between the temporal goods and the eternal goods mentioned in this article. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." I John 2:15-17. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26. And again: "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had

opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11:14-16. Of Abraham too it is said that by faith "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10. In Heb. 13:13, 14 we are admonished: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." In a similar vein we read in II Cor. 4:17, 18: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Thus also the Lord Jesus Himself says: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:26. There can be no doubt about it, therefore, that the gospel of grace exactly appeals to the faith and longing of the people of God by setting forth the promise of the eternal things as over against the temporal. And to this extent it is also true that the divine working surpasses the working of Satan in this respect. All that Satan has to offer a man is incomparably poor, not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. No, about this we have no quarrel with the Arminian. But when the Arminian insists that this is the efficacy of the divine working, then indeed we differ radically. If this were true, then not a single individual would ever lay hold upon that rich promise of eternal goods; everyone would prefer what Satan promises. If this were true, then the promise of God and the promise of Satan are of equal power; they only differ in contents. If this were true, then after all the promise is but an offer, not a sure word, and its efficacy is after all nothing. For such a promise to be effective it is necessary that man take hold of it and accept it. This Arminian presentation simply means that all the so-called "efficacy of the divine working" is in man, is the efficacy of a human operation, not of a divine one.

4) And finally, we can now understand quite readily the remaining element of the Arminian position in this article. The Arminian claims that this moral manner of working is "the noblest manner of working in the conversion of man, is most in harmony with man's nature, and that there is no reason why this moral grace alone should not be sufficient to make the natural man spiritual." It is the Arminian claim that if the grace of conversion is as the Reformed confession teaches, then the work of grace violates man's rational, moral, responsible nature, and makes of the moral, rational creature a stock and block. But if, according to the Arminian, grace is moral in its operation, and consists in moral suasion, then this difficulty in harmonizing God's grace and man's nature is overcome. And the Arminian maintains that there is no reason why such a moral grace should not be sufficient to

accomplish the change of conversion, the change from a natural to a spiritual man. The premise upon which this Arminian doctrine is based is found, of course, in the Arminian doctrine of the creation and fall of man. Granted that the spiritual gifts do not belong to the will as such, granted that these gifts are not separated from the will of man in spiritual death, granted that the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, and granted that in the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will, — then it must also be granted that such a moral grace and suasion would be quite sufficient to change a natural man into a spiritual one. But notice: 1) That this reduces the change from a natural man to a spiritual to a mere relative change and denies the absolute and radical character of conversion. 2) This implies that both the will to be converted and the ability to convert one's self lie within the power of the natural man. He still has, according to the Arminian, a will that can successfully be appealed to by God by promising to him eternal goods over against Satan's goods, which are temporal.

Such is the Arminian position set forth in this article.

And the fathers condemn this position.

Let it be noted, first of all, that in their condemnation they do not deny, but affirm, that the grace of the Holy Spirit in the work of conversion partakes of the nature of advising or suasion, is a moral grace. If we do not remember this, we lay ourselves open to the Arminian charge that in the Reformed view man is nothing but a stock and block. God certainly does not violate the nature of the very man which He created in any of His dealings with man. In the work of conversion God deals with man as a moral, rational creature. Conversion does not take place apart from and outside of the will of man, but in the will. It is conversion of the heart and mind and will. And therefore in conversion God renders the evil, disobedient, and refractory will of the natural man good, obedient, and pliable. III, IV, A, 11. And in consequence of this work of God, the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but becomes itself active. III, IV, A, 12. As a result, we hear the "gentle advising" of the Holy Ghost, we see the folly of our sin and the vanity of the things temporal which Satan "promises," and we turn from the way of sin, from our evil way, we repent, we seek forgiveness, we believe. All this the Reformed faith does not deny at all. Nor is it true that according to Reformed doctrine the above is true only with regard to the outward proclamation of the gospel by a human preacher. The article speaks of the *grace* of conversion, of the manner of the Holy Spirit's working, and of what God promises. And while it is true that in this respect the work of conversion takes place through the means of the Word preached, that Word preached is not the word of man, but the Word of God Himself! God Himself earnestly advises and urges the sinner to turn from his evil way. And in the

case of the *elect* sinner God does this *graciously and well-meaningly*.

But the fathers insist that if this moral aspect of the grace of conversion is posited as the *only* aspect and as setting forth the fundamental spiritual character of the grace of conversion, then you become guilty of Pelagianism. And let us understand that this is not simply a bit of name-calling. The idea here is that the church in dealing with heresy does not have to begin anew in laying down the principles of the truth every time another heresy arises. The church is one in all ages. The church as it exists today does not have to develop the truth anew, but has received a heritage of the truth from the church as it existed yesterday. And therefore the church may not act as though the truth has never been developed and expressed in the past. Hence, if it becomes evident that a certain heresy which arises today is nothing but the same heresy of Pelagius of yesterday, only by a different name, the church does not re-investigate the truth in order to determine whether Pelagius was right or wrong. No, it simply labels that heresy of today by its right name, and condemns it on the very ground that it is Pelagian. Thus the fathers dealt with Arminianism.

The question was whether those earnest urgings and advisings to repent and be converted are enough. Whoever maintains that, — as the Arminians did, — maintains that the natural man is *able* to convert himself, if only he *will*, and that in his will lies the ability to choose and turn to the good, if only his understanding is enlightened and convinced of the necessity of conversion. And that is nothing but the Pelagianism condemned by the church long centuries before.

And it is here that the fathers, in the second place, see the fundamental divergence between the Reformed truth and Pelagianism. The Holy Scripture teaches "another and far more powerful and divine manner of working," an operation which is prerequisite to this moral grace. The heart must be changed first; and only when the heart itself, and with it the mind and will, has been changed can this gentle suasion and moral grace of the Holy Spirit possibly bear any fruit unto conversion. Here is where the Arminian and the Reformed doctrines part ways. The Arminian says with Pelagius: Convince the natural man of the necessity of conversion, of the wisdom of it, of the great benefit resulting from it, and that man can by his own will turn and be saved. The Reformed faith says: But it is exactly impossible to convince the natural, unconverted man of his sin, because he is dead in trespasses and sins; he is both unable and unwilling to be converted, yea, he is at enmity against the living God. Before he can ever be convicted of sin, before he can see spiritual things, before he can ever actively turn from his evil way, he must be turned in the depths of his being, and his heart must be changed. And this is only possible through a work which God works in us without us. This position they prove by an appeal to the text from Ezekiel cited in the article.

H.C.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Credentials

In the previous issue we presented various credential forms and offered a few suggestions toward making the one presently in use more complete and, therefore, better. We also pointed out the idea of the credential letter in that it is an official authorization given to certain individuals to represent their consistories or classes at the major ecclesiastical gatherings.

This matter, treated in Article 33 of our Church Order, like many of the articles of that document, also has a history. The practice of using credentials dates back to the first regular Synod of the Reformed Churches of Holland held in Emden in 1571. Circumstances at that time, perhaps much more than today, made the necessity of proper credentials more keenly felt. For one thing the churches were not as close to each other in the sense that there were no modern means of conveyance. Travel was not common then as it is now and the representatives of different churches that were some distance apart did not always know each other. Credentials, issued by the churches, served the purpose of making proper identification and this was sometimes extremely important.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that these were the immediate post-reformation days. The churches had gone through a long period of struggle. The days of persecution had to some extent broken off contact between the churches in different places. Besides this, it was not uncommon that enemies of the church would attempt to seat themselves in the assemblies for the purpose of doing damage to the cause of the truth. These fraudulent imposters must be barred and this could be accomplished through the issuance of proper credentials. Those who lacked them simply could not be seated in the assembly.

Now, today these things have changed but this does not obliterate the need of credentials nor does it make them any less significant. No one may be seated in the ecclesiastical assembly without proper attestation. Only those who are able to furnish official authorization in writing may be accepted. It would be wrong to constitute an assembly on the mere basis of individual's claims to be delegates. Great havoc could be wrought that way! The business of the church is Christ's business or rather Christ's business is the church's business and, therefore, only those authorized or appointed by Christ Himself through the offices of His church have the right to transact that labor.

What then constitutes a proper credential?

Article 33 stipulates the requirement: They shall be "*signed by those sending them.*" This does not mean that the delegates themselves fill out the credential form at the very time and place of the meeting to which they are supposedly

then delegated. Even if the delegation from a certain consistory happens to be the president and the clerk of that consistory, a credential issued in this manner is not legal. It is a fraud and constitutes an ethical violation of the principles underlying the orderly processes of delegation. These things, too, belong to the sacred things of God and may not be trifled with and when they are the punitive finger of God points toward those who do so!

A consistorial credential is one that is properly issued by motion at a legally held meeting of the consistory and record thereof inscribed into the minutes. At the same time such action takes place the proper form is filled out by the clerk and signed by the designated officers in the presence of the entire consistory.

Years ago, when the relationship between church and state in our fatherland was very close, it would sometimes happen that the town or city officials would sign the credentials of ecclesiastical delegates. This was, of course, wrong. Our fathers, fearing State domination, objected to this practice and, consequently, insisted upon the insertion of the phrase, "*signed by those sending them.*" In this they were wholly correct. Now *The Church Order Commentary* states, "For us today it merely means that no letter of delegation is valid except it be properly signed." On the surface this may appear to be true but it is not. Certainly no document has official status and, therefore, cannot be regarded as valid without a signature. However, there is more. It is not *merely* a question of signature but rather a question of *how the signature got there!* If the civil magistrates or anyone else for that matter who has no authority to do so puts it there, it is not valid. That is obvious transgression. However, it is just as wrong if the proper individuals affix the signature apart from the proper processing by the body they represent. That's why the credential form also contains the clause: "*Done in Consistory . . . date!*" When then this is done by the consistory on a certain date and the form is processed by individuals (not the consistory) on another date, this gives the lie to the whole thing. If the thing was really done in Consistory why wasn't the form then also filled out?

As far as the ecclesiastical assembly is concerned, such a document may be perfectly valid. It bears the proper signatures. There is no visible evidence of tampering. Classis accepts the testimony of the hastily and improperly filled out credential form and seats the delegates designated thereon. She can do nothing else. Before the eyes of the Lord, however, Who commands that all things in His church be done *decently and in good order*, the thing is entirely wrong.

Those who are properly delegated and able to present their valid letters of credential are authorized to, firstly, bring instructions to the broader assembly and, secondly, to vote in all matters except such as particularly concern their persons or churches. We may note here that the term "*instructions*" in this connection has a twofold connotation. It refers

on the one hand to the charge or instruction the sending body gives to its delegates as these are found on the credential letter. Briefly stated, each delegate is instructed to take part in all matters legally coming before the meeting and transacted in harmony with the Word of God, the doctrinal Standards and the Church Order. By this instruction each delegate must abide. He carries it with him. Only by adhering to it is he a faithful representative of the church sending him.

The term "*instruction*" may also denote those matters which the sending body itself brings to the broader assembly through its representatives. These may be in the form of overtures, protests, appeals or questions and should always be in writing and attached to the credential letter. And, of course, they too must bear the proper and official signatures of the body sending them.

In the treatment of all these matters, the delegates have the right to vote. Rather important is the question as to whether or not the body that sends delegates also instructs them as to how they are to vote on various matters that come up for deliberation and decision. Does a consistory tell its delegates to Classis how they are to vote or are the delegates free to vote as they see fit?

This question, as we see it, is debatable. Some things may be cited in favor of both positions. For example, in favor of the position that delegates are bound to vote in agreement with the desires of their own consistory is, first of all, the fact that they represent that consistory and, therefore, must speak and vote in agreement with the consistory's position for otherwise they are not true representatives. Who will represent the consistory if their own delegates do not? Moreover, in the second place, an agendum is prepared by the stated clerk of the major assembly and sent in advance to all the consistories so that they may have opportunity for previous deliberation. What is the intent of this if not that consistories come to settled convictions regarding the matters to be treated and instruct their delegates to vote according to those convictions at the gathering?

On the other side of the question, however, there is also strong argument. First of all, if it were true that the delegates are bound in their voting by the instructions of their consistories, there would be no sense to hold Classical and Synodical meetings. It would only be a waste of time and money to deliberate, debate and weigh various arguments concerning the issues involved if the vote of each delegate is pre-determined by the consistory. The same end could then be gained by having each consistory register its vote via mail. We believe, secondly, that our ecclesiastical bodies are and should remain deliberative bodies. Free and open discussion should be encouraged. This in turn opens the way to convincing one another where differences of opinion may exist so that unity of conviction may be attained in the assembly and throughout the churches. And this unity can only be expressed where the freedom of vote on all issues is retained.

Now perhaps it might happen that a delegate, knowing the mind of his consistory, and even agreeing with that mind, is convinced through the discussion in the broader gathering that he should vote the very opposite way from which he first contemplated. Our view is that he should then do so but the matter does not rest there. He in turn should also, in reporting back to his consistory, attempt to convince them that in view of added information, etc. his vote as he recorded it was proper. If he succeeds, very well! If not, the consistory is free to register a protest or appeal the decision at the next meeting. This is the preferred position since it makes possible free discussion, retains the deliberative character of the assemblies and enables the individual delegate to do justice by acting harmonious with conviction.

The *Church Order Commentary* agrees substantially with this but adds a few other significant elements. We quote:

"The instructions to delegates should, as a rule, always be general. To illustrate, no Consistory should endeavor to instruct its delegates to Classis how to vote on a particular issue. Each delegate must use his own best judgment, and then vote as his conscience before God bids him vote. Abstractly and inherently the Churches would have a right to give their delegates a definite mandate, telling them how to vote. But the true welfare of the churches requires that all delegates have their hands free and unbound. For our assemblies are not merely meetings at which the votes of the various churches are recorded. But they are gatherings at which the problems and the affairs of the churches are mutually considered and decided upon. Our gatherings are and should remain deliberative assemblies. And our delegates should not be reduced to the role of voting machines. It is a very good practice for the sending bodies to consider the major issues that will require action at the assemblies to be held. That promotes general interest and counteracts hurtful ignorance. And that will help those that go as delegates to the major gatherings to know the mind of their brethren at home. But the delegates should not be bound. After a good discussion at the major assembly they may feel compelled to vote exactly opposite from their first contemplations.

Only when circumstances are very extraordinary, as when a sending body knows all the issues involved in a specific case, would it be justified to instruct its delegates how to vote. So, for example, at the great Synod of Dordt, 1618-19, some Particular Synods had instructed their delegates previously to vote so as to maintain the purity of doctrine, i.e., against the Arminians. Or as Jansen states, "sending bodies can only give definite instruction as to how delegates should vote regarding matters which are clearly expressed in Holy Writ, and concerning which therefore further deliberation is unnecessary, and change of opinion out of place" (pp. 151, 152).

The next time, D.V., we will consider the exception to this right of voting.

G.V.D.B.



## ALL AROUND US

### *Unconditional Election*

Recently a friend and brother, of one of our churches, was instrumental in having sent to me several copies of a monthly paper called "New Testament Baptist Witness," published in Cincinnati, Ohio, and edited by the pastor of the New Testament Baptist Church of that city, Lasserre Bradley, Jr. Along with the copies above referred to I received also a booklet containing five messages on The Doctrines of Grace. These messages in substance were delivered by the pastor first in his church and then over the radio on a program called the Baptist Bible Hour which at the time they were delivered was carried by seven radio stations. We wish to thank the brother for having this material sent to us. It was much appreciated.

We are not sure whether the pastor Bradley is a hard shell or thin shell or whatever shell Baptist he may be, but if the material we read coming from his hand is a sample of what he preaches, I could very easily find myself at home in his audience. We gather from what the pastor writes that it has been only a few years ago that he was converted from rank Arminianism, and that he now embraces all the doctrines of God's Sovereign Grace.

Referring to the booklet above mentioned which contains five messages on The Doctrines of Grace, he treats of the Five Points of Calvinism in their order. All of these messages are true to the Word of God. We purpose in this writing to give our readers a sample of what Bradley writes on the subject of Unconditional Election. We may not be able in our allotted space to quote all he writes on the subject, but here follows as much as we can quote.

"As we continue our messages on the doctrines of grace, we speak today on 'Unconditional Election.' Our text is I Thessalonians 1:4, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.' Let us then at the very beginning be convinced that election is of God. Realizing this to be true, each one listening to this message should give their most diligent attention to the passages we shall read from God's Word. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit may open men's hearts and teach them that election is of God. And surely the only way anyone can ever know this, being truly convinced in their heart, is for the Spirit to reveal it to them."

Pastor Bradley then quotes from the Philadelphia Confessions of Faith on the subject of election which I will not quote here. He then proceeds as follows:

#### ELECTION DEFINED

"First we must explain what is meant by election. And in brief we shall say, *election is a sovereign act of God whereby He chooses certain individuals, from the fallen race, to*

*eternal life for the glory of His name.* Let it be remembered that the whole human race is condemned, having not the ability to remedy their awful condition. All mankind sinned in Adam, and fell in Adam; and, so are now dead in trespasses and sins. If salvation were then dependent upon man's ability to choose God, or to become righteous before Him; then none would ever be saved.

"God would be just to cast every member of the human family into hell, for each one is but a rebel against God. Man left to himself would choose nothing but sin, bringing eternal judgment upon himself. So it is only because of the choice of God that any shall be saved. One of the clearest definitions of the doctrine of election is found in the first chapter of Ephesians. We begin reading with the third verse, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy without blame before him in love.'

"Notice it says, 'he hath chosen us'; it was His choice, not ours. This choice was made before the foundation of the world and so it could not possibly be founded on anything in us. And note too, that He hath chosen us 'in Christ.' All the spiritual blessings we have are in Christ. We are chosen in Christ, loved in Christ; in Christ we have righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and 'the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' *You cannot separate the doctrine of election from the person of Christ.* In fact the more we understand of election, the more we will come to appreciate the glories of Christ's person and desire His intimate fellowship.

"Verse five continues, 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.' How were we predestinated? Was it according to man's free will? No, many wish it said that, but it plainly declares it was according to 'His will.' 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' You often hear people speak of, 'accepting Christ.' But if we are to use Scriptural language, we must say we are 'accepted in Christ.' You see the choice is not ours, we would never choose Christ—for our hearts being evil, we would flee from the light rather than come to it.

"Yes, God accepted the elect in Christ; and they, and no more shall be saved. The question is then immediately raised, 'Why does God choose some, and pass others by leaving them to perish in their sin.' And to this we must give the answer of our Lord Himself, '. . . Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.' Shall we bring into question the sovereign rights of our Holy God? Can any charge that the

God of glory does not do right? No, my friends, let us fall prostrate before Him, and with great awe and wonder repeat that marvellous phrase, 'Even so, Father . . . it seemed good in thy sight.'

*"The end of this choice is to make a people like Christ for the praise of His name. He ' . . . hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.' The language again points to the fact that salvation is of the Lord, 'He raised us;' we didn't raise ourselves. And to the reason for all this — why, He shall show the exceeding riches of His grace. Yes, when the many sons are brought unto glory, and all those who were predestinated have been conformed to the image of Christ; surely then His name shall be greatly magnified, for all that blood washed through shall fall before His throne singing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' and no doubt even the angels will stand amazed at what God has done for those who were by nature children of wrath.*

*"By unconditional election, we mean that the choice of God was not conditioned on anything within man. Since man was utterly sinful, there was nothing in him to attract the favor of God. Then too, the Scriptures plainly declare that this choice is not by the will of man. John 1:13 says, 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' To say that election is conditioned on the foreseen faith of man, or any other act of his will would deny this plain passage as well as the rest of God's Word. Again we can say that election must be unconditional, for salvation is by grace; and, so could not be founded on anything in man for then it would be by works.*

#### ELECTION TAUGHT

"Next, we shall examine a number of passages dealing with this subject to see how election is taught in the Bible. Time will permit us to make only brief comments."

The reader will forgive me for not quoting all that pastor Bradley writes under this heading for our space is too limited to quote all the texts he quotes with his comments. Let me just enumerate the texts and then pick two or three on which he makes some striking comments. The texts are the following: Nehemiah 9:7; Matthew 20:16; John 6:37, 44, 65; John 15:16, 10; John 17:2, 6, 9; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28, 29, 30; Romans 9:11-16; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 1:9.

Here is what Bradley writes on John 6:37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Often times the last part of that verse is quoted like the first part was not there. It is true that he who comes will not be cast out, but who comes? Those who come are the ones given to the Son by the Father, they are the elect of God. You see the Father chose a people; Christ entered into the covenant of grace promising to die

for those people; and the Spirit pledged Himself to apply salvation to their hearts. Ah, how good to know that every one given to the Son shall come to Him, and if the desire to come is within your heart you know you will not be cast out, for the desire itself is the gift of God."

Concerning Acts 13:48 Bradley writes: "Coming now to Acts 13:48 we read, ' . . . and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' They did not believe in order to be ordained to eternal life, but they believed because they were ordained to it. In our preaching we urge men to believe on Christ, but none will ever believe except those who were ordained to life; for it is only unto them that the graces of repentance and faith are granted. Let it ever be remembered that our believing is not the cause of God's choice but the evidence of it."

Pastor Bradley concludes this section of his message with the following two paragraphs:

"Surely you can see from these many Scriptures that unconditional election is taught in the Bible. Once the Spirit opens your heart to this truth, you will be able to see that it is taught from Genesis through Revelation. And though this doctrine strikes the death blow at the pride which is in men, and thus often is resented by them; we believe it to be a most glorious and comforting truth. I wouldn't waste five minutes arguing about this doctrine or any other teaching of God's Word, but often there are those who have sincere questions. I couldn't deal with every question in this broadcast, but it might be profitable to consider a few.

"One question which is asked frequently is, 'Doesn't man have a choice?' To this we answer, man had a choice in the garden of Eden; but in Adam he chose sin and so lost his ability to choose good. Many times people will attempt to refute this doctrine by saying, 'I believe that whosoever will may come.' And it is true that the thirsty may drink of the living water, the hungry may eat of the bread of life, the weary may come and rest, the willing may come and be received; but, the thirst for the water, the hunger for the bread, the desire for the rest, and the willingness to come are all given by the Lord and are given only to His elect."

In the last section of his message Bradley speaks of the profitableness of election. The two main thoughts he expresses under this aspect of his subject are: "First, we can say it is profitable because it gives us the only proper view of God. You cannot truly worship God unless you believe He is sovereign.

"Secondly, we know the preaching of election is profitable because it puts man in the dust. You can't go to seed on preaching this truth because you can't exalt God too much and you can't put man low enough. We are made to see our own corruption, and come to realize that anything we get better than Hell must be by sovereign grace."

And I would add to this "and all the people said Amen!"

M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### CALVINISM — THE TRUTH

(Arminianism the Lie)

As Based on the Canons of Dordt, Popularly known as the Five Points of Calvinism.

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

*Limited Atonement*

(Continued)

So with the word "any." Cf. II Pe. 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (which is never made to the reprobate), as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." God is longsuffering to *us* (His elect); and is not willing that *any of us* should perish. Who are the "any"? the "us"? According to the context, the "beloved" of v. 1, the "beloved" of v. 8. He is not willing that any of His beloved should perish. Therefore He is longsuffering over *them*. But take "any" in the unqualified, absolute sense, and the text is made to contradict other Scripture, where, for example, it says that God is "*willing* to show His wrath" upon the "vessels of wrath," and cause them under that wrath to end in "destruction" (Rom. 9:22). However, it is different with His "beloved." They shall never perish. As to the word "world": did Christ die for the whole world of men without exception? No, but for the world of "whosoever believeth" (Jn. 3:16); the world which has its sin actually and really "taken away" (1:29). The Lamb loves that world; He takes *away* its sin. But of the wicked it is said, "your sin *remaineth*" (9:41). The intercession of Christ is not for the whole world of mankind, but only for those the Father gave Him (Jn. 17:9). But if He died for absolutely the whole world, why does He not pray for it? The truth of the matter is that there is an elect world, a world with its sin removed (Jn. 1:29), and a "world of the ungodly" (II Pe. 2:5). Teach, however, that Christ died for all the sins of all men, and the following results: God demands the penalty for sin twice! — once at the hands of His Son who paid it all, and again at the hands of those for whom He died (now in hell, themselves paying that already cancelled debt!). But Christ lays down His life exclusively for the *sheep*. To the rest He says, "Ye are *not* of My sheep" (Jn. 10:15, 26). He does not lay down His life for *them*. Nor will it do to say that God originally *intended* to save all. For from the beginning it was not so: Gn. 3:15. At the first, God put enmity between the children of God and the children of the devil. From the first, the cross divided all men into these two companies. Clearly, the cross was never intended to save that serpent's brood. For the cross sovereignly puts (ordains) enmity against the serpent's seed. And tho temporal gifts flow from the cross, they are not a blessing, but a curse to that reprobate seed. The gospel itself

must be to them a curse (II Co. 2:15f). From this it should be plain that God does not love all without exception. Did God love Pharaoh (Ro. 9:17)? Did He love the Amalekites (Ex. 17:14ff)? Did He love the Canaanites (Dt. 20:16)? the Ammonites and Moabites (23:3)? Does He love the workers of iniquity (Ps. 5:5)? Does He love the vessels of wrath (Ro. 9:22)? Did He love Esau (Ro. 9:13)? What is the central purpose of the Cross? To "save *His people* (and them only) from their sins."

*Irresistible Grace*

6. ARMINIANISM insists that man can and does often resist Divine grace (Ac. 7:51); that the gospel does not present impossibilities to the sinner, but where God commands, there man is able to obey. For the Lord gives every sinner the *ability* to believe, then expects the sinner by his free will to exercise faith, and consent to the terms of salvation. Sinners can therefore accept or reject the offer of grace at their pleasure. For God does His part for man's salvation; in fact God has done all He can for man without destroying his free agency. So that God in His great efforts to save man is displeased with Himself and the results He finally obtains. He sets his heart on the sinner to deliver him, and, as it were, labors till the going down of the sun to deliver him (Dn. 6:14). Why He is not always successful in accomplishing that deliverance is because He has created man with a will sovereign in its own right: "wherefore say My people, 'We are lords (sovereigns); we will come no more unto Thee'" (Jer. 2:31). For this reason God's counsel can be annulled and rendered ineffectual by the perverse wills of impenitent sinners: "I have called and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of My reproof" (Pro. 1:24, 25). The unavoidable inference is that it remains in man's power to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted. And since man has such power to choose or refuse, it may very well happen that all the works of grace which God uses to convert man may be so opposed, the Holy Spirit so resisted that this salvation is prevented, tho it was originally possible.

CALVINISM rejoices in the truth that saving grace is irresistible. God does not save any against their will, it is true. But man's will is always subservient to God's sovereign will. God is always Almighty God! Therefore they who did resist the Spirit, did *not* resist the Spirit in *them*, for they were devoid of the Spirit. But that resistance is to the Spirit in the prophets, and in the ministers of the Lord; also to the external calls and reproofs thru the preaching of the Word. But when the Spirit is in men in His grace of conversion, and acts with a will to convert, He thus makes them willing, and turns them forever to Himself. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3). So that not by free will (Jn. 1:12, 13; Ro. 9:16; Zech. 4:6) are we saved, but by God's irresistible power (Eph. 1:19), which works in us a new heart, removes hardness (and unwilling-

ness), and inscribes God's law in our heart (Ezek. 36:26, 27). The dead sinner does not open his heart to Christ and let Him come in to save. That is an idea prominent in Arminian hymnology, but is nowhere in Scripture. Christ first opens the heart (Ac. 16:4), and then the heart receives Him. Man, of himself, has not the ability to come to Jesus, will not come, and cannot will to come until the Father draw him (Jn. 6:44). God giving that new heart *causes* the renewed sinner to walk in His ways. Else how can a heart of stone open to Christ? How can a heart that is enmity against God be willing for Him to improve it? But, assume that the power of God's saving grace can be resisted, and God must be supposed to will that all men be saved, yet nevertheless it must finally be, not as He wills, but as *they* will! However, the truth remains that grace saves those who are "the called according to *His* purpose" — saves with an almighty power — for they *must* be saved with an everlasting salvation!

#### *Perseverance of Saints*

7. ARMINIANISM wrests Scripture to teach that it is "possible for the true believer to fall from the grace of salvation (Ga. 5:4); and that each believer is provided with sufficient ability to persevere and preserve himself, if only he will: 'And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life' (Jn. 5:40). It all depends on the choice of man's will, whether he will persevere or not. From this it follows that not only can believers fatally and finally fall, sin unto death, and be eternally lost, but, indeed, may often fall, be often recovered, yet be in the end lost to God. ('Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God', Heb. 3:11). There is, then, no such thing in this life as certainty of eternal security, nor assurance of perseverance. ('Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?' . . . 'And began every one of them to say unto Him, Is it I, Lord?' — Jn. 6:70; Mt. 26:22)."

CALVINISM is strong in the Divine Word that no true believer can ever fall from Christ and salvation. For He promises, "I give unto them (the sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (Jn. 10:28f). This promise is made unconditionally to God's people. It is not qualified with any additions of "ifs," "buts," "perhaps," "maybes," etc., but is to be understood in its plain, unencumbered, unequivocal sense. God's covenant is equally sure, In that covenant He swears that He will never leave His people, and will so keep them that they shall never forsake Him: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me" (Jer. 32:40). So our salvation, and our remaining in that salvation in no way depends on us, or upon our feeble will. Yet we are confident of this very thing (not of our doing, but) that He who hath begun a good work in us will perform and perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ

(Phil. 1:6). We trust not in our own strength (we have none!), but in His power to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before Him! And when the elect do fall, the Lord raises them up (Pro. 24:16). So that, *He* is faithful, who will not suffer us to perish, but will establish us, and *keep* from evil (II Th. 3:3). Of this the believer may be certain, and have the assurance of faith now and forever. "The righteous shall hold on his way," and as God has promised, he shall never depart from that way; but rather he shall become "stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). The believer *remains* a believer; he *does* persevere to the end, not by human effort, but by the power of God; which power is exerted on his behalf not for any worthiness in him, but for the sake of the Lamb who alone is worthy! He, meanwhile and always, belongs unto Jesus, "who shall also confirm you unto the end blameless, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Co. 1:8).

#### *Conclusion*

The truth is never popular. However, we are not concerned with what is popular, but with what is right. The truth of Scripture is one thing. What men would like to be true is another. The question is, Are we willing to bow to the Word of God? no matter what the cost? Too few are willing to be that self-denying. The hatred of the natural mind against God is such that tho a man be shrewd, intelligent and able to see the arguments on both sides, yet he will not admit the fundamental doctrine of absolute sovereign grace to be true. If an angel from heaven were to stand before him, and declare that God redeems both objectively and subjectively only His elect people, and that Christ prays not for the world, but only for those the Father gave Him, such a (natural) man will not, cannot believe it. This whole system of Truth is contrary to the old nature; it is the opposite to what men think to be in agreement with justice and experience. So that the many who hate this doctrine are always ready to oppose it. Therefore also comprehended under the brand of Arminianism are the following evil forms of the same proud heresy, viz., Romanism, Pelagianism, Socinianism,<sup>1</sup> Amyraldianism,<sup>2</sup> Baxterianism<sup>3</sup> and New School Presbyterianism.<sup>4</sup> Calvinists, then, are the most hated people in the universe! We know this from Scripture, reports, history and personal experience.

But this does not change the eternal purpose of God. For "the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Ti. 2:19). Suppose every preacher in the U. S. A., or in the world speaks the very opposite to these points! That means, humanly speaking, we are in a very, very unpopular minority. But, with God and His Truth on our side, or rather we being on His side, are actually on the side of the majority! Finally, it is our calling to preach what God has clearly revealed. We cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.

1. Polish — disguised Modernism, 2. French — camouflaged Arminianism, 3. English — concealed Arminianism, 4. American — masked Arminianism.

## REPORT ON THE EASTERN LADIES' LEAGUE

The Spring meeting of the League of Ladies' Societies was held on the evening of April 24, 1958, in the basement of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The meeting was opened with the singing of number 374 from the Psalter. This number was chosen by the Delegate Board as our theme song. We also sang the Dutch psalm, number 68, verse 10. Our president thereupon led us in prayer and welcomed all the ladies present. The Eunice Society of First Church favored us with a musical number rendered by a ladies' quartet.

Our speaker for the evening was Rev. C. Hanko, who spoke on the subject: "Our Mission Calling as Protestant Reformed Churches." He divided his material into three parts: What is mission work? What is the calling of the church in fulfilling this mission task? And what is our specific calling as Prot. Ref. Churches. In regard to a definition for mission work, he pointed out that there is by no means agreement even in the Reformed church world. There are those who seek to introduce modern culture in the more backward regions of the globe. There are others who seek to establish the kingdom of God in this present world by introducing Christ into politics, economy, business and society. And there are still others who dream of a world wide revival, or saving the whole world for Christ. All these ambitions center mainly in man, are contrary to the plain teachings of the Scriptures, and therefore must also fail. Yet Scripture is very plain on this point, for the Word of God plainly teaches us, that mission work is the work of God, which He carries out in Jesus Christ, through the official ministry of the Word by the Church, whereby Christ gathers unto Himself His elect church from all the nations of the world. Therefore it is the obvious calling of the church to preach the gospel. This is her **sole** calling. Yet, this calling must be carried out in all sincerity. The whole gospel must be proclaimed in all the riches of the fulness of the revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ. And the motive must always be, that God's Word may reach the ends of the earth, in order that God's purpose may be realized in gathering His church, unto the coming of the day of the Lord. From this also follows that we as Protestant Reformed Churches, who are privileged to possess the truth of Scripture, with all emphasis on our sovereign, covenant God, have the unique calling to maintain and propagate that truth through every possible means made available to us by God. In the past we have spread much literature throughout a comparatively wide area, have been able to maintain various broadcasting centers, and have also received much response, as is still the case today. Especially in a day when the Word of God is no more being preached in all its fullness with the emphasis upon God, when the pure milk of the Word is being adulterated with all kinds of pernicious heresies, and when the lines of demarcations between the various denominations are rapidly fading away, we have the calling to hold, maintain and proclaim to the ends of the earth that which God has entrusted to us. That requires a strong home front, a diligent study of the Scriptures in our societies, and an eternal vigilance, in the confidence that faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

Various questions were raised and discussed after the speech. Thereupon we sang number 50 from the Psalter, while our ladies from Fourth Church took up an offering for The Standard Bearer, which amounted to \$82.71. The minutes of the last League meeting and the Delegate Board meeting were read by our secretary, Mrs. J. Kalsbeek. All of our societies were well represented, including even Grand Haven and Kalamazoo, who had a greater distance to come than the rest of us. The secretary of the Priscilla Society of First Church gave a report of the society activities. The Eunice Society quartet sang another number, after which the president thanked all those who helped to give us an inspirational and edifying evening. Our vice president, Mrs. J. VanderWal, closed with thanksgiving after we had sung psalter number 238. Refreshments were served after the meeting.

Mrs. C. Hanko, reporter