

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

*"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." ACTS 8:36-39*

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The above Scripture comes to mind when we peruse the story of the drawing, the guiding and the receiving of the Light of the Ethiopian, the eunuch, who was baptized by Philip.

It is all so beautifully of the Lord. It is not at all of Philip, or of the eunuch.

Philip is one of the newly chosen deacons. But we see the unity of the threefold office: Philip was preaching the Gospel in Samaria. Through persecution because of Stephen he had gone to Samaria to preach and to perform miracles.

And he had done so until Peter and John had come down from Jerusalem to inspect the great work which God had done to these backward people and in this forsaken place: Samaria!

But in the midst of this busy mission field, the Angel of the Lord had come to Philip with a message: Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Is not the way of the Lord inscrutable? Here is a great missionary who is doing a wonderful work among many people; and his work is so wonderful that when the apostles Peter and John see it, they approve of it, and continue to build on it. But Philip is called away from this busy work, and must go to a desert, on the hunt for one solitary man, and he an Ethiopian.

Would any Mission Board so act?

It reminds us of Jesus Himself who went out of His way(?) to draw one woman, and she a Samaritan, and a woman of ill repute. Are not God's ways higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts?

\* \* \* \*

Who is this happy mortal?

Who is this man for whom the very Angel of Jehovah comes and commands one of the foremost preachers unto his help?

He is an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a blackfaced man, a descendant of Ham, the cursed race.

Yes, he was a man of great authority, the treasurer of the Queen.

What business did he have so far removed from his usual habitat?

The Holy Word tells us that he had come down to Jerusalem for to worship. And he was now returning along the way to Gaza in the wilderness.

There is no doubt but God had wrought in his heart the wonderful life of Christ. For he went to Jerusalem for to worship. And . . . he has a copy of the Old Testament in his possession.

And he reads.

And from the text which is quoted we note that the Old Testament in his possession is a copy of the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Oh yes, the first glimmerings of the heavenly life had shined in his inmost heart:

He knows the Jewish nation and their religion.

He was drawn to Jerusalem to worship.

He has the Bible, and . . . he reads it. He has a text, and what a text!

He has a hunger for God in his heart. And God knows it, for He put it there, and will send a missionary to interpret.

There is no doubt about it: here you have a picture of a beautiful subject for missionary work.

\* \* \* \*

What care of God for *one soul*!

The Angel of the Lord is sent by God to earth for the sake of one soul. Do you remember that wonderful text in Deut. 33:26b: “. . . who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky”?

And a busy missionary who is used for the drawing into the flock of “both men and women,” (Acts 8:12b) is rerouted, and must go into the south to be used as an instrument of Almighty God in order to make a “darky” travel his way rejoicing!

And Philip is obedient to the heavenly vision. From the north to the south, from Samaria to the desert road to Gaza. Wasting his time on one negro? A eunuch?

Perish the thought! God never wastes time!

The soul of this negro is precious in His eyes. And it is the time set in His everlasting counsel that this man be fully drawn and placed into the full light.

And if tradition is correct in this instance, this Ethiopian was the firstfruit of a great harvest in Ethiopia!

God always knows perfectly what is right, and when it is the right time for everything.

This was the time for the eunuch to be drawn. Hence: Arise, Philip!

And Philip went.

\* \* \* \*

Arriving at the southern route from Jerusalem Philip beholds the entourage of this Ethiopian, and the same time is prompted by the Spirit of Jesus Christ to go near and to join himself to the chariot. And drawing near he hears a very familiar passage of Scripture. The man is reading out loud.

Philip needs no further prompting, but inquires politely: Understandest thou what thou readest? And he hears the answer of this thrice blessed man: How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

And then Philip hears from him the very place which he was reading. And what a place! It is Isaiah 53:7, and 8:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away and who shall declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.”

And now commences the breaking of the day!

What a beginning for Philip!

And what wonderful order in the work of God’s evangelist!

You must have a text.

Must be a good text: all texts are not fit for our work.

You must make a beginning. And from there you must proceed.

And the whole of it is preaching Jesus.

Now read the Holy Record, and you will find all of that in this story.

God is God of order.

Oh yes, he indeed preached Jesus, the Light of the world.

And have you noted the wonderful fulness of the Gospel?

First: Humiliation! The terrible downward journey of Jesus.

We see Him as a sheep slaughtered and as a lamb shorn: dumb, for it was beautifully just.

Deliverance: for His judgment is taken away by humiliation. He swallowed up death in victory.

Glory: In a great generation that no one can number; and through exaltation from the earth. His life is taken from the earth indeed. His life is the highest revelation of the life of the covenant of Triune God.

It is the full story of the Saviour who wrought our salvation.

It is the only story which we may bring to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Woe to the man or woman who brings aught else. The Holy Ghost will not apply anything else but that which He took from the Word. The Holy Ghost only applies Jesus and all He did and does.

Watch the Ethiopian!

Oh, how he listened with both ears, and with the ears of his heart.

Blessed object of the mission of God, the special mission of God.

\* \* \* \*

Blessed Ethiopian!

As Philip began, and proceeded to preach Jesus Christ, this dark-faced southerner beheld a pool, a river, or a brook: at any rate, he saw water. And in the course of Philip’s ser-

mon he must have come to the doctrine of baptism, that blessed rite of the incorporation into the body of Christ.

And seeing the water, his inmost desire is kindled to be baptized.

"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest!"

And that is divinely correct: the hungry and thirsty are called, and may partake of all the bounties of Christ. Everything is for the believers.

But most important of all: let us note that God worked through. By the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit of Christ this man was brought from the twilight to the full light of day: he hungered and thirsted for righteousness. And his needs must be filled.

Listen to the wonderful confession of this *heathen*! "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!" What marvelous faith! How wondrous are the works of God! It did not take long either. When God works through, we will know it.

Philip recognizes the work of the Spirit, and with this blessed man descends from the chariot and enters the water which providentially is there.

I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit! Ah, the age-tested formula! How wonderful and how blessed to be baptized into the death of Christ, and to come up out of the water and thus partake of the resurrection of the Lord!

They wend their way back to the chariot.

But what is this?

Philip is gone. The same Spirit who gave salvation to the eunuch spirited Philip away to other fields of labor. The Ethiopian needed him no more.

And the man realized it too: He had everything necessary for his further walk of faith: he went on his way rejoicing in the God of his salvation.

Some day I will see this Ethiopian.

In glory. Amen.

G.V.

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

When the Lord the names shall write  
Of thy sons, a countless throng,  
God Most High will thee requite,  
He Himself will make thee strong.  
Then in song and joyful mirth  
Shall thy ransomed sons agree,  
Singing forth throughout the earth,  
"All my fountains are in thee."

Psalm 87:2

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## EDITORIALS

### The Declaration of Principles

The "Declaration" states 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 born in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith."

Is this the teaching of the Confessions?

It certainly is.

Let us, to prove this, first of all, refer to the Canons of Dordrecht which were adopted by the Reformed Churches in 1618-19.

The first chapter of these Canons deals with the subject of divine predestination. It is introduced by an article that speaks of the fact that all men have sinned in Adam and are, therefore, under the curse, so that God might justly have left them all to perish. The second speaks of the love of God in sending His Son into the world "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The third speaks of the preaching and the preachers of the gospel whom God sends to whom and at what time he wills. The fourth emphasizes the truth that, while the wrath of God abides on them that believe not, those that do believe are delivered from the wrath of God and receive the gift of eternal life. The fifth article expresses that, while the cause of unbelief is not in God but in man, faith and salvation are the free gifts of God.

Then, in article 6, the Canons teach that the fact that some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not is rooted in the decree of God. This is a beautiful article and I will, therefore, quote it in its entirety:

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

Notice here:

1. That this article speaks of a discrimination between men by God according to His sovereign decree of election and reprobation.

2. That, according to this decree, God leaves some in

their unbelief while He sovereignly bestows saving faith on others.

3. That, therefore, the promise of God, which includes faith and eternal life, cannot be a gracious offer on the part of God to all men, nor even a conditional offer to all that are born in the church, but that it is an oath of God which He realizes only to the elect. Even here the First Point of 1924 and its interpretation are condemned. But also the well-known first statement of De Wolf is condemned: "God promises *to every one of you* that, *if you believe*, you shall be saved." If language means anything at all, this statement certainly implies and expresses: 1. That God, on His part is willing to save every single individual in the audience. 2. That, however, he that would be saved must fulfill the condition of faith. This is not Reformed but Arminian. One may preach, of course: "God promises every one of you that believes salvation." This is Scriptural. But the promise of God is never conditional and is never meant by God for all that hear it.

So much for this article of the Canons.

Article 7 of the same chapter of the Canons then describes God's eternal election, and again we prefer to quote the whole article:

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

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

Also this proves, without a doubt, the statement in our Declaration of Principles "that the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer on the part of God to all men." For mark you well, this article speaks, indeed, of divine predestination but not merely in the abstract. On the contrary, it speaks of election in a very concrete sense of the word and defines the contents of election. Election means, according to this

article, that the elect have been given to Christ as their mediator and head, that they are effectually called and drawn into His communion by His Word and Spirit, that they receive the true faith, justification, sanctification and preservation unto the end unto final glorification.

This is the contents of God's decree of election.

And this is exactly also the contents of the promise of the gospel. The promise is based on the decree of election. How anyone, in the light of this article of the Canons, can possibly maintain that the promise of the gospel is a gracious offer on the part of God to all men, is a mystery to me. And how anyone could possibly preach, in willful contradiction to the Declaration of Principles, in the light of the above quoted article of the Canons: "God promises every one of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved," I fail to understand.

To me, the two are in flat contradiction to each other.

Article eight of the first chapter of the Canons emphasizes that the decree of election is one, it is an election "both to grace and glory, to salvation and the way of salvation, which he hath ordained that we should walk therein."

Then in article 9 reference is made to conditions and prerequisites. This article I will quote once more in full:

"This election was not founded upon foreseen faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc., therefore election is the fountain of every saving good; from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to that of the apostle: 'He hath chosen us (not because we were) but that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love.' Eph. 1:4."

Here we meet with the terms "condition" and "prerequisite."

Kok, I mean the Rev. B. Kok, loves to show that our Reformed fathers and that the Rev. Ophoff and the undersigned also used the term in the past. In fact, he composed several typewritten sheets for the purpose, evidently, to prove that, in the past, I believed the same as he and De Wolf et al.

Let me assure him: 1. That this is not true. I never believed that the statements of De Wolf, which Kok defends although he distorts them, are Reformed. 2. That I do not fight against a term. Although I believe that it is better to avoid the term "condition" because of its Arminian connotation, it is not impossible to use it in some connections in the sense of "particular." This Kok also well knows.

Once more, I do not fight for or against a mere term.

However, when someone preaches (and Kok believes this, too) that "our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of God" then I maintain that this is, principally, the same heresy as to which reference is made in Canons I, 9 quoted above. For, outside of the kingdom of God we are in darkness, and if it be true that our act of conversion must

be performed before we can ever enter into the kingdom we simply shall never enter.

We will continue this discussion next time, the Lord willing.  
H.H.

### Shall We Re-unite?

There appears to be, in the group that departed from us and from the Protestant Reformed faith, a desire to reunite with us.

Such a reunion, however, may only be accomplished in the right way, that is, the way of truth and righteousness.

It is always rather difficult to reunite churches that have once separated, unless all the different groups concerned have so far departed from the truth they once confessed that they have become wholly indifferent to their own confession. And this certainly is not the case with the Protestant Reformed Churches. We still insist that we represent the true Church of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in the Word of God and delineated in our Confessions. We also insist that those that have left us departed from that truth and are walking in the way of error.

In the light of the recent attempts from the opponents for reunion, it may be well to review the history of our separation in order that all may know and none may be deceived.

As I have remarked before, the general cause of the split in our churches is the fact that those that caused the schism must have nothing of the well-known Declaration of Principles which, at first, was virtually unanimously adopted by our synod, but which later was criticised and which now is officially rejected by the schismatics.

But although this is, undoubtedly, the general cause of the split, there is also a more immediate cause. That immediate cause was local. The split started in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, and in Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches. It was caused by the unreformed preaching of the Rev. H. De Wolf.

I speak of the unreformed preaching of the Rev. De Wolf for, although the matter of the dissension was, finally, concentrated in two specific heretical statements, in his preaching he hardly ever revealed any love for our Protestant Reformed truth.

In connection with this, I wish to reproduce a protest which, at the time, I sent to our consistory (that is, after De Wolf's two heretical statements had been reported to the consistory) and which literally presents the truth without any exaggeration.

This protest reads as follows:

The Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Esteemed brethren:

Because we are, evidently, making history, and because the

Rev. De Wolf is apparently attempting to show how far he can go with his conditional theology, so that we will have to take a stand and officially make a choice between it and the Protestant Reformed truth, which certainly are not the same, because of all this, I say, I prefer to commit my thoughts to writing, and ask you kindly to receive the following document for information and take it up in your minutes for future reference.

In it I will attempt to explain why I cannot and will not sit at the same communion table with the Rev. De Wolf, even for one Sunday, unless he whole-heartedly repents of the evil of his way. I will explain why I will never again occupy the same pulpit with him, unless he publicly apologizes. I will explain the statements I made last Monday evening in your meeting, why I cannot possibly trust him, and why it is impossible to entrust the congregation to him, unless he repents, and publicly apologizes.

At the same time in all seriousness, I hope you understand that, either you must demand such a public apology of him, or apply the keys of the kingdom of heaven to me.

Permit me, then, to explain.

The sermon which the Rev. De Wolf preached last Sunday evening does not stand out as an isolated event, but is rather a climax of events in which the Rev. De Wolf revealed:

1. That he does not clearly understand or love, or both, the Protestant Reformed truth.

2. That he often appeals to and strengthens the weaker element in the congregation, i.e. strengthens them in their wrong attitude, while he discourages the stronger Prot. Ref. element.

3. That, in addressing the congregation, he often rails at certain persons, particularly the stronger element, in an offensive way, without preaching the Word of God to them.

4. That, more than once, he deprecated the truth of election, as no Prot. Ref. minister would ever do.

5. That he is, evidently, very strongly in love with "conditional theology" which is condemned in all our confessions, and which is Arminian.

6. That, as a result, the congregation is not built up by the Rev. De Wolf in the pure Prot. Ref. truth.

Proof; in proof of all this, I offer the following:

1. In the earliest days of his ministry, among us, he delivered a school-speech which the supporters of Prot. Ref. instruction never forgot. Instead of encouraging them and exhorting them to go ahead with all their might, he catered rather to the opponents, and discouraged the society as much as he possibly dared. This, a man of principle and strong Prot. Ref. convictions could never have done.

2. In a sermon, the date of which I forgot, after my sickness, and on which I did not shake hands with him at the

time, he made very offensive remarks of a personal nature, which, at the time I felt were directed to me and to the Rev. Ophoff, a feeling which was shared by the latter. They were remarks such as the following: "Some of you think that they know it all. Some of you cannot stand it that someone stands next to you and also knows something" etc. I called him to my study and asked him whether he did mean me. He denied it. When I urged him to tell me, whom he could possibly have in mind by such very personal remarks, he finally said that it was Mr. and Mrs. D. Jonker. In the notorious sermon of April 15, 1951, he again made some very sarcastic and personal remarks, again at the address of strong Prot. Ref. people, for which the Rev. De Wolf seems to have a dislike. I refer to statements such as: "Some of you carry Prot. Ref. on the lapel of your coat," etc. And this time I certainly feel that I belong to those whom he was addressing.

3. In the same sermon, he made remarks about the truth of election which no Prot. Ref. minister would ever make. And the same is true of the sermon of last Sunday evening.

4. In the same sermon, that of April 15, 1951, which I consider a very bad sermon, he really struck an Arminian note throughout, as far as I can judge from reports of that sermon. Not only did he virtually preach a general conditional promise, but the very introduction struck an un-Protestant Reformed note, by appealing to Canons III, IV:8, 9 of the Canons of Dordrecht, and that, too, with the same intent as did the Synod of 1924 in support of the First Point and the general offer of salvation, well-meaning on the part of God to all that externally hear the gospel. In fact, there is no difference whatsoever between the preaching of a general-conditional promise and a well-meaning offer of salvation.

In the sermon of last Sunday evening, he literally preached that our act of conversion is a condition or prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God. This is neither Scripture nor the Confessions. There never was a word of explanation about the truth of conversion, that, from the beginning of conversion to our act of conversion it is the work of God, that the entrance into the kingdom is not our act of conversion but God's work of regeneration, and that our act of conversion is only the fruit of God's work. It is not our act of conversion, but God's work of regeneration which is the prerequisite to enter into the kingdom. And that the disciples must still be converted before they could enter into the kingdom of heaven, was only because the kingdom of heaven was "nigh" but had not yet been realized.

If this kind of preaching can be condoned, we must apologize to the Christian Reformed Church for ever having rejected the "Three Points" and return on our knees. I am sure, with such preaching they will be glad to have us.

5. In the last few years, we often had sermons of the same nature. Whenever he has the opportunity the Rev. De Wolf tries to introduce the conditional theology. Personally,

I remember his sermon on the fifth petition, where he made our forgiving one-another a condition or prerequisite for God's forgiving us; and also his sermon on Lord's Day 45, which I corrected in the next sermon I preached, without, of course, mentioning his name.

It is a fact that from the Rev. De Wolf one hears Prot. Ref. preaching so seldom that I find myself commending him to his face when he does. The result is that, under his preaching, the congregation is not built up, but gradually loses all feeling for Prot. Ref. truth.

7. I cannot trust the Rev. De Wolf to teach our youth in Catechism. On the basis of what I hear from him on the pulpit, I am convinced that he cannot be trusted to teach the young people in my book "The Heidelberg Catechism for Junior Catechumens" a book which is virtually approved officially by our churches. In this book I teach that faith is a spiritual bond of living fellowship with Christ, wrought on our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, and that only in the elect. I feel confident that Rev. De Wolf makes of faith a condition. In that book I teach that it is solely the work of God's grace in our hearts that we receive Christ, but I am afraid that the Rev. De Wolf would introduce also here his conditional theology. In that book I teach that faith is a gift of God whereby he unites us with Christ our righteousness. In that book, I teach that the covenant is the gracious fellowship of friendship between God and His people in Christ, in which He is their God and they are His people. But I am afraid that the Rev. De Wolf wants to make the covenant bi-lateral, and that conversion is prerequisite to enter into the covenant of God, conversion, that is, as an act on our part. In that book I teach that conversion is solely of an act of God through the Spirit, but I am afraid that the Rev. De Wolf would make conversion an act of man, a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And finally I emphasized that the Canons of Dordt teach unconditional election, and I am afraid that also here the Rev. De Wolf would introduce his conditional theology.

These, brethren, are my reasons why I do not and cannot trust the Rev. De Wolf anymore, why I cannot shake hands with him, why I cannot and will not minister the Word of God from the same pulpit anymore, unless he heartily repents and publicly apologizes and reveals that he mends his ways. I do not ask that he be suspended from office, but that he apologizes and mends his ways. And I ask you to demand such an apology from him.

Respectfully submitted,

Your brother in Christ,

H. Hoeksema

More about this next time, the Lord willing.

H.H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### CHAPTER III

#### *The Song of the Redeemed and of the Angels*

#### Revelation 7:10-12

And yet, if we look a little more closely, and consider these two expressions of the redeemed and of the angels more carefully, we will soon find that they belong together both in form and in contents. As far as the form is concerned, let us notice that the part which the angels sing is really a reply to the shout of the redeemed throng. This is clear from the fact that they begin their song with the corroborative "Amen." This "Amen" evidently means to be an answer to the outcry of the redeemed. The redeemed cry out: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And the angels take up their song and answer: "Amen. So be it. So it certainly is forever and ever." Even as in olden times the daughters of Zion would meet one another in courses and in their song respond to one another, so also in this heavenly choir the angels respond to the song of the redeemed. The latter sing that salvation belongeth to God; and the angels meet them and respond with their solemn adoration and ascription of glory to the Most High. And therefore the form plainly indicates that the two expressions belong together, and must not be separated. The same is true also of the contents of this song. It is essential that a song must have unity of thought and theme. This is certainly true of the song of the redeemed and the angels. The theme is the same in both. That theme is the glory of God as it has become revealed in the mighty work of salvation. The redeemed throng sing of the fact that of this salvation God and the Lamb are the authors: they have wrought it, they have planned it, they have completed that salvation. And the angels conclude by pointing out that therefore all praise and glory and honor and thanksgiving and wisdom and power and might belong to the Most High, and that all the powers of creation unite in ascribing glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne. Hence, we repeat: in the theme and form and outcries of angels and redeemed we have the record of a heavenly song, sung by all the moral and rational creatures in God's glorious creation.

Let us fasten our attention a moment upon these singers. We do not mean to determine now who they are: for that has been settled in our last chapter, at least in as far as the numberless throng is concerned. This throng consists of the redeemed and glorified and perfected children of God that have passed through the great tribulation and have now been gathered from all peoples and nations and tongues and tribes into everlasting glory. And the ones that reply to their outcry

are the mighty angels, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands in number. But we must watch and consider them for a few moments as singers of this wonderful song. And then we shall find that there never was a better qualified chorus upon earth than this mixed choir of men and angels. A song is chiefly a matter of perfect and harmonious expression. The clearer our consciousness and knowledge of the contents of our song, the fuller and more beautiful our song will be. The more deeply we feel and realize the depth of meaning there is in the song we sing, the more impressive will be the song we are singing. It must be admitted that from these points of view the chorus that is singing here, according to the words of the text we are now discussing, in the new heavens and the new earth is perfectly qualified. They have, in the first place, arrived in the state of perfect knowledge. Their consciousness has been cleared, and the cloud of sin that here overshadows and bedims our knowledge, the knowledge of the people of God, has been dispersed. It is true, also here on earth we often sing; but our song is as imperfect as ourselves. Our minds are still darkened by the influence of sin; our consciousness is beclouded by the effects of sin. We do not fully understand the truth of God and the contents of that of which we sing. As the apostle Paul has it: "We behold a dim image, as in a dark glass; but we do not as yet see face to face." Sometimes the darkness seems to break, and there are moments when we see more clearly than at other times. There are moments when we behold more clearly the beauty of God's plan and of the work of salvation. In such times we sing rather consciously with the inspired poet of old: "O how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." But even at those best moments of our present life upon earth the darkness of sin has not been fully dispersed, and we do not see face to face. And as it is with our knowledge, so also it is with our will, with our feeling and with our desires. Our will is still under the influence of sinful perversion. The lust of the flesh often still dominates and controls us to a certain extent. And we do not live the fulness of our spiritual life in the present dispensation. We are by no means perfect. There is, in fact, but a small beginning of the new obedience. There is but a small principle of the new life within us. And the result is that here we cannot sing in the perfect and true sense of the word. How often we even sing merely from an aesthetic point of view, merely for the enjoyment of the sound of the trained human voice. How often we sing mechanically, without realizing the depth of meaning there is in the songs of Zion. How often we sing without our heart being expressed in the song we are singing. The best of our songs are under the influence of the power of sin and imperfection.

This, we understand, is not true of the song of the redeemed throng and of the angels that respond to their song. The redeemed are now perfectly delivered from the power of sin. Their minds have been cleared. They see no more a dim image in a dark glass, but now they see face to face. The cloud of sin has been dissipated. They know as they

are known. Their consciousness has been purified. And fully they understand the implication of their song. With all their clearest consciousness they understand the full implication of the words they sing: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." All the more do they realize the depth of meaning that is hidden in their song, and all the more fully can they express their inmost heart in this song because it is a song of their own perfected experience. They do not sing of something that does not and never did concern them. It is not a song that, for instance, has been composed for them by one of the great masters of music among them, the meaning of which is foreign to them and the tune of which is strange until they have learned it by heart. On the contrary, they themselves are the authors of this song, and they simply sing of what they have experienced, in the light of their glorified consciousness. Here upon earth they often did not understand themselves when they sang. They could not fully interpret their own experience. They could not understand their own feelings and desires. They could not see the reason of the way in which they had to walk, in which they were led here in the world by the God of their salvation. But now all is different. Clearly they understand their own experience. Here upon earth they often sang, "Sometime, sometime we'll understand," because they realized that they did not understand themselves. But now that "Sometime" has been changed into the everlasting present. Now they know. And their own experience, that which has been realized in and for and through them by the Lord their God, the God of their salvation, in the light of their redeemed consciousness, is the subject of their song. They were sinners. They used to be in the power of sin and death. And while they were in this life in the midst of the world, they sometimes felt the horrible implication of the truth that they were in the power of corruption. But the full reality of this terrible fact we really never feel in this present life. We do not know what it means to live the life of perfection. We do not know what it implies to be entirely perfect, without sin and corruption, in mind, in heart, in will, in all our feelings and emotions. We do not know what it means to be completely free from the effects of sin. We only faintly feel sometimes that it must be unspeakably blessed to live the full and abundant, eternal life of perfection. But in perfection and glory we shall realize it all. Then, looking back, we shall certainly be conscious of our former state in the midst of the world. Oh, this shall not be the case in the sense that the sins of this present life shall still be a cause for sorrow and repentance. In heaven, in eternity and glory, in the new creation, God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, also the tears of repentance and sorrow over sin. But it shall certainly be true in this sense, that we shall recollect the depth of misery from which we are saved. Now we cannot know the contrast; then we shall see it clearly.

H.H.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Zechariah

*Fertility and Prosperity of the Whole Land*

Chapter 14:8-11

8. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea, and half of them to the western sea, in summer and winter shall it be.* 9. *And Jehovah shall be king over all the land; in that day Jehovah shall be one and his name one.* 10. *All the land shall be changed like the plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, and she shall be high, and dwell in her place from Benjamin's gate to the place of the first gate, to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses.* 11. *And they shall dwell in her, and there shall be no more utter destruction, and Jerusalem shall sit secure.*

Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city of the living God, the God and Father of Christ, where God dwells with His people and satisfies them with His likeness, and where His people see Him as He is in the face of Christ, walk and talk with the Lord and taste that the Lord is gracious.

In the Old dispensation Jerusalem was that city in Palestine that was known by this name — Jerusalem. Here dwelt God in His holy temple. Here burned His altars, and here the saints shouted with joy. Where is Jerusalem now? According to the Scriptures, Jerusalem is now above. "Ye are come," one may read in the Hebrews (12:22ff), "unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . ." When at the return of Christ it shall have appeared what Jerusalem shall be, she shall be a city of remarkable beauty. The great city, Jerusalem the heavenly, was shown to John. And he tells us what he saw. The city has the glory of God. And her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And the city lies foursquare, and its wall is of jasper. And the whole city is of pure gold. And the foundations of her wall are garnished with all manner of precious stones. And the twelve gates of the city are twelve pearls; every gate is of one pearl. And the street of the city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. Such will be the glory of the city as to her appearance, the beauty of Jerusalem when she will have appeared with Christ in glory.

Not that on the new earth Jerusalem is to be streets and buildings enclosed by a wall. A city is also streets and buildings to be sure. But the city proper is not buildings and streets but the body of inhabitants, the corporation of persons that occupy those buildings and walk those streets. A city without inhabitants is not a city; it is what is known today as a ghost town. It is the inhabitants that make the city. The earthy Jerusalem was buildings and streets en-

closed by a wall. But the Jerusalem proper were the inhabitants, God and His people, Christ and His Church of that day. Now certainly those building of the earthy Jerusalem also had great significance, particularly the temple, it being God's dwelling place, and on which account it prefigured the church in glory, the indwelling of the triune Jehovah in His church through Christ in His Spirit. Other important buildings were the palaces of David and Solomon, these persons being what they were, the vicegerents of Jehovah as kings over His people.

Jerusalem is now above. "Ye are come," one may read in the Hebrews (12:22ff), "unto mount Sion, and unto the holy city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The Jerusalem above surely is not also literally streets and building encompassed by a wall as was the earthy Jerusalem. This Jerusalem is no more. Being but a shadow, it vanished away. Jerusalem is now solely God and His redeemed people, Christ and His Church, which is His body. The Church is now Jerusalem, the temple, the house of God and the Church only. "Ye are come . . . to the heavenly Jerusalem," that is, "to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." So is this passage to be understood.

Can it be then that on the new earth Jerusalem is to be also literally streets and buildings encompassed by a wall — streets and buildings of heavenly gold, that is, of a heavenly or spiritual material substance as will be the case with the new bodies of the saints and the new earth that they will inherit? The Bible surely is against such a view. In the New Testament Scriptures Jerusalem and the temple are always solely the Church. It's the Church, the body of the elect, that will be glorified and not surely also the streets and the buildings and the wall and the gates of the earthy Jerusalem. Thus the golden city of John's vision is but an image, an earthy figure of a heavenly thing and this thing the body of the elect in glory. Imaged is this glory, the visible beauty of the life of the church in glory.

Living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem, that is, from the church. This will be possible because centrally the Church is the incarnate Son of God, the crucified and the resurrected and the glorified Christ, and because He is the Christ of God. The living waters are the fulness of grace and blessing proceeding from God their eternal source and from Christ their channel and seat. So in the vision of John. "And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." The Psalmist speaks of a river whose streams make glad the city of God (46:4); Joel declares that a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim (3:18); Isaiah promises, "I will pour floods upon dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (44:3). Ezekiel saw water that is-

sued from under the temple, an ever widening and deepening stream, which swept through the desert bearing fertility in its course, until it reached the sea of Sodom, and healed its waters, filling them with animal life and covering its banks with trees whose fruit was food and their leaves medicine (47:1-12). The living waters that our prophet sees, flow in different directions from Jerusalem and reach the eastern and western sea — the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. Unlike most rivers in Palestine that contain water only during the rainy seasons, from October unto April, the promised streams will retain their water in summer and in winter. The fulfillment of this promise is the new earth as perpetually fertilized and beautified by the living waters, by the fullness of blessings and grace, that proceed from the holy city, the church in glory. For the earthy Canaan was the type of the new earth.

The Canaan indicated by our prophet is the Canaan of the so-called ideal boundaries. For it is the Canaan that stretched from the western to the eastern sea. It was much larger by far than the Canaan proper. It was an immense region that extended to the Euphrates on the east and to the river Nile on the west and thus included the whole of Arabia. But let us quote the Scriptures here, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "Unto thee have I given this land from the river of Egypt (the Nile) to the great river (Euphrates)" Gen. 15:18. And afterwards to Moses, "And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even to the Sea of the Philistines (Mediterranean) and from the Arabian desert unto the river (Euphrates)" Ex. 23:31. And still later, "Every place whereupon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours, from the wilderness of Lebanon, from the river (Euphrates) even unto the uttermost sea (Mediterranean) shall your coast be" (Deut. 2:24). And finally to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said to Moses. From your wilderness to this Lebanon even to the great river, the river Euphrates, and all the land of the Hittites, and the great sea (Mediterranean) toward the going down of the sun shall be your coast" (Joshua 2:3, 4).

Such were the ideal boundaries of Israel's inheritance. Boundaries they were that included immense regions that surrounded the rather small strip of land allotted to and inhabited by the twelve tribes of Israel. All these regions together with the heathen nations that dwelt therein the Lord by promise had given to Abraham and his seed. So the Scriptures just quoted tell us. Nations they were that represented and typified "all the nations of the earth" blessed in Abraham, in Christ. Not under the ban of God as were the Canaanites; peace had to be proclaimed unto them. They had to be mandated by Israel's armies, when come to their cities, to open to Israel the gates of their cities in the willingness to serve Israel's God in the paying of tribute, that doing so, they would live, but that disobeying, they would be destroyed. "When thou comest nigh unto a (heathen) city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be,

if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if they will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God shall deliver it unto thy hands, thou shalt smite every man therein with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil therein, shalt thou take unto thyself . . . Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are afar off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations," the Canaanites under the ban of God (Deut. 20:10-15). No peace might be proclaimed unto the latter, but they had to be utterly destroyed. For they were reprobated (Numbers 30; Deut. 7:2; 20:16, 17). But as to the cities that were far off, peace had to be proclaimed unto them. But the nations afar off chose war. All were overcome by David. On the ruins of their kingdoms he built a mighty empire. And God gave him rest from all his enemies round about. Under Solomon the kingdom was established greatly. He had dominion over all the kings west of the Euphrates river. God gave him rest on every side, so that there was neither adversary nor evil occurrence. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely. And all the kings of the earth sought his presence to hear his wisdom that God put into his heart. And they brought every man or king his present. And he reigned over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. What we deal with here is type and prophecy, the realization of which will be Christ's reign of peace on the new earth. Solomon's kingdom extended only to the Euphrates river on the east and to the great sea on the west. Besides the twelve tribes of Israel it included only the nations dwelling in that part of the earth. But Christ's kingdom of peace will extend to the four corners of the new earth and include all the nations. And they will render Him a willing service, for His law will be in their hearts. It was to this great blessedness that our prophet had reference, when he said, "And the Lord shall be king over all the land."

That this is here the prediction is plain from the sequel. Our prophet goes on to say, "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one. None will be having other gods before His face. Idolatry will be no more. All shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. And He will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will He remember no more."

10. And all the land shall be changed as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. *As a plain* — The word may be rendered as a proper name, Araba, or as a common noun (A.V.). The whole country, with the exception of Jerusalem, will be made into a level plain. The Araba is more than a thousand feet below the sea level immediately east of Jerusalem. The thought of fertility is not here implied. The extent of the district thus to be changed is denoted more definitely. *From Geba* — In the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. 18:24), about

five miles north of Jerusalem and the northern boundary of Judah (II Kings 23:8). Rimmon was south of Jerusalem. There was also a Rimmon in the north (Josh. 19:13). The one mentioned here marks the southern border of Palestine (Josh. 15:32). Through the region, which is meant to include the whole of Judah, being leveled to a plain, Jerusalem will be exalted, lifted up. The holy city will be exalted even higher, Micah 4:1, "But it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills . . ." The exaltation will proclaim the city the center of the kingdom of Christ. The fulfilment of the prophecy was the exaltation of Christ with His people to the highest heavens. Its final fulfilment will be the appearance of the Church in glory. As lifted up, the city will be inhabited in her place, that is, it will be established forever as the center of the new creation. As of the land, so of the city, its full extent is indicated. *Benjamin's gate* may be identical with *gate of Ephraim* (II Kings 13:13). The place of the *first gate* is unknown. The *corner gate* was located at the west end of the northern wall. The tower of Hananeel is probably in the northeast corner (Neh. 3:1). All three points may indicate the northern boundary of the city and its extent from east to west. The king's winepress is unknown.

11. All men shall dwell in the city. "People shall flow into it, and many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many nations, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it. For all the people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever" (Micah 4:2ff). In the words of our prophet, "but there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Such will be the felicity of the Church, the blessedness of the citizens of Christ's kingdom in glory. The language of course is again figurative throughout. It is a language the terms of which were borrowed from forms and conditions of Israel's life in the earthy Canaan. Surely the view according to which the *city* that is here meant is the earthy Jerusalem is completely overturned by the statement that "all men shall dwell in the city."

G.M.O.

### The Ten Plagues — Their Purpose

The purpose of these plagues is brought out in the following Scriptures: "That I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and

bring forth my armies and my people the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt . . ." (Ex. 7:4, 5). And again, "For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth . . ." (Ex. 9:13). Thus Pharaoh must know that in all the earth there is no God like the Jehovah of the Hebrews and that no god can do what He does. The plagues must make this clear. And so they do. They make evident that the earth and its fulness — water, fire, hail, thunder and lightning, etc. — are His creatures, and that they exist and operate by His power. They make evident therefore that the Jehovah of the Hebrews is the God mighty to save His people, and that there is no god beside Him.

To understand how the plagues make this evident we must consider the following. Each plague is foretold, and without exception it begins to riot in the very hour specified. Then Moses prays for its removal as Pharaoh requests. And the plague is removed. Thus the evidence that the plagues are of the Lord is overwhelming. And Pharaoh admits this as often as he asked that the plagues be made to cease.

That the Lord devastates Egypt through the elements in nature is significant. The Egyptians worshipped the creature — man, birds, four-footed beasts, creeping things, the hosts of heaven, the elements. The kings of Egypt boasted descent from the gods and were worshipped as gods. Thus Egypt was laid waste by its very gods. But these gods, which are no god, were the Lord's creatures. By His power they exist. In the light of these remarks we can understand the miracle of Moses' rod. This rod becomes a serpent, and in Moses' hand is again converted into the rod. That serpent, too, is symbol. It is the symbol of that entire evil consort of evil powers of which Satan is the prince and the Egypt of the book of Exodus the type. This Egypt is Satan's domain. Here he has established his throne. And in the land of Goshen dwells the church with Christ in her loins. And the rod becomes a serpent and the serpent again becomes the rod in Moses' hand. If it be borne in mind that Moses' hand with the rod is the symbol of God's power, might, strength, it will be seen that the truth set forth is this: That devil-worshipping, God-defying, civilized, cultured and holy-seed-persecuting Egypt lives and moves and has its being in God and exists solely by His power. It is thus nothing, less than nothing in itself. God raises it up and casts it down as He will and puts it to whatever use He chooses. Not that serpent but the rod is the first and the last, the beginning and the end and all that lies between. From the rod it seems to come forth and to the rod it again returns. Let Israel then expect all his salvation from God alone. For He is God and none else.

G.M.O.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Matthew 24 and 25

#### I.

#### *Introduction* .....

The attentive reader will have noticed that it is the intention of the writer of this rubric to attempt an exposition of two chapters from the Gospel according to Matthew, which give the exegete reason for real consecrated and devoted study.

A secondary reason for writing on these two chapters from the Gospel of Matthew is the fact that, in the understanding of this writer, such is the purpose of this rubric. "From Holy Writ" does not presume to be a writer of Meditation. His is the duty to attempt to write constructive *exegesis*. Our fervent prayer is that we may succeed.

The real and only primary reason for writing on this passage is that some contribution may be made toward the proclamation of the full counsel of God. The doctrine of the "Last Things" too calls for our attention. We are to give heed unto the more sure prophetic word which shines as a light in a dark place — until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts, II Peter 1:19. For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching (doctrine), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, II Tim. 3:16, 17. And the "testimony" which Christ gave to the church may not be *sealed up* (Rev. 22:10), but must be proclaimed unto the church that she be not deceived by the powers of darkness.

We make no secret of it that it is our conviction that Jesus did not simply instruct his disciples on the Mount of Olives to satisfy their curiosity. The Lord had told his disciples that not one stone in the beautiful architectural structure of the Herodian temple would remain upon the other. It would be made a desolation, a total ruination. And this word from the lips of Jesus had deeply moved the apostles. Such had been the case especially with Peter, James, John and Andrew. They had privately come to Jesus on the Mount of Olives and had asked Jesus the very pregnant question: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" And now Jesus will not instruct them to satisfy curiosity, but rather to enlighten them concerning the matters which belong to the "secret counsel of God concerning our redemption," concerning the things which *must come to pass*!

It is the purpose of the Lord that these disciples instruct

the church of the ages concerning the meaning and purpose of history. They must know how all things will reach their Divinely appointed eschatological end. Their eyes are directed upon the destruction of the earthly temple and the earthly city of the great King. But in so doing the Lord of heaven, while on earth in our flesh, directs their eyes upon the consummation of the ages — the end of all things in Christ Jesus. All of history is, from this prophetic perspective, nothing but the "birth-pangs" of the new world which is born from the womb of the counsel of God, in the First-born of all creatures as the First-born from the dead!

Only thus will the church be watchful unto prayer, having the loins of her mind girt up in spiritual readiness to meet the Bridegroom in that day. It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus prefaces all his instruction concerning the "things which must come to pass" with the explicit warning, "Take heed that no man deceive you"! We must look out of both eyes. We must allow no one intentionally to make us believe the lie concerning the meaning of the history of the world with its judgments, signs, wars and rumors of wars. We must take heed to the prophetic word! See Matthew 24:4.

That Jesus would not simply give a "philosophy" of history here, but that it is a call to the colors is further evident from the verses 41 to 43 of the 24th chapter of Matthew, where we read: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But this know, that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Such is, indeed, the purpose of Christ in this instruction of the disciples, and of us through them.

Further it should not be overlooked that in this entire section from the Gospel of Matthew we are dealing with "prophecy." This entire discourse of Jesus is interspersed with either direct quotations from Daniel, Jeremiah and other prophets, or allusions are made to the prophets. This should but seem in keeping with the nature of prophecy. Prophecy was the Word of God spoken in diverse times and manners through the prophets. It was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, who searched out the time and the manner of the time of the sufferings which would come upon Christ and the glory to follow (I Peter 1:10-12). Angels were desirous to look into it. It was the unfolding of the counsel of God and the Word of God concerning the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption. In this discourse here recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (also in Mark and Luke) the Lord Jesus is the great prophet. The Word is here proclaimed by the Son of God in our flesh. In him all the promises are about to be fulfilled.

However, we should not look in prophecy for a calendar of events. The Lord does not give us in this 24th chapter of

Matthew simply a chronological order of the events which must take place between his death and the final return in the last day. This is explicitly stated by the Lord himself in Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven (neither the Son of man) but my Father only." Hence, in this chapter we are not to look for exact dates and "periods"! Such was also the instruction to the disciples on this same Mount of Olives at the occasion of Christ's ascension to heaven. Thus we read, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (authority). But ye shall receive power (ability) after the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . ." Acts 1:7, 8. Hence, no calendar of events, giving calendar dates, exact details of year, month and day! Such would not be prophecy! Then there would be no heeding in faith and hope but rather a walking by sight and computation of the calendar of man's reckoning of time.

But now we are dealing with prophecy which abides by the prophetic style (if we may so speak) of a Daniel. Only, Daniel must "seal up the testimony." However, here the testimony which Daniel could unfold no farther is made clear to us. The matter is now revealed. We now have here in Matthew 24 what John will see unfolded before his eyes "in the Spirit" while on the little isle of Patmos, where he sees the vision of the throne, the Scroll on the right hand of him that sitteth on the throne, and the breaking of the seven seals of this book, the seven trumpets which blow and the seven vials which are poured out, and presently the vision of the New Jerusalem! Christ, of course, goes beyond Daniel, or, what is more to the point, Christ here in the flesh lets the light of the prophetic Word fall farther into the future *for us* than *he* did in the prophecy of Daniel or in any of the other prophets. Howbeit, even here it still is a prophetic word!

With the foregoing in mind our study of these two chapters under consideration has made us come to conclude that we have the following "scheme" here in these prophetic utterances of Jesus to his disciples.

In the verses 1-8 of chapter 24, after telling us the historic occasion of the utterance of this prophecy, we are told what will constantly happen in history during the entire N.T. dispensation. There will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be no peace upon the earth between the nations. It is the same pattern of events that is given both in the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and of Daniel (See Daniel 2 and 7). While this all happens and endless woes and plagues and judgments of the Almighty smite the nations, many false messiahs will rise. They will all proclaim a solution to this problem of war and of the judgments of the Most High. But they are all false prophets. Their word will not come to pass. For these things must come to pass. They are the "beginning of birth-pangs"! It will be a long history. And as history goes on these "birth-pangs" will be stepped up in rapidity and in intensity!

In the verses 9-14 we see the place of the church of God in the midst of this evil world as she is saved in hope. Here is the patience of the saints! Here faith is tried! Not all endure. The love of many shall wax cold because of the abundance of iniquity and lawlessness. But they who endure to the end shall be saved. And the Gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed, heralded in all the world. It will be a testimony to them. This will make it a constant battle and struggle for the church. Hence, she must be watchful.

In the verses 15-28 we are shown what the times will be of the culmination of iniquity. It will be a time when the evil world shall make the instituted worship of God at the altar impossible. It will be the time such as occurred under Antiochus Epiphanes when the altar was desecrated. It will be when the "man of sin" shall succeed to persecute the church to such a degree that "if it were possible the very elect would perish if the days be not shortened." Such times the church has never yet seen! Then will be the coming of the Son of man.

In the verses 29-31 we have a description of the actual "Sign" of the Son of man and the effect upon all the nations, when we shall have the final sounding of the trumpet of God and the gathering of the elect from the four corners of the heaven.

In the verses 32-44 we have Jesus' word of warning unto *watchfulness*. Here he adds the parable of the message of the budding of the fig-tree. It is a sign of the seasons. So we must be watchful to see the "signs of the times" of God, lest the day overtake us as a thief in the night!

These "warnings" are continued by three parables. The first is the parable of the "faithful and prudent servant" in the absence of his master (Matthew 24:45-51). The second is the parable of the "Five Wise Virgins" in distinction from the foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-14). The third is the parable of the "Pounds," depicting the "foolishness" of the foolish servant. And the entire discourse is concluded with a description of the "Final Judgment" (Matthew 25:15-30 and Matthew 25:31-46, respectively).

Such is the subject matter we will, the Lord willing, discuss in a future series of articles.

May the Lord bless our efforts to the edification of His people and to the glory of His Name!

G.L.

#### MISSIONARY TRIUMPHS

For, lo, He comes; at His command  
All nations shall in judgment stand;  
In justice robed, and throned in light,  
The Lord shall judge, dispensing right.

Psalm 98:7

## IN HIS FEAR

### Freedom From Fear

(3)

"Only in His fear do we have freedom from fear."

So we wrote in the first installment of this matter of freedom from fear. Only those who fear God can possibly have freedom from fear of either what man can and shall do to man or of what God has decreed as the punishment for sin.

It makes, therefore, a great deal of difference, as we wrote last time, whether our fear is the fear of the Lord or whether it is the fear of man. If we fear what man shall do to us we shall never be freed from fear of suffering, death and hell. There is absolutely nothing to which one can point and upon which he can base any hope of such freedom from fear. Instead as we progress and even rush toward the end of this world, we will increasingly see things which shall nourish a growing fear of these things. It is of that matter that we would like to say a few more things at this time.

With all the advances that man makes in the age in which we live there comes an added apprehension and fear as to what it will mean for every man, woman and child. With the splitting of the atom man had found a new and extremely potent source of energy to power his machines and lighten his physical burden. But accompanying this revolutionary discovery of a new source of fuel and energy is a tremendous problem that must be solved entirely and permanently to make life safe for man on this earth. He has the problem of "burying" the radio-active waste material. And he must dispose of it in such a way that it will not threaten the lives of future generations. He buries it now in the depth of the ocean encased in a thickness of concrete and in places where these waste materials, to use their own words, "may last for many feet of thick mud for further protection. Yet bear in mind that the scientists themselves inform us that many of these waste materials, to use their own words, "may last for eons" as far as their radioactivity is concerned. Whether erosion and chemical reaction will destroy the protecting cover over these highly dangerous waste materials man is not in a position at the moment to say. And he expresses real fear lest all sea life be killed and a highly important source of our food — fish — be poisoned and contaminated with deadly radioactivity.

He likewise considers burying these dangerous waste materials in abandoned oil wells but hesitates lest they either in time contaminate and poison the sources of our drinking water or else by their very heat these waste materials — some of which are tremendously "hot" — might in time

build up to form a tremendous geyser that would spout out deadly radioactivity over a wide area of our land. Indeed there is every reason for fear when we look about us and see man even in his outwardly-peaceful pursuits. It is not only his dreadful weapons of warfare that strike fear into the hearts of man. In his attempt to provide, in the so-called peaceful use of nuclear fission, power for the manufacture of goods, of electricity and even of treatment of diseases, he still is confronted with fear. There is a power with which he cannot cope. Under God's providence he has discovered how to obtain it but not without mounting fears of the very thing that he has discovered. The fear of suffering, death and hell still stays with man no matter what wonderful discoveries he may make and things he may invent. Yea, although he becomes somewhat bold in his visions and expressions he realizes that he has brought into the world more fearful things than were here in the days of his forefathers. The very weapons he invents and in which he puts his trust for peace and safety fill him with terror because of their dreadful power to destroy. He realizes that as he advances in these things his enemies also advance. And the world does not sleep and rest more peacefully now that it has entered the atomic and space ages. Why, indeed, should there be today such a cry and demand for tranquilizing pills when man has so much more power than his forefathers? To be sure, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isaiah 57:21 and 45:22.

Or again, if you will, as man becomes bold in his visions and he presses on to new fields he has fears of being overtaken by his fellow men and of having his fellowmen turn things to his disadvantage in these new fields. Of this we were reminded when recently we read two series of articles on the bold visions man has in regard to such a universal thing as the weather. Man plans to control the weather. He has great visions that by means of a "clean" hydrogen bomb he may remove mountains and so change the wind patterns. In this way he dreams of bringing the moist air from off the Pacific Ocean farther inland and distribute over a wider area the rains that now drench the northwest corner of our land and give it a rainy season from October through June. He talks of melting the polar ice caps and so solve man's increasing need for water. In this way, too, he envisions changing the wind patterns of the world and ridding man of the fear of the Arctic blasts that send frost even into the deep South.

He promises relief from hurricane and tornado. He knows how to sprinkle coal dust on snow-covered grounds in the far north and at high elevations to cause the snows to melt and provide new fields for the raising of food for an ever increasing population. He has succeeded in spreading a harmless, tasteless chemical on water surfaces to slow down evaporation, so reducing rainfall on adjacent lands. He even boasts of being able to make a perpetual twilight by setting patches of the sky aflame. This he has done already in a limited way over New Mexico on October 12, 1955, by means

of an Aerobee rocket which set off four pounds of vaporized sodium 40 miles above the surface of the earth. And in March of 1957 he did a similar thing which was seen for 300 miles and lasted for 20 minutes. He thinks that in time he will be able to better man's lot here below by shifting the magnetic pole of the earth and so modify this earth's climate. In this way he expects to control if not eliminate both thunderstorms and tornados and realize for man nothing more than cheering, quiet rains. Indeed he has bold visions!

But he has fears to match those bold visions. What, he asks, if Russia should be able to do things before we can? What if Russia turns all the rain storms away from our land to obtain all the benefit for herself and turns our fertile lands into a howling wilderness of drought and famine? Oh, it is not the discovery of all these powers that God has implanted in creation, it is not the increase of knowledge of the world wherein we live that is the reason for and the basis for this fear. It is because these things have been discovered by and because this increase of knowledge is possessed by wicked, depraved man. It is, after all is said and done, fear of man. It is fear of the man who has this added power. It is fear that he will use it against us instead of for our good.

And as long as all we see is what the natural eye sees, if all we know is what may be known by the natural man, when all we hear is what the natural ear hears, there will never be anything to take that fear away. Wicked men are here on earth. Wickedness amongst these evil doers, as we pointed out last time, only increases and is not restrained by the Spirit of God through an operation upon their hearts. Physical, outward restraint there is, of course. Each time God takes their earthly life from them, they are restrained from further wickedness among and evil upon their fellowmen. Yet their evil conniving goes on in the heart and they only work harder with heart and mind to find ways to perpetrate their evil without being apprehended for it and without being required to suffer for it at the hands of their fellow men. The Scriptures teach us that the man of sin, the antichrist *must* come and that the measure of iniquity *must* be filled. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come (the day of Christ), except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," II Thessalonians 2:3, 4. Or again, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," II Thessalonians 2:11, 12. How shall days such as these come, if sin does not develop? And how dare we deny verse 11 that God will send them delusions?

Look where you will, then. Listen to whomsoever you will among men. Consider all the writings and plans of men. But where will you find freedom from fear? Wicked men

shall be with us until the end of this world. You can find no area of life pretty soon which will not be entirely under the domination of sinful men. The only way that we could have hope of freedom from fear of what man shall do to us is that a spiritual conversion would have to take place in his heart. Treaties, summit talks, laws, alliances, promises and military inspections cannot give peace of heart and mind, cannot relieve anxiety and fear of man's cruelty and sinful ambitions. We do not have a more quiet and carefree life now than our forefathers had in spite of all our inventions, labor-saving devices, prosperity and the like. We still fear man. We still fear each other.

And surely men can never take from us the fear of God's impending judgment and of hell's fiery torment. No matter how afraid we may be of man, we shall not in that fear be freed from fear of God's wrath and punishment. But he who fears God will find therein freedom from man. Oh, he may tremble as far as his flesh is concerned when the enemy comes to torment him and take from him his life. And yet he has no fear that man shall keep him from the glory of God's kingdom. He looks beyond that burning stake and firing squad to a resurrection of the body and life everlasting. He says with Job when he was tormented by his "friends," Say what you please about me, "For I know that my redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," Job 19:25, 26.

Also, it may be pointed out that when the women, who loved Jesus and in the fear of the Lord believed in Him as the Messiah promised of God, came in the sorrow that was wrought by their love for Him to His empty tomb, the angel says to them, "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus Which was crucified," Matthew 28:5. The angel, in effect, declares this glorious truth that they who fear the Lord have nothing to fear. They have the true freedom from fear. All fear of God's wrath has been ruled out by this crucified Jesus. Even when one of His holy angels stands before them in all the brilliance of his holiness, they need not fear him as a servant of God's judgment. They may look upon him as one sent by God for the ministry of their good.

We say again, How important that question: "Whom shall I fear?"

Let it not be man. Let it not be man and God. Let it be God alone. For that fear leaves no room for fear of what man may do unto us.

*"Jehovah is my light, And my salvation near;*

*Who shall my soul afright, Or cause my heart to fear?*

*While God my strength, my life sustains,*

*Secure from fear my soul remains."*

J.A.H.

## 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.

In his attempt to control the affairs of European states, he met with less success than failure, and in Philip the Fair of France he found his match.

In Sicily, he failed to carry out his plans to secure the transfer of the realm from the house of Aragon to the king of Naples.

In Rome, he incurred the bitter enmity of the proud and powerful family of the Colonna, by attempting to dictate the disposition of the family estates. Two of the Colonna, James and Peter, who were cardinals, had been friends of Coelestine, and supporters of that pope gathered around them. Of their number was Jacopone da Todi, the author of the *Stabat Mater*, who wrote a number of satirical pieces against Boniface. Resenting the pope's interference in their private matters, the Colonna issued a memorial, pronouncing Coelestine's abdication and the election of Boniface illegal. It exposed the haughtiness of Boniface, and represented him as boasting that he was supreme over kings and kingdoms, even in temporal affairs, and that he was governed by no law other than his own will. The document was placarded on the churches and a copy left in St. Peter's. In 1297 Boniface deprived the Colonna of their dignity, excommunicated them, and proclaimed a crusade against them. The two cardinals appealed to a general council, the resort in the next centuries of so many who found themselves out of accord with the papal plans. Their strongholds fell one after another. The last of them, Palestrina, had a melancholy fate. The two cardinals with ropes around their necks threw themselves at the pope's feet and secured his pardon, but their estates were confiscated and bestowed upon the pope's nephews and the Orsini. The Colonna family recovered in time to reap a bitter vengeance upon their insatiable enemy.

The German emperor, Albrecht, Boniface succeeded in bringing to an abject submission. The German envoys were received by the haughty pontiff seated on a throne with a crown upon his head and sword in his hand, and exclaiming, "I, I am the emperor." Albrecht accepted his crown as a gift, and acknowledged that the empire had been transferred from the Greeks to the Germans by the pope, and that the electors owed the right of election to the Apostolic See.

In England, Boniface met with sharp resistance. Edward I, 1272-1307, was on the throne. The pope attempted to

prevent him from holding the crown of Scotland, claiming it as a papal fief from remote antiquity. The English parliament, 1301, gave a prompt and spirited reply. The English king was under no obligation to the papal see for his temporal acts. Edward removed from Scone to Westminster the sacred stone on which Scotch kings had been consecrated, and which, according to the legend, was the pillow on which Jacob rested at Bethel. The dispute went no further. The conflict between Boniface and France is reserved for more prolonged treatment.

An important and picturesque event of Boniface's pontificate was the Jubilee Year, celebrated in 1300. It was a fortunate conception, adapted to attract throngs of pilgrims to Rome and fill the papal treasury. An old man of 107 years of age, so the story ran, travelled from Savoy to Rome, and told how his father had taken him to attend a Jubilee in the year 1200 and exhorted him to visit it on its recurrence a century after. Interesting as the story is, the Jubilee celebration of 1300 seems to have been the first of its kind. Boniface's bull, appointing it, promised full remission to all, being penitent and confessing their sins, who should visit St. Peter's during the year 1300. Italians were to prolong their sojourn 30 days, while for foreigners 15 days were announced to be sufficient. A subsequent papal deliverance extended the benefits of the indulgence to all setting out for the Holy City who died on the way. The only exceptions made to these gracious provisions were the Colonna, Frederick of Sicily, and the Christians holding traffic with Saracens. The city wore a festal appearance. The handkerchief of St. Veronica, bearing the imprint of the Saviour's face, was exhibited. The throngs fairly trampled upon one another. The contemporary historian of Florence, Giovanni Villani, testifies from personal observation that there was a constant population in the pontifical city of 200,000 pilgrims, and that 30,000 people reached and left it daily. The offerings were so copious that two clerics stood day and night by the altar of St. Peter's, gathering up the coins with rakes.

So spectacular and profitable a celebration could not be allowed to remain a memory. The Jubilee was made a permanent institution. A second celebration was appointed by Clement VI in 1350. With reference to the brevity of human life and also to the period of our Lord's earthly career, Urban VI fixed its recurrence every 33 years. Paul II, in 1470, reduced the intervals to 25 years. The twentieth Jubilee was celebrated in 1900, under Leo XIII. Leo's bull, dated May 11, 1899, offered indulgence to pilgrims visiting the basilicas of St. Peter, the Lateran, and St. Maria Maggiore. A portion of the document runs as follows: "Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, has chosen the city of Rome alone and singly above all others for a dignified and more than human purpose and consecrated it to himself." The Jubilee door was inaugurated by the august ceremony of opening the *porta santa*, the sacred door, into St. Peter's, which it is the custom to wall up after the celebration. The special ceremony

dates from Alexander VI and the Jubilee of 1500. Leo performed this ceremony in person by giving three strokes upon the door with a hammer, and using the words *aperite mihi*, open to me. The door symbolizes Christ, opening the way to spiritual benefits. Leo extended the offered benefits to those who had the will and not the ability to make the journey to Rome.

For the offerings accruing from the Jubilee and for other papal moneys, Boniface found easy use. They enabled him to prosecute his wars against Sicily and the Colonna and to enrich his relatives. The chief object of his favor was his nephew, Peter, the second son of his brother Loffred, the Count of Caserta. One estate after another was added to this favorite's possessions, and the vast sum of more than \$5,000,000 was spent upon him in four years. Nepotism (favoritism, especially displayed toward nephews and other relatives) was one of the offences for which Boniface was arraigned by his contemporaries.

#### *Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair of France.*

The overshadowing event of Boniface's reign was his disastrous conflict with Philip IV of France, called Philip the Fair. The grandson of Louis IX, this monarch was wholly wanting in the high spiritual qualities which had distinguished his ancestor. He was able but treacherous, and utterly unscrupulous in the use of means to secure his ends. Unattractive as his character is, it is nevertheless with him that the first chapter in the history of modern France begins. In his conflict with Boniface he gained a decisive victory. On a smaller scale the conflict was a repetition between Gregory VII and Henry IV, but with a different ending. In both cases the pope had reached a venerable age, while the sovereign was young and wholly governed by selfish motives. Henry resorted to the election of an anti-pope. Philip depended upon his councillors and the spirit of the new French nation.

The heir of the theocracy of Hildebrand repeated Hildebrand's language without possessing his moral qualities. He claimed for the papacy supreme authority in temporal as well as spiritual matters. In his address to the cardinals against the Colonna he exclaimed: "How shall we assume to judge kings and princes, and not dare to proceed against a worm! Let them perish forever, that they may understand that the name of the Roman pontiff is known in all the earth and that he alone is most high over princes." The Colonna, in one of their proclamations, charged Boniface with glorying that he is exalted above all princes and kingdoms in temporal matters, and may act as he pleases in view of the fulness of his power — *plenitudo potestatis*. In his official recognition of the emperor, Albrecht, Boniface declared that as "the moon has no light except as she receives it from the sun, so no earthly power has anything which it does not receive from the ecclesiastical authority." These claims are as-

serted with most pretension in the bulls Boniface issued during his conflict with France. Members of the papal court encouraged him in these haughty assertions of prerogative. The Spaniard, Arnald of Villanova, who served Boniface as physician, called him in his writings lord of lords — *deus deorum*.

On the other hand, Philip the Fair stood as the embodiment of the independence of the state. He had behind him a unified nation, and around him a body of able statesmen and publicists who defended his views.

The conflict between Boniface and Philip passed through three stages: (1) the brief tilt which called forth the bull *Clericis laicos*; (2) the decisive battle, 1301-1303, ending in Boniface's humiliation at Anagni; (3) the bitter controversy which was waged against the pope's memory by Philip, ending with the Council of Vienne. Contemporary writers spoke of the modern or recent French nation as opposed to the nation of a preceding period. So the author of the Tractate of 1308 in defence of Boniface VIII. He said "the kings of the modern French people do not follow in the footsteps of their predecessors." The same writer compared Philip to Nebuchadnezzar rebelling against the higher powers.

The conflict originated in questions touching the war between France and England. To meet the expense of his armament against Edward I, Philip levied tribute upon the French clergy. They carried their complaints to Rome, and Boniface justified their contention in the bull *Clericis laicos*, 1296. This document was ordered promulgated in England as well as in France. Robert of Winchelsea, archbishop of Canterbury, had it read in all the English cathedral churches. Its opening sentence impudently asserted that the laity had always been hostile to the clergy. The document went on to affirm the subjection of the state to the papal see. Jurisdiction over the persons of the priesthood and the goods of the Church in no wise belongs to the temporal power. The Church may make gratuitous gifts to the state, but all taxation of Church property without the pope's consent is to be resisted with excommunication or interdict.

Imposts upon the Church for special emergencies had been a subject of legislation at the third and fourth Lateran Councils. In 1260 Alexander IV exempted the clergy from special taxation, and in 1291 Nicolas IV warned the king of France against using for his own schemes the tenth levied for a crusade. Boniface had precedent enough for his utterances. But his bull was promptly met by Philip with an act of reprisal prohibiting the export of silver and gold, horses, arms, and other articles from his realm, and forbidding foreigners to reside in France. This shrewd measure cut off French contributions to the papal treasury and cleared France of the pope's emissaries. Boniface was forced to reconsider his position, and in conciliatory letters, addressed to the king and the French prelates, pronounced the interpretation put upon his deliverance unjust.

H.V.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

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

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 7. Who teach: That the grace whereby we are converted to God is only a gentle advising, or (as others explain it), that this is the noblest manner of working in the conversion of man, and that this manner of working which consists in advising, is most in harmony with man's nature; and that there is no reason why this advising grace alone should not be sufficient to make the natural man spiritual; indeed, that God does not produce the consent of the will except through this manner of advising; and that the power of the divine working, whereby it surpasses the working of Satan, consists in this, that God promises eternal, while Satan promises only temporal goods. But this is altogether Pelagian and contrary to the whole Scripture which, besides this, teaches yet another and far more powerful and divine manner of the Holy Spirit's working in the conversion of man, as in Ezekiel: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh," Ezek. 36:26.

The above translation could be improved upon. It would seem that the translators of the Rejection of Errors followed the Dutch version of the *Canons* rather slavishly; and one would almost venture the guess that they accepted the official Dutch version uncritically, without even comparing it with the original Latin. A comparison with the Latin will bring to light the following corrections that should be made:

1) The first clause should have instead of "only" the stronger expression "nothing else than."

2) Also in the first clause, "gentle advising" could more accurately be rendered "gentle suasion."

3) The second clause should be: "or, (as others explain) that this is the most noble manner of working in the conversion of man and most in harmony with human nature, namely, that which takes place through suasion."

4) The next clause does not speak of "advising grace" but of "moral grace." The Latin term is *moralis gratia*, not the term *suasio*, which has been translated "advising." The same is true of the next clause. There also the Latin term requires that we translate: "indeed that God does not otherwise produce the consent of the will than by the moral method."

5) Finally, in the last clause the term "power" is all right, provided we remember that it is power in the sense of "efficacy."

This is a very important article, for it brings to light the true character of the Arminian error. The Arminian doctrine of grace is a doctrine of mere moral suasion. It denies the efficacy of divine grace altogether, reduces its power to a mere moral influence of persuasion and advice, and, denying the necessity of anything more than such a moral influence of persuasion, it puts in the place of efficacious grace the decisive choice of the essentially good will of the natural man. Moreover, the Arminian view is dualistic. It places God, Who promises eternal goods, and Satan, who promises only temporal goods, in competition for the allegiance of men; and God in the case of some men at least gains the victory over Satan by selling a better product, or by persuading them that He has a better product.

Mark you well, this article does not talk about the preacher and the preaching, but about God and His method of operation. That is why it is so important. And that is also why in last analysis this article also has something very important to say about what constitutes a true preacher and true preaching. After all the preacher officially represents God, is His ambassador. And the word which the preacher brings is the Word of and concerning God and His way of salvation, His grace. It makes all the difference in the world, therefore, if the preacher proclaims that grace as consisting in nothing else than a gentle, moral suasion, and presents God as promising eternal goods over against Satan's promise of temporal goods, and either tacitly or expressly presents God as leaving the decision entirely up to man. That exactly this is done by many an Arminian preacher today we all know. But that this is frequently done in so-called Reformed circles we ought to see; and the Reformed believer ought to be doctrinally equipped to discern this error quickly and to expose it for what it is. There is much preaching today that is nothing more than this moralism of which our *Canons* here speak and which they condemn as Pelagian and contrary to the whole Scripture. We must not be fooled by the fact that men speak of grace, and apparently emphasize sometimes very strongly that we are saved by grace and are converted through grace only. Any Arminian can use the very same language. Ds. T. Bos calls attention to this in his comments on this article also (I translate): "That there must be a conversion of man, and that God has a hand in this conversion, is not denied by the Remonstrants. For that reason their preaching led many in the way of error. Our preacher, so they said, also speaks of faith and repentance, and he admonishes and urges us to repent not any less earnestly than the Reformed minister."

"The danger of a false doctrine is exactly the greater when Biblical words are used and when after all something entirely different is meant than what the Bible says, or when by mentioning the one truth another truth is denied. The

audience also in our times may therefore well be on guard, for there are still preachers who speak of God and His Word, of sin and grace, but who understand thereby something entirely different than these terms must mean according to Scripture. Try the spirits, whether they be of God, by testing their doctrine with the Holy Scriptures."

It is this test that must be applied to the doctrine of the well-meant offer of salvation as well as to the still more insidious error of a general conditional promise, in order to find it wanting. It is this test that must be applied to the preaching that proclaims that "man's act of conversion is a prerequisite to entering the kingdom of God." Any preaching that does not make it abundantly plain, explicitly clear, that the very nature of man's conversion to God, is such that it cannot possibly take place without the operation of absolutely efficacious and irresistible grace, is such that man's conversion is absolutely dependent on God's sovereignly converting him,—any preaching that does not measure up to this standard has reduced the gospel to the very Arminian moralism that is rejected by our *Canons* here. That the responsibility to repent must be proclaimed we do not and cannot deny. But to proclaim that responsibility to repent in such a way that it either tacitly or expressly implies the *ability* of natural man to repent is mere moralism. That the calling to accept Christ by faith must be proclaimed cannot be questioned. But to proclaim that calling in such a way that it ever leaves the impression upon the hearers that they can of themselves at all accept Him is mere moralism, is no preaching of the gospel. And that this is exactly one of the faults of a general, well-meant offer of salvation and of a general, conditional promise cannot effectually be denied. Not only is that true from the standpoint of doctrinal debate; it is also true from the practical viewpoint of the impression that is left upon the audience that hears such a general offer and such a general promise. The impression that it is within their power to accept the offer or not to accept it, to fulfill the condition or not to fulfill it, can never successfully be avoided. What is then the effect of such preaching? Are any of the reprobate saved by it? Not at all. No Reformed man would dare to say such a thing. No, but the bad effect is that the elect are not comforted and built up by it. The elect are saved, but they certainly are not saved by such a brand of preaching. For the real nature of conversion as a radical turning about of the whole man from darkness to light, a change so radical that it can be accomplished only by the **almighty operation of divine grace**, is denied by this doctrine.

And to be saved means exactly that we are converted from darkness to light in that radical sense.

With this in mind let us pay attention to the meaning of this article, so that we may be equipped to apply its test to all preaching and may be equipped to reject this error of moralism.

And we give our attention, first of all, to the teaching of the Remonstrants that is the subject of this article of rejection.

The main proposition of the Arminians here is that the grace of conversion is nothing else than a gentle suasion, that it is a moral grace, and that this moral grace is completely sufficient to change a natural man into a spiritual man. To understand this we may note the following elements.

1) According to this view, conversion takes place through the preaching of the Word in such a way that the sinner only has to be advised or persuaded to convert himself and to repent. Remember, this means that God Himself merely advises and persuades the sinner.

2) Secondly, it is the position of the Arminians that conversion takes place by no other method than this. This is important to understand. It is not thus, that conversion does not at all take place through the admonitions and urgings of the Word and its preaching. No, the fathers admit that this is an element in the work of conversion. How could it be otherwise? Do not the Scriptures indeed frequently call men to conversion? "Turn, ye backsliding children; and I will heal your backslidings." And again: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil way; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Or again: "Turn unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." And again: "Except ye be converted (and we may even take this in the reflexive: "except ye convert yourselves") and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And did not Peter preach on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"? And does not Paul advise the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"? No, indeed the fathers did not wish to deny the necessity of *conversion through the preaching of the Word*. But the Arminians taught that this was the sole element of grace in the work of conversion, that there was no other operation of grace than that gentle, moral advising or suasion of the Holy Ghost through the preaching. That is the question here, whether such moral suasion is *sufficient*. And it is well-known how Arminians of every shade love to emphasize all such Scriptural injunctions as we have quoted above as though such passages were the peculiar property of Arminians, and as though anyone who maintains the doctrine of efficacious grace denies these parts of Holy Writ, and as though Scripture taught nothing else about the work of conversion than what is found in these admonitions. One even finds the complaint in Reformed circles once in a while that "conversion is not preached enough." I am reminded in that connection of the story told about the late Rev. H. Danhof, who evidently understood this complaint quite well when it was brought against him by a certain consistory, and who rather bluntly and at the same time sarcastically treated it by repeating the admonition, "Bekeert u," ("Repent ye"), three times at the beginning of his sermon, and then turning to the said consistory with the question, "Is dat genoeg kerkeraad?" ("Is that enough, consistory?")

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Credentials

*"Those who are delegated to the assemblies shall bring with them their credentials and instructions, signed by those sending them, and they shall have a vote in all matters, except such as particularly concern their persons or churches."*

— Article 33

The following decisions pertaining to this article of the Church Order have been adopted by our Classes and Synod:

*"1. To promote uniformity the credential letter for delegation to major assemblies shall end in the following form: 'With instruction and authority to take part in all deliberations and transactions regarding all matters coming legally before the meeting and transacted in agreement with the Word of God according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as in harmony with the church order of the Protestant Reformed Churches.'"*

*"2. The major assemblies shall also have a stated clerk, who however shall not hold the position of permanent secretary, and who shall not be a member of the assembly's officers, but that of a deputy to serve the classis or synod with services which would otherwise constitute the task of such a functionary."*

This article has to do with the matter of ecclesiastical credentials. A credential, according to Webster, is "that which gives a title to credit or confidence; specifically, testimonials accrediting a person." Ecclesiastically they are of two kinds, Classical and Synodical. In the former the individual consistories express that certain persons are duly authorized or properly accredited to represent them at the meeting of the Classis. In the latter the Classis gives testimony concerning certain persons that they have been appointed to represent the Classis at the meeting of Synod. And I suppose that we could also speak of the individual's membership papers as a credential but with this we are not at present concerned. The credential letters referred to in this article are the Classical and Synodical and the form used in our churches is in both cases the same. We insert here a copy since we intend to refer presently to parts of it. It reads as follows:

#### Classical (Synodical) Credentials

L. S.

*To the Classis (Synod) of the Protestant Reformed Churches to convene.....19..... at .....*

*The Consistory (Classis) of the ..... Protestant Reformed Church(es), has appointed the brethren N..... N..... as delegates to represent said church (Classis) at the meeting of Classis (Synod) above referred to. The alternate delegates are N..... N.....*

*We hereby instruct and authorize them to take part in all the deliberations and transactions of Classis (Synod) re-*

*garding all matters legally coming before the meeting and transacted in agreement with the Word of God according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as in harmony with our Church Order.*

*INSTRUCTIONS (Classical credential only)*

*Done in consistory.....*

*By order of the Consistory (Classis)*

.....*President*

.....*Clerk*

The credential form, as Rev. Ophoff points out in his mimeographed notes on "Church Right," is formed of four parts: "(1) A statement of the delegation with the names of those delegated; (2) A statement of the task to be performed; (3) The instruction, and (4) The blessing."

Examination of the above cited credential letter will show that the fourth part, the blessing, is lacking. This part, which we feel should be included, appeared in the older Dutch form which read as follows:

#### CREDENTIEBRIEF

*Aan de Classe.....van Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken,*

*saamgekomen den.....19..... te.....*

*Weleerwaarde en Eerwaarde Broeders in onzen Heere Jezus Christus:*

*De Kerkeraad der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk van ..... heeft, in zijne samenkomst van.....19....., naar Uwe Eerwaarde vergadering gedeputeerd, nevens den Dienaar des Woords, den Weleerwaarde Heer..... den Broeder Ouderling.....bij wettige verhindering hunnerzijds te vervangen door hunne respectieve secundi de Broeders..... met last en volmacht om, namens hem, in gebondenheid aan den eenigen en onfeilbaren regel van Gods heilig Woord, naar de Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk: de Nederl. Ge-loofsbelijdenis, den Heidelbergischen Catechismus en de Dordtsche Leerregelen, in alle zaken, die Uwer Eerw. vergadering zullen voorkomen, alzo te helpen oordeelen en besluiten, als meest kan strekken tot den bloei der Kerken tot verbreiding van Gods Koninkrijk en tot verheerlijking van 's Heeren naam;*

*verbindende zich de Kerkeraad zijnerzijds, om alle besluiten Uwer vergadering, die met bovengenoemden regel niet strijdig zijn, voor bondig en vast te houden, en getrouwelijk te helpen naleven en uitvoeren.*

*Uwer vergadering, bij alle hare handelingen, de onmisbare leiding des Heiligen Geestes toebiddend, blijven we, met broedergroete,*

*De Kerkeraad der Chr. Geref. Kerk te.....*

.....*Praeses*

.....*Scriba*

(Taken from "Kerkelijk Handboek," door Revs. I. Van Delen en H. Keegstra)

Freely translated, this credential letter reads:

### CREDENTIAL LETTER

To the Classis of the Christian Reformed Churches, convening  
.....19.....at.....

Esteemed and honorable brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church at....  
.....has, in her gathering of..... delegated to  
your esteemed gathering, besides the minister of the Word  
the Rev. ...., brother elder....., who for  
lawful cause on their part may be replaced by their respective  
secundus, the brethren.....

with the mandate and authority to, in harmony with the  
one and infallible rule of the Holy Word of God according to  
the three forms of unity of the Christian Reformed Church:  
The Netherland's Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and  
the Canons of Dordrecht; help judge and decide all matters  
that come before your worthy gathering, striving to the ut-  
most for the profit of the church, for the extension of God's  
Kingdom and for the glorification of His Name.

The Consistory pledges to consider all decisions taken by  
your gathering and not in conflict with the above named rule  
to be settled and binding and to faithfully help maintain and  
execute them.

Praying your gathering the unmistakable guidance of the  
Holy Spirit in all her actions,

we remain, with fraternal greetings, the Consistory

President

Clerk

There are several elements in this credential letter that are to be preferred to our present form. We do not say that the form that is currently in use is inadequate, does not serve the purpose, or that there is anything wrong with it. That is something else. If that were so it would be our immediate duty to overture the major gatherings to revise the credential letter. But that is not the case. It is rather a matter of personal preference and a question as to whether the present form can be improved. This we believe to be the case.

In the first place, the salutation in the present form is cold. There is much more warmth in an address such as "Esteemed and worthy brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ." Merely to address the ecclesiastical body as the Classis or Synod of a particular church that is to meet at such and such a time and place leaves something important lacking. It is a gathering in Christ Jesus the Lord that is being addressed and this should be stated. In the present form the name of Jesus Christ does not appear at all and although it does not follow from this that He is not recognized or that His Name is deliberately excluded, we would prefer to see the Classis or Synod addressed "in the Name of her Lord."

Secondly, the statement of the delegation with the names of those delegated is in both letters substantially the same. There is some difference of terminology but no serious differences. In the older form mention is made of the fact that primi delegates may be replaced by their secundi only for

"lawful cause." This should, of course, be understood but it may be well to also express it in the credential letter since it does happen that delegates seek to be excused from this privileged service of Christ's church as a matter of personal expediency rather than of moral and spiritual right! The insertion of a clause to this effect serves to remind every appointed delegate of his duty in Christ Jesus. It does no harm to stress this!

Concerning the statement of the task to be performed, a few small matters might be mentioned here. First, where our present form reads: "transacted in agreement" . . ., it might be better to change this to read: "to help transact them in agreement . . .". Secondly, our present form speaks of "instruct and authorize . . ." whereas the older form has "met last en volmacht . . ." A mandate is a little stronger than an instruction as we understand the language. Thirdly, the older form does not mention the church order at all here. This should be retained as in the present form although it has already been suggested that the reading, "as well as in harmony with our church order" be changed to read simply: "and the accepted church order." Finally, the older form adds a brief description of the objective of the labors and certainly there can no objection to that. There is something for it, in fact! The purpose of the labors must be constantly before the delegates and this is then also accomplished when the letter of credential containing it is publicly read at the opening of the session. It should be included.

Fourthly, the statement by the consistory, pledging itself to maintain and execute the decisions of the broader assembly need not be expressed since it is stated in Article 31 of the Church Order to which each consistory binds itself. However, no harm is done by repeating it here and it serves the practical advantage of reminding the consistory of this obligation each time it sends delegates to the major assembly. Inasfar as brief principles of the Church Order can be incorporated into our forms without making the latter cumbersome, the practice should be encouraged.

Finally, the matter of the "blessing" which Rev. Ophoff points out is part of the credential form and appeared in the last part of the older form should be included in our forms currently used. The same warmth we mentioned in connection with the address is lacking when this is omitted. There is, we believe, a strengthening of the denominational tie of unity when Consistories address their Classes as "brethren in the Lord" and conclude their address "wishing you the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of our God!"

Hence, we feel that all these elements should be taken into consideration and a new or revised form adopted. Adding these things would necessarily make the form letter a bit longer but that would be no serious disadvantage. Its content would be improved and the beauty of the whole enhanced greatly and these are advantages worthy of consideration.

Perhaps one of the consistories will consider it worthy of an overture in the future!

G.V.D.B.

## THE QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE OF I TIM. 2:2

The wording of the above title is taken literally from the text in I Timothy 2:2. These words form part of an exhortation of the apostle Paul to his fellow-worker Timothy, which Timothy, in turn, is to direct to the churches for their instruction. The entire exhortation reads as follows: "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." vs. 1, 2.

From this exhortation of the apostle we learn that the ultimate goal which he has in mind, and to which he aspires, is a quiet and peaceable life for the churches. To this end the apostle pens the words of the exhortation; to this end he will have Timothy exhort the churches. And because he deems a quiet and peaceable life necessary for the churches, emphatically he exhorts that prayers be made for all men, including, specifically, kings and all in authority.

Somewhat different answers are given to the question: What constitutes the quiet and peaceable life of I Timothy 2:2. Calvin, in his commentary on this passage<sup>1</sup>, considers this quiet and peaceable life to consist in "the fruits which are yielded to us by a well regulated government." And these fruits, according to him, are three in number. "The first is a *peaceable life*; for magistrates are armed with the sword, in order to keep us in peace. If they did not restrain the hardness of wicked men, every place would be full of robberies and murders. The true way of maintaining peace, therefore, is when one obtains what is his own, and the violence of the more powerful is kept under restraint. The second fruit is the preservation of *godliness*, that is, when the magistrates give themselves to promote religion, to maintain the worship of God, and to take care that sacred ordinances be observed with due reverence. The third fruit is the care of public *decency*; for it is also the business of magistrates to prevent men from abandoning themselves to brutal filthiness or flagitious conduct, but on the contrary, to promote decency and moderation." To Calvin, then, the quiet and peaceable life is dependent upon the social conditions existing about the church, and is to be had only when governments rightly regulate the life in the community.

R. H. Lenski, in his commentary of I Timothy 2:2,<sup>2</sup> gives a somewhat similar, yet more general, content to this quiet and peaceable life. To express his view on the matter he quotes from the liturgical General Prayer of the American Lutheran Church as follows: "Cause thy glory to dwell in our land, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace everywhere to prevail, etc. . . . Graciously defend us from all calamities by fire and water, from war and pestilence, from scarcity and famine." And to Lenski, an answer of God to this prayer will provide the church with the quiet and peaceable life. Dependent, therefore, again, is this life upon the

conditions and circumstances in which the church finds herself in the world.

And generally similar to the above are most commentaries on this passage in I Timothy 2. And in most of these commentaries the quiet and peaceable life mentioned and sought by Paul consists in the absence of all social and civic, all economic and natural evils and disturbances which are prevalent in the world, and which in one degree or another affect the life of the church. It consists in the absence of all hatred and malice toward the church, of all persecutions and all oppositions to the church. And positively, this quiet and peaceable life consists in an acknowledgment of the church by all men whereby she is held in honor and esteem. Her religion is to be promoted, her doctrines maintained, her members and their possessions protected. And we could continue. But to put it in other words, for the church to lead a quiet and peaceable life in the world, all the above must first of all prevail in the community, in the nation, and in the world. Then, and only then, will the church be able to lead this quiet and peaceful life of I Timothy 2:2.

Accordingly, of course, these commentators give content to the prayers which the apostle exhorts to be made by the churches. Calvin, in harmony with this conception, would have prayers uttered by the churches for the salvation of kings and rulers, and that these may come to knowledge of the truth and thus "begin to impart to us those benefits of which they formerly deprived us." Thus he considers that their salvation will be conducive to proper government and, consequently, to a quiet and peaceable life for the churches. Lenski will have supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks made for all men, including kings and rulers, in order that they may be saved, but also that they, with the believers, may share in "the many blessings (of a quiet and peaceable life) secured by this prayer." Still others, ignoring the fact that Paul will have prayers made for all (kinds, classes of) men that they may "be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (vs. 4), would exhort the churches to pray for a rich measure of God's common grace to be bestowed upon kings and all in authority so that "the curse of militarism may be curbed, that war may be prevented, that civic righteousness in national and international relationships may be advanced, in order that in the peace of our land we may also have peace."<sup>3</sup>

Much could be said about the above conceptions of the quiet and peaceable life as well as about the contents which commentators generally give to the prayers exhorted by the apostle. It is true that Paul exhorts prayers to be made for the salvation of men, including also, men among kings and rulers. But neither Scripture in general, nor the context in I Timothy 2, in particular know of such a quiet and peaceable life as depicted above. Nor do the Scriptures ever give grounds to the believer that an answer to prayers with the above contents will ever be answered. From Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," to Matthew 10:22, "And ye

shall be hated of all men for my name's sake," the Bible knows of no such quiet and peaceable life for the church. Moreover, from Daniel to Revelation the Scriptures always forewarn of wars and rumors of wars, of earthquakes and famines, of persecutions and troubles in the world; even speaking of a sharp increase in all these as the end of this world draws ever nearer. Let us not be deceived.

Least of all, however, do such conceptions of a quiet and peaceable life find any basis in the text of I Timothy 2. Fact is, that the text is averse to any such interpretations. This is evident, first of all, from the word "lead" in the text, which in Scripture has only an active meaning. In the original it reads literally: lead through. The quiet and peaceable life then is not simply a life lived or passed under quiet and peaceable conditions and circumstances, but is one quietly and peaceably conducted by the church. Hence it is evident that Paul is not characterizing the conditions and circumstances which envelope the church as she lives in the world, but, rather, is indicating the manner in which the churches are to conduct themselves in the world, namely, quietly and peaceably. Moreover, that the text is averse to the above interpretations is evident in that Paul speaks of leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. And, certain it is, that although quiet and peace should reign in the world about the church, such could never be characterized as godly. For, godliness is characteristic of a walk or life which is rooted in the fear of the Lord. Godliness cannot characterize conditions and circumstances even though such be peaceful and quiet. It is only to be applied to a concrete walk, and here is applied to the life led or conducted by the church and the believers. And so too, the word honesty, which is better translated as honorable. Both are descriptive of the conduct of the church. For while godliness describes the life of the church as rooted in the fear of the Lord, as being in harmony with the will of God, and according to His commandments and precepts, the word honorable speaks of that life as above reproach, so conducted that it incites and merits respect and honor. Together, they depict a life that breathes of the fear of the Lord and is altogether above reproach.

From all this it is evident that the quiet and peaceable life of Paul does not refer to conditions and circumstances which may surround the church of Christ. And, from this too, it is evident that the quiet and peaceable life of I Timothy 2:2 is in no way dependent on what may exist in the world. Conditions and circumstances have nothing to do with this life at all. And this is evident from all of Scripture. For we are to love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that spitefully use us. Matt. 5:44. Servants are to be subject to their masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. I Peter 2:18. And thus we could go on. Even though the world in which we live be at war; though there be famine or pestilence; though kings and rulers and men persecute the church and seek her destruction; still the church is to conduct her life in the fear of the

Lord and in a highly honorable way. And in this way she will also lead a quiet and peaceable life.

For, first of all, a quiet life is a life which harmonizes fully with the accepted, and authorized, as well as lawful standards of conduct and walk, in the community, nation and above all the Church. It in no way incites disobedience, riot or unrest, but conforms in all respects to godliness and honesty. And, secondly, in the way of walking in godliness and honesty, the church will maintain a peaceable, or better said, a restful walk. For a restful walk and life is one content to care for its own, and does not meddle in the affairs of others. In our text then; a peaceable life is a life conducted by believers and the church in which, refraining from meddling in affairs not their own, they give diligence to, and are content in, their own calling and station as ordained of God. Thus in quiet and restfulness, and in all godliness and honesty Paul would have the church live in the world.

And unto this end Paul exhorts that prayers be made by the churches for men of all stations in life, also for kings and rulers. For this is according to the will of God who "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." It is not for the church to make distinctions, to eliminate some from their prayers. This is detrimental to a peaceable and quiet life. It will only serve to a disregard of authority. But for this same reason Paul exhorts to "Put them in mind to be subject to all powers, to obey magistrates . . ." Titus 3:1. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters." I Peter 4:15. And again he exhorts "aged men," "aged women," "young women" and "young men" and "servants." Titus 2. And so too, he admonishes with a view to the adornment of women, their being subject to husbands, elders and deacons, and widows. I Tim. 2, 3, 4.

All these things, and more, he writes to the churches with a view to instructing them as to the way in which they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in the world. The apostle would have the believers "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2:15.

G. Lanting

1. *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 51, 52.

2. *Interpretation of Timothy*, p. 540.

3. Rev. Zwier in *De Wachter*, May 6, 1941 (translation mine).

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### The True and False Church as to the Confessions

According to the confessions (Art. 29, Confessions of Faith) there are two churches. True and false. And these two churches are easily distinguished from each other. As for the true church the confessions teach that where the Word of God is purely preached there the church is. This means a church denomination that officially confesses nothing

but truth (as the apostles and the prophets preached) and maintains, preaches, and teaches this truth is the true church. For where the truth is preached there Christ speaks and where Christ speaks the Church is.

As to the false church denomination, she officially declares, preaches, and teaches that God well-meaningly offers salvation to all men, that salvation is conditional, in short, Arminianism. She preaches not as the apostles and the prophets preached but preaches another gospel. Furthermore the false church persecutes those who rebuke her for her idolatry, and casts them out of their midst, thereby defiling the sacraments.

That the confessions are not speaking about the people in the church is plain when they state (but we speak not here of hypocrites, who are mixed in the church with the good, yet are not of the church, though externally in it). In other words the confessions mean that the hypocrites in the true church do not make the true church denomination partly false or less pure. Nor does it make the false church denomination less false if there are still children of God left in it. The confessions are speaking of different denominations, and they judge a denomination, true or false by what they officially confess, preach, teach, and maintain. Therefore I maintain that the Prot. Ref. Church denomination is the true, pure church. She officially confesses, preaches, teaches, and maintains the gospel as the apostles and the prophets preached. She officially confesses nothing but Truth.

If this view is not in harmony with the confessions I would appreciate comment, especially from Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff.

B. J. Meelker  
Redlands, California

## 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

*Reprobation*

(Continued)

Why some are gifted with faith by God in time, and some are not so gifted, is therefore determined by God's eternal decree. And that decree does not have chief reference to the Fall of man, or even to the sins of the reprobate. For it was made "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil" (Ro. 9:11). Rather the decree has primary reference to the sovereign good pleasure and will of God, "who worketh all things (including reprobation) after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). Election is the main object of the eternal purpose of God. The Fall and reprobation are subservient to that main object. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself (for His own

purpose); yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Pro. 16:4).

### *Limited Atonement*

5. ARMINIANISM supposes that the Atonement of Christ is "not according to a certain and definite decree to save some, but was made according to a general, conditional offer of grace which God desired to make to all men absolutely and indiscriminately: 'who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (I Ti. 2:4). But being conditional, the death of Christ does not infallibly secure the salvation of anyone. The word 'atonement' is not to be understood in the sense that it makes salvation *actual*, but that it merely provides a *possible* salvation for the whole human race: 'and He is the propitiation (provided remedy) for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole *world*' (I Jn. 2:2). This possibility remains even for the so-called reprobate: cf. Cain — 'if thou doest not well, sin (a sin-offering) lieth at the door' (Gn. 4:7). In its extent, therefore, the atonement is universal: He died for all the ungodly; the gospel being for 'whosoever.' ('Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,' Ac. 2:21.) God loves everybody; He can hate nobody (Jn. 3:16). The preaching of the gospel is grace for all who hear; for 'gospel' means *good news*. But if the gospel provides salvation for the elect only, it cannot be good news to those for whose salvation it contains no possible provision. This being so, the cross is like a blank check, providing universal redemption, payable to the endorser, merely for his endorsement, which in turn completes the stipulated terms of the atonement." But the final effectuation of election and salvation depends upon the free will of man. As a result, all or none may be saved! "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (Lam. 1:12) implies that it may not be anything to anybody.

CALVINISM sponsors the Biblical doctrine of particular atonement, which does more than to render salvation possible, but secures the actual salvation of those for whom Christ died; and He died for those the Father gave to Him (Jn. 17:2, 12). So that death is not for a vague, general "whosoever," but for "whosoever *believeth*" (3:16); and they only believe who were ordained to eternal life (Ac. 13:48). When Scripture says that Christ died for the ungodly (Ro. 5:6), it should be noted that it does not say He died for *all* the ungodly. Where the word "all" does appear in connection with the atonement of Christ, it has a meaning limited by the context. The arm of the Lord is not revealed to *all* (Isa. 53:1). Why? because the Lord had sovereignly determined to harden and blind the rest so that they *could not* believe (Jn. 12:37-40). In I Co. 15:22 (Ro. 5:18) "all" means all in Christ; otherwise the Arminian will prove more than he wants to prove. In I Ti. 2:4 it is *all* classes of men.

(To be continued)