

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

JESUS' RESURRECTION

LUKE 24:13-35

It must have been rather late in the afternoon when two of the disciples of Jesus left Jerusalem for the village called Emmaus. Rather late, because the distance was about 7 miles and when they arrived there, it was toward evening and the day was far spent.

And what a day it had been!

On the afternoon of that day of Jesus' resurrection, we see two men leaving the gates of the holy city in order to direct their steps to the village called Emmaus.

We shall do well to be quiet. We want to listen in on their conversation. They are certainly enwrapped in it. Question follows question, remark follows remark. They speak and ask again. And ever the same answer: No, we cannot understand why Jesus had to die! Oh, why did He have to die? Who can understand that awful cross? Here we had placed all our hopes on this wonderful prophet. He would be the great general who would lead our legions in order to once more vanquish the armies of God's enemies. But no, without striking one solitary blow, He gave Himself to a handful of soldiers and servants, armed with swords and sticks. When they scolded Him and struck Him, He grew silent. He even rebuked one of us when we would strike and kill and destroy!

And yes, now He is gone! Nevermore to return. And did we not love Him? Oh, we love Him still even though He is gone forever. For He was so good and wise and wonderful in all His words and deeds! Our hearts are weeping within us for the Christ of God who died and went His solitary way!

And thus they talked and talked.

* * * *

But, wait, here is another sojourner on the way to Em-

maus. Let us fall back and see what He wants. Listen, He will speak to our downcast friends.

What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?

Oh, oh, that question found no friendly home. We can see that in one glance. The one, named Cleopas, turns himself impatiently to the questioner with somewhat of a stern rebuke: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

Oh, let us not be hard on Cleopas. The intended rebuke has a rather weighty reason. The things that happened there in Jerusalem were to them the most terrible that could have happened. Their very lives and hopes for the future were all wrapped up in Jesus of Nazareth. We can understand the annoyance of Cleopas and his friend. Besides, the things alluded to are about the most important ones of all the ages. So important that Paul after due study and contemplation, born of the Holy Spirit of God, came to the conclusion that Jesus' cross would have to be the sum and substance of his preaching. Come now, stranger, are you the only stranger here in Jerusalem? Dost thou not know of the cross of Jesus?

But our stranger on the road to Emmaus insists: What things?

And then the floodgates of their hearts are opened. The words gush out. You cannot help but notice how eagerly they relate the whole grievous story in well chosen words, the whole sad problem, including the main question that bothered them: "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him!"

Two things stand out in their version of Golgotha and all that related to it. First, that they could find no place for that cross. Everything else concerning Jesus they could understand, nay, worship. He was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. In a few words you have all their happy experience of the last three years. They had been witnesses of the power of God unto salvation. The dead arose, the sick were healed, the elements were

but servants in His hand, the poor received life and substance. And unto the spiritually hungry the Gospel was given. But that Cross, oh, that Cross! We find no place for that cross. We thought that He would be the promised redeemer from the yoke of the heathen. But no. He was crucified and is now dead and buried three days.

* * * *

And the second thing we note is their love for the Christ. Listen to Cleopas, he will tell you. Certain women have been at His grave. They tell of a vision of angels, of the unbelievable story that He lives — but, stranger, Him, oh, Him they saw not!

But as soon as they are silent again, He says to them: O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Your problem is no problem at all. You find no place for that awful cross, do ye? Well, that cross is the Divine answer to all your sad questions. It fits with Heavenly accuracy. But you have been and are fools and slow of heart in believing. Had you read your Bibles with more belief in your hearts you would have seen that the Christ of God, in order to be Christ, ought to suffer the things that you could not understand, in order that He might enter into His glory!

Don't you know the Scriptures?

Come, let us begin with Adam. Don't you remember the first Paradise and the happy pair of mortals that dwelled there? How they sinned and how Jehovah slaughtered an innocent animal in order to cover their nakedness? See the flood of innocent blood that was shed in history by sacrifices and offerings. Come with me and I shall show you, slow of heart, the cross in Isaiah's prophecy. Listen to the roaring of the Christ in the psalms of David. You will hear the exact words that reverberated the hills of Judah a few days ago.

* * * *

No, we have not the exact words of the sermon, but we have the beautiful text. It is the Bible. It is the exposition of the Son of God.

And here is the emphasis: Christ must suffer and die in order to enter into His glory. Do you see it, Cleopas? Together with your friend?

It must happen. There was a Divine necessity. God wanted to glorify Himself in His children. The elect children of God whom He loved, had by His determinate counsel fallen into sin and subsequent guilt. Yet He loved them even while they were sinners. And He determined to have them with Him in heaven forever. And since the Son of God was made their Head in His counsel, that Son must needs suffer and die for them, so that He might bring all these sons and daughters to glory.

The two wayfarers have grown silent. Not one question they asked. Far from interrupting the stranger, they have

hung on every word He uttered. They drink in every word, every phrase, every thought expressed. Their eyes shone, their faces lit up, their every mien and bearing expressed exultation.

What strange, passing strange scene we are witnessing.

A preacher of the Word of God. Yes, but He is both subject and object of His sermon. He preached the Christ and He is the Christ. What authority rung in every word.

And what audience to this perfect sermon. They are silent in admiration. They are taught heavenly wisdom. O happy souls. Would you not have liked to be there? But then, let us make no mistake. We have the sermon in Old and New Testament. And when the Holy Spirit has opened our heart we also may sit at Jesus' feet to listen and drink of the water of life. And we do unto God's praises.

* * * *

But watch the closing scene.

Talking and listening the miles have dwindled away. There are the first houses of Emmaus. They approached their own dwelling. But the stranger held Himself as though He would go farther.

But no, stranger, no, that may not be. Please, enter our dwelling. There must be more to say, to listen, to enjoy. This is heaven to our souls. Our hearts are burning within us and it is all because of Thy words and sermon.

Sweet, simple, lovable children of God! They had enjoyed the bread of angels. And would fain prolong such bliss. It is not every day that we may sit at the feet of such a Teacher and Preacher. Oh, the Saviour's audience was indeed appreciative.

Yes, they constrained Him. It has become history. Cleopas said: Abide with us, fast falls the eventide! The day, O stranger, is far spent! Note the words that convention dictates. Their plea is: Abide with us! And here are the reasons, O stranger! It is toward evening. And: the day is far spent! Yes, but Jesus knew the real reason: they had learned to love this stranger. Their shining eyes have told their story.

* * * *

And He went in to tarry with them. Angels hovered near their Lord and His children. Scene of heavenly harmony and bliss. Our hearts grow weary with longing for heaven and heaven's God.

Yes, and He was invited to sit at meat with them.

When He took bread, blessed it, and brake, and gave to them, their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

Do you not notice how the mouth of Cleopas already opens to say: My Lord and my God!? But too late. He vanished out of their sight. Why? Because no manner of

misery, despair, sorrow or anything could ever blot out the image of their Lord whom they had learned to know through His Word. No enemy or devil could ever obliterate the image of Jesus that dwelled in their hearts through the Holy Ghost that was given unto them.

Are they sorrowing because Jesus disappeared out of their midst? Oh, why should we ask such a foolish question. Watch Cleopas and his companion. They rose up the same hour and back they went the same journey to Jerusalem. They will multiply the joy that burns within them. Oh, why do you think we speak and sing and make music this day?

The day is far spent and yet our Lord abides with us. And He shall abide until life's journey is over. Then again He will take the chief seat at the table of the Lord in His Father's house. To take the bread and bless and give it.

Unto our eternal joy and singing.

The Lord is risen indeed and appeared unto His own. Hallelujah! Amen.

G.V.

Eastern Ladies' League

The Eastern Ladies' League will hold their Spring meeting, D.V., on April 24 at First Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the topic, "The Mission Calling of our Protestant Reformed Churches."

We invite all ladies to come and enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, Vice Secretary

THANKFULNESS AND TRIUMPHANT JOY

Ye gates of peace and joy untold,
Ye gates of righteousness, unfold,
That I may enter in and raise
A song of thankfulness and praise.

Within Thy gates, O God of grace,
Thy saints shall find a dwelling-place;
My thanks and praise to Thee I bear,
My Saviour, Who hast heard my prayer.

What wondrous things the Lord hath wrought!
The stone the builders set at naught,
Established by no human hand,
The chiefest corner-stone doth stand.

In this day the Lord hath made
To Him be joyful honors paid;
Let us Thy full salvation see,
O Lord, send now prosperity.

Hosanna! Praise to Him proclaim
Who cometh in Jehovah's Name;
May blessing from God's dwellingplace
Descend on us in boundless grace.

Psalm 118

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EDITORIALS

Diotrephes

The name of Diotrephes, is evidently, of sufficient importance to have a place in the Word of God.

It occurs in the third epistle of John.

In that epistle the apostle chiefly writes about three men and the name of Diotrephes occurs right in the midst of them. He first gives us some information about Gaius, to whom also this epistle is addressed. He was, probably, an elder in the church. About him the apostle, in the first place, says that he loves him very dearly in the Lord. Already in the address he speaks of him as "the wellbeloved Gaius." Then, in the second verse, he writes once more that he is beloved and that he wishes him to prosper in every respect. And in vs. 5 he addresses him once more as "beloved" and witnesses of him that he does faithfully whatever he does, both to the brethren and to strangers. Gaius, according to the apostle, knows the truth and is walking in the truth. The truth is in him. He revealed this especially by receiving and helping those that came to the church from without. "Missionaries" who had preached the gospel to the Gentiles and had taken nothing from them.

This is, indeed, a beautiful picture of the "wellbeloved" Gaius.

Then, in vs. 12, the apostle gives testimony to Demetrius. It is much briefer than that of Gaius, but it is also favorable. He tells us of him that he has a good report of all and of the truth itself.

But right in the midst of these good reports there occurs the most miserable picture of Diotrephes.

The chief feature of that picture is expressed in the words "who loveth to have the preeminence among them," that is, among the brethren, in the church. The original word means that he wanted to be first and wanted to be regarded as such. He could not tolerate that anyone was considered better than he, that anyone in the church had more influence and power than he, yea, he could not even stand it that someone stood next to him as regarded as of equal importance in the church as he. He wanted to be first.

Of course, there have always been men in the church that, according to their God-given position and power, had the preeminence in the Church of Christ. To these belong, first of all and chiefly, the apostles, who have the preeminence over the entire New Testament church by reason of their apostolic authority. They were infallibly inspired and to them the entire church is subject. But there also have been men like Augustine, Luther, Calvin and others to whom God has given special power, insight in the truth, and leadership in the church. Such men do not love to be first and have the preeminence, but they simply occupy their God-given place in the church and use their God-given powers and gifts for the benefit of the church.

This is not true of men like Diotrephes.

He may have had certain gifts but whatever gifts and talents he had he did not employ for the wellbeing of the church but for his own selfish ends. There was nothing especially preeminent about him, yet he loved to be considered first.

Men like that are a very evil influence in the church.

This is evident from all that the apostle writes about him in this brief epistle.

First of all, he writes that he, John, had written a letter to the church but that Diotrephes "receiveth us not." It is not improbable that the church met in the house of Diotrephes and that, therefore, the apostle had addressed his letter that was intended for the church to him. But that letter never reached the church. Most probably when the bearers of the epistle had wanted to give it to Diotrephes he had refused to receive it. And why? Because he loved to be first and, therefore, was jealous of the authority and influence of the apostle.

Envy and jealousy is one of the evils that characterizes men that love the preeminence in the church.

Another of their evils is that they lie and slander those that are better than they, have more God-given power and authority than they or even stand in the same position. This, too, is evident from what John writes about Diotrephes. He, according to the apostle, was prating against him with malicious words. He, evidently, went around in the congregation reviling and slandering the apostle. Again we ask: why? And the answer is always the same: Diotrephes wanted to be first and he loved to have the preeminence. Hence, he could not tolerate that the apostle had greater authority than he.

One can readily imagine that men like Diotrephes had a very evil influence in the congregation.

Still more.

The apostle also writes that he not only refused to receive him and that he babbled against him with all kinds of malicious words and slander, but: "not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." By the brethren whom Diotrephes refused to receive the apostle, evidently, refers to those whom he had mentioned in vs. 5-8. They were those that had come to the church from without and who had witnessed the name of the Lord among the Gentiles without receiving any reward of them. These Diotrephes did not receive. And not only did he not receive them, but he also forbade others that were willing to receive them to do so, and these he even cast out of the church. And why? Because he was, evidently, afraid, not only that these men might have some influence in the church by the report of their labors among the Gentiles, but also that they might carry an evil report about him to the apostle as well as to others.

Jealousy, envy, lying, slander and hatred of the brethren were the evils that characterized Diotrephes.

Let us beware of men like him!

H.H.

Become One With Them?

In the bulletin of the schismatic Fourth Church of Grand Rapids, I read that the consistory "decided to request Classis to overture Synod to contact the churches with Rev. Hoeksema with a view to having them become one with us."

This is a strange request and I cannot help wondering what is the motive behind this.

Do not fail to notice that the request is that we become one *with them*.

Not they with us, but we with them.

This implies that we take their stand, that we confess that we were wrong in condemning De Wolf and others for their conditional theology and preaching, and that we also repudiate the Declaration of Principles which they have already rejected.

This, I assure the consistory of the Fourth Church (schismatic) the Protestant Reformed Churches, which are we, will never do.

Shall we become one again? Who of us would ever dare to answer that question negatively? I least of all.

But such a union can be accomplished only before the face of God and, therefore, in the light of the truth and in the proper way. And that is certainly not the case with the overture of Cammenga's consistory.

Hence, I would suggest another overture to that consistory which would read as follows:

"The consistory requests Classis to overture Synod to express that we desire to become one again with the Protestant Reformed Churches, expressing our sorrow that, by our erroneous teaching and preaching of conditional theology and by our rejection of the Declaration of Principles, we have ever separated ourselves from those churches."

I assure the consistory of Cammenga that we would be very glad to receive such an overture. But it is almost inconceivable that they will ever do such a thing even though it is the truth pure and simple. History teaches very clearly that a church, that has once become separatistic and departed from the truth, never returns but rather advances on the slippery road of error and false doctrine.

But we, i.e. the Protestant Reformed Churches that are really Protestant Reformed, will never become one with them.

The truth of God in Christ is too precious to us for this.

H.H.

The Declaration of Principles

We were, and still are, discussing the rather important question of "conditions" which was the principal reason why those that departed from the faith which we have always con-

fessed are no longer Protestant Reformed and why they were opposed to and rejected the above mentioned Declaration of Principles. The last time, you will remember, we were discussing our Baptism Form in order to prove that our fathers that composed that Form must have nothing of conditions. This we will now continue for a while.

We read:

"And although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ; as God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and therefore unto us and our children (Gen. 17:7), saying, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.' This also the apostle Peter testifieth, with these words (Acts 2:39), 'For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Therefore God formerly commanded them to be circumcised, which was a seal of the covenant and of the righteousness of faith; and therefore Christ also embraced them, laid his hands upon them and blessed them (Mark 10)."

Now let us attend to these words of our Baptism Form a little more in detail, particularly with a view to the question concerning conditions.

The Form here says that even as our little children are partakers of the condemnation in Adam, *without their knowledge*, so are they again received unto grace in Christ.

You say, undoubtedly, that it stands to reason that our children do not and cannot know that they are under the condemnation in Adam. And that is true, of course. But it is, nevertheless, for the question we are discussing at present, important that we understand clearly the implication of this statement. That we are under the condemnation in Adam means, of course, that the guilt of Adam is imputed to us so that we are worthy of damnation and death. This is applied to our little children. This implies that they can do nothing about this. Personally they all come into the world with the guilt of Adam on their head. It is not a question as to whether or not they are able to fulfill any conditions. Their being under the condemnation of Adam is without their knowledge and, therefore, absolutely unconditional.

Now, our Baptism Form tells us that those same little children are in like manner again received unto grace in Christ. This means, of course, that our little ones are received unto grace in Christ without their knowledge, without their consent, without their having done anything about it and, therefore, unconditionally. For many so-called Reformed theologians this language is too strong. They, therefore, invent the theory that this refers to the promise, that the promise is, indeed, for all the children of the covenant, but

that, if this promise is to be realized to them, they must fulfill the condition of faith. But how absolutely impossible is this interpretation in the light of the entire sentence. If this were true, it must be applied to the first part of this sentence as well as to the second part. Then the sentence would mean the following: "Even as all our children are under the guilt and condemnation of Adam, but if this is to be realized to them they themselves must accept this guilt and condemnation; so also the promise of salvation is for all as far as God is concerned, but if this promise is to be realized the children must accept it by faith as a condition of their salvation when they come to years of discretion." That this cannot be the meaning is evident to all. And therefore, the only possible explanation is, that our little children are unconditionally received unto grace in Christ.

You object, perhaps, that this cannot be said of all the children of the church that are born in the line of the covenant?

We agree. But, as I said before, the Baptism Form speaks throughout of the spiritual seed, the elect. It leaves the carnal or reprobate seed entirely out of sight and does not consider them.

The same truth is expressed in the rest of the paragraph from the Baptism Form which we quoted above.

It is the meaning of the texts that are quoted. How could God establish His everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed conditionally so that it would be dependent on a second party for its realization? It is true, of course, as the apostle teaches us in Rom. 9, it is only the spiritual seed of Abraham with whom God establishes His everlasting covenant: "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." And therefore, even in the outward manifestation of the covenant in the line of generations it is true that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" and also that "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." But this certainly does not mean that the establishment of the covenant or the promise is conditional. The very contrary is true for it signifies that election and reprobation run right through the generations of the people of God and that, therefore, the promise of God is absolutely sovereign and unconditional. The same is true of the text quoted from Acts 2:39. It is true that the apostle addresses the entire audience that confronts him when he says: "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off," but that, nevertheless, he does not mean that the promise is for every one of them individually is evident from what he adds: "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." He does not leave it up to man, he does not say "as many as will accept the promise," but it is the work of the sovereign God Who calls whom He will.

The rest of this paragraph is of minor importance for our

purpose, although it must not be overlooked that the sign of circumcision and, therefore, also of baptism, was a seal of the righteousness of faith. For thus we read in Rom. 4:11: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised." Now, if infants of eight days old received that seal of God, and if, therefore, infants in the new dispensation receive the same seal of God in baptism, it is evident that they cannot fulfill any conditions. They receive the seal of the righteousness which is by faith unconditionally.

The same is true of Jesus' blessing of the little children. In the context we read: "And they brought young children unto him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." All these passages the Form quotes as belonging to the basis of infant baptism. At the same time it proves that the grace of God and the promise are unconditional. If little children are in the kingdom of God they surely did not fulfill any conditions in order to become heirs of that kingdom. Besides, this is also literally expressed in what follows in the Baptism Form: "infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of his covenant."

This is also expressed in the exhortation to parents and in the first question that is asked them. In the former we read the well-known words: "you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of God, to seal unto us and to our seed his covenant." And in the latter the question is asked: "Whether you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore as members of his church ought to be baptized." Little infants are in Christ, are sanctified in Him, and are members of His church. All, of course, unconditional.

Finally, attend to the words of the Thanksgiving in this Form:

"Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism; we beseech Thee, through the same Son of Thy love, that Thou wilt be pleased always to govern these baptized children by Thy Holy Spirit, that they may be piously and religiously educated, increase and grow up in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may then acknowledge Thy fatherly goodness which Thou hast shown to them and us, and live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ; and manfully fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion, to the end that they may eternally praise and magnify Thee, and Thy Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, the only true God. Amen."

This is the climax of the whole of the unconditional theology that is expressed in the Baptism Form.

Here it is confessed, before the face of God, with praise and thanksgiving, that He *has* forgiven all the sins of those little children that are baptized and who surely cannot fulfill any conditions. The forgiveness of sins is, therefore, unconditional.

Here it is emphatically expressed that God has received us as members of Christ and therefore, we are ingrafted into Him. And who are the "us" to whom the reference is here? They are the whole church, including the little infants that are just baptized. Conditions, you say? I say: ridiculous! Our fathers never thought of conditions when they wrote this thanksgiving in the Form of Baptism. Infants are here confessed to be living members of Christ, and infants cannot comply with any conditions. The promise of God is absolutely unconditional.

Here it is confessed before the face of God that He adopted us to be His children and, again, the "us" includes little children. Is this adoption not a work of God according to which He realizes unto us the grace of justification? Can this adoption, which is the realization of His eternal counsel of election, ever be changed by anything we may do? Of course not. But then, seeing that this adoption refers to little infants as well as to confessing believers, is not also this part of the promise of God unconditional? It certainly is!

Hence, we claim that those that maintain their conditional theology cannot use this thanksgiving. Yea, more: we insist that those who want conditions cannot possibly use this Form of Baptism. They really must become baptists.

And the Declaration of Principles, which maintains that the promise of God is unconditional, surely is confirmed by our Form for the baptism of infants.

H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

Anneke Jans, by P. J. Risseeuw. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 7.90.

This is a romance about life of the Dutch settlers in New York which was, at that time, the seventeenth century, still called Nieuw Amsterdam. The author concentrates what may be called a historical novel around the life of Anneke Jans, whose life was characterized by many conflicting experiences. It is in connection with her life that the history and experiences of the early Dutch settlers in New York are described.

A very interesting book, beautifully written. I heartily recommend this book to all that can still find interest in a well written Holland novel.

H.H.

Sin, Its Origin and Knowledge, by Dr. G. C. Berkouwer. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands.

This book is part of the series "Dogmatic Studies" by

the same author. In seven chapters, he treats the question about the origin of sin, the teaching of Scripture that God is not the origin of sin, the dualistic conception, sin and demonism, the riddle of sin, sin and the law, sin and the gospel.

I have the impression that the chief emphasis of this volume of Berkouwer's series is placed throughout on the fact that sin is essentially inexplicable, that it is, as he expresses it, a riddle. This he already expresses in the first chapter where he asks the question whether it does not follow from the very essence of sin that any explanation of sin is impossible, and then answers his own question positively, p. 19. And this idea he develops more fully in the fifth chapter on the "riddle of sin." In spite of this I would have liked to see some explanation of this "riddle" in the light of Scripture.

I was glad to notice that Berkouwer, evidently, rejects the idea of the "covenant of works" which we, as Berkouwer ought to know, have always rejected. See pp. 200-201.

I gladly recommend this volume to students of theology who can read the Dutch language.

H.H.

Gezicht op de Zending (View on Mission), by Dr. J. C. Gilhuis. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 4.90.

This book is one of the nicest studies on the subject of missions that I have read for a long time. He first of all has a chapter which he calls "The heart of the matter," in which he describes the biblical basis of missions both from the Old and the New Testament. Then he goes through the history of missions, describes the work of missions "on various fronts," discusses the different methods of mission-work, in order to conclude with an answer to the question how churches ought to be dealt with that have just been organized, through the labors of the missionaries, in heathen lands.

The book is clearly written and soundly biblical and Reformed. Hence, I recommend it to all that are still able to read Dutch.

H.H.

ATTACHMENT TO THE CHURCH

With joy and gladness in my soul
I hear the call to prayer;
Let us go up to God's own house
And bow before Him there.

We stand within thy sacred walls,
O Zion, blest for aye,
Wherein the people of the Lord
United homage pay.

Psalm 122:1, 2

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER II

The Numberless Throng

Revelation 7:9, 13-17

But a few words of explanation we must nevertheless stammer. We often forget, perhaps, that Christ will be our head and our all, even in eternity. He is not a Savior that serves only in this dispensation, unto the end of time, and that will leave us again as soon as we are perfectly redeemed. Oh, no: Christ is now our head in the absolute sense of the word, our Lord and our King. He now sits at the right hand of God, and rules over us in perfection. The time shall come indeed that He will deliver His kingdom, deliver it to the Father, and also shall be subject Himself. This, however, does not mean that then He shall disappear as our Savior, lay aside perhaps His human nature, or abdicate entirely and occupy no place in the new creation. On the contrary, then He shall occupy the place of our head and of our King under God as the second Adam, and that too, forevermore. Also in eternity we shall be organically one with Christ. Also then He shall be our head; He shall be our King, our leader, in the new creation. Also then we shall have our all in Him, and our life we shall draw from Him forevermore, and through Him from God. He is now our redemption and our sanctification: and all we receive in the line of grace we receive by faith from Him. But also then He shall be the fount of our life, through which we shall draw the living water of eternal life from the Lord our God. That is the meaning of the expression that He shall lead us to fountains of water, of the water of life. No more suffering and no more want there shall be. And why not? Because the Lord Jesus Christ shall forevermore be with us, and shall forevermore give us the true life, the abundant, perfect, eternal life, life without the taste of death in it, life of everlasting satisfaction and glory. And God shall remove all the causes of suffering and sorrow from our body and from our soul and from the entire creation, and thus He shall wipe away all the tears from our eyes.

Thus we also understand the meaning of this particular portion, and that too, in distinction from the immediately preceding. The first portion contained for us the comfort that the Lord keeps us in the midst of tribulation and that we shall not be harmed, however high the billows of affliction may go over our heads. For we are sealed, and the Lord through His Spirit keeps us and always gives us strength according to the tribulation. But this second portion pictures before our eyes what will be the outcome of the tribulation, in order to inspire us with confidence and courage, and to cause us not to be afraid of the tribulation of this present time. The glory that is pictured to us is so great, so

beautiful, so all-comprehensively abundant, that for it we are willing to give our all, our life and our possessions. And with a view to it, in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can well afford to suffer a little persecution and a little pain for a little while. For it quickly passes away, and then the glory, everlasting glory, is awaiting us. Then our dear Lord Jesus Christ will forevermore be with us, and in Him our God and our Father shall have perfect communion with us. Surely, then we shall serve Him day and night. And what will be the expression of our service we hope to see in our next chapter. Let it now be sufficient that we have again by faith grasped a glimpse of that everlasting bliss, and that we have learned to understand the words of the apostle: "For the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

CHAPTER III

The Song of the Redeemed and of the Angels

Revelation 7:10-12

10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

I think that we have a perfect right to call this outcry of the numberless throng and of the angels that surround the throne and the elders and the four living creatures a song. For, in the first place, it is safe to say that in the perfected economy of things all our expressions shall be in the form of a song in a certain sense of the word. If we take song now as a higher and fuller and more beautiful, harmonious expression of all our conscious life in glory, then indeed it may be asserted that in heaven and in the state of perfection and glory we shall always sing. There our human language shall have reached the height of perfection. There the human voice shall sound in all the fulness of its perfected beauty. And there we shall be able to give the most harmonious expression to what we think and feel, to all our conscious life and experience. In that sense we shall always sing in heaven.

But also the text itself indicates that we have to think here of a song, which these redeemed of God and the angels sing together to the glory of the Most High and of the Lamb. This is not so apparent as long as we take these expressions separately, and look upon them as two separate expressions, the first of the redeemed and the second of the angels. But that is evidently not the case. It is true that in our text they are separated by a few clauses. Besides, they are expressions of different beings and with different contents apparently.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

The Only Day

Chapter 14:6, 7

6. *And it will come to pass in that day that there will not be precious light, but dimness.* 7. *And the day will be one, It will be known to Jehovah, not day and not night. And it will come to pass at the time of the evening that it will be light.*

Also the thing of which this verse speaks will come to pass in "that day," this present dispensation of grace. "That day," therefore, is not a day of twenty-four hours, but a period or epoch. Denoted is what is called in John's epistles the "last hour." In "that day" there will not be the precious light but dimness. And the day will be one, one of its kind. There has never been, nor is there now a day like it. It's a wonderful day. I will be known to Jehovah, to Christ. He is its Lord; it will be His gracious gift to His people. This only day will not be wholly day, clear, bright; on the other hand, it will not be wholly night, dark. It will thus be characterized by a dimness in this Christian dispensation. But this only day will be freed from its dimness. At the time of its evening it will be light, that is, break forth in heavenly brilliance. It is, therefore, an only day also in this respect that it is not characterized by alternation of light and darkness.

What precisely may be the meaning of this all? Is the reference here to that working of God in nature predicted by Joel, "And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapour and smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." When Christ was on the cross the sun was turned into darkness for three dreadful hours. Before His second return and as this dispensation draws to a close, the sun will again and perhaps over and over be turned into darkness and the moon into blood. In the vision of John the sun becomes black as sackcloth and at another time a certain part of it is smitten. Is this the dreadful phenomenon of which our prophet is speaking in the verses under consideration? Those who hold to this view point to the fact that in some Handwritings the Hebrew of verse 6 reads (in translation), "Not will there be light; the precious or glorious ones will be dimmed" (literally congealed). The disputed expression is the verbal form *will be dimmed*. In most Handwritings, according to the authorities, the reading is *dimness*, which is a nominal. Those who favor the reading, "the precious ones will be dimmed," instead of, "there will not be the precious light but dimness," take the expression "precious or glorious ones," to indicate the stars of the firmament of the heavens including the sun, and accordingly take the meaning to be, "There will be no light; for the stars will be dimmed" (or the stars will withdraw themselves). In this way proof is provided for the view

that the words of our prophet refer to a working of God identical to that foretold by the prophet Joel. But how easy it would have been for our prophet to have said simply, "The stars will be withdrawn," or "the sun shall be turned into darkness," if this is the message that he meant to convey. Besides, according to verse 7 the dimness is continuous during this entire present dispensation, which could not be the case, if it were a dimness that is caused by an occasional blackening of the sun. For such will be the character of this working of God in this last hour; it will be occasional. For if it were otherwise, if in this Christian dispensation the sun were permanently blackened, all life on earth would soon perish. Also it may be questioned whether the "glorious or precious ones" are the stars of the firmament. The expression can also denote God's people, the true believers of this dispensation. What it means is that the view that the message of the verses under consideration is, that the stars of the firmament of the heavens will withdraw themselves is without any real support in any of the Handwritings. In no Handwriting does the Hebrew of these verses literally set forth such an idea. And therefore it is not necessary to choose between the two readings. For not only that there is no conflict between them, but both set forth the same thought essentially and therefore supplement the one the other.

What then is the message of these verses? If the idea of this message is to be grasped, understanding must be had of what is meant by the expression "only day" in this context. Indicated is the eternal day or Sabbath *as begun by God's believing people in this life*. It would be a mistake — a mistake some make — of identifying this "only day" with this Christian dispensation called "that day" in these verses. This "only day" is eternal; it is the everlasting Sabbath that Christ merited for His people and that, as the resurrected and glorified Christ, He has entered with them. This Christian dispensation is temporal; it will be terminated by the second coming of Christ. The expression "only day" as a sentence element of verses 6, 7 may best be clarified by a paraphrase of these verses as follows:

It will come to pass in that day — this Christian dispensation — that there will not be the precious light of this "only day," everlasting Sabbath, eternal rest. In "that day" this Sabbath "only day" will be dim. This will be owing to the fact that in "that day," this present dispensation, the precious or glorious ones — God's believing people — will be dimmed as to their heavenly light by the issues of their sinful flesh. This light will not yet shine as it one day will when the Church is with Christ in glory. Hence, this "only day" will also be dim in "that day." For seeing that this "only day" is the everlasting Sabbath as kept and lived by the believers, it follows that this "only day" can be no brighter than the believers are perfect. This "only day" therefore will not be day in "that day," that is, it will not be clear as day; nor, on the other hand, will it be night, that is, total darkness; but it will be characterized by dimness as are the believers themselves. This glorious day, eternal Sabbath, is surely one,

only. There is no day to be compared with it. It is known to Christ, seeing that He merited it by His death on the cross and is therefore its Lord. The dimness of this "only day" will surely end with His return. For then God's people will appear with Him in glory. Then the righteousness of this "only day," which is the righteousness of Christ and of His people, will go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

And so it is plain that keeping this "only day" is to cease from sin and to yield oneself to Christ; it is to see all God's marvelous works that He accomplished through Christ and to say from the heart: Behold, it is very good. And so it is also plain that the light of which these verses speak is not sun light, light physical, nor natural light, the light of unsanctified reason, but true light, the light of life, the light of true knowledge of God, of righteousness and holiness. It is the light of the everlasting day, eternal Sabbath. It is the light that will shine in the new Jerusalem and with what saving and healing and beautifying effect is revealed in the vision of John. The great city descends out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God, for the tabernacle of God is with men, and He, himself, dwells with them, and they are His people. And He wipes away all tears from their eyes; and there is no more death there, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain. And there is no more night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord giveth them light.

It is to this light that the expressions occurring in these verses, "There is not the precious light," and, "it will be light," have reference. And so the darkness of which these verses speak is the darkness of sin, the night of the wrath of God and of the curse stalking the earth and of death and hell and the grave and all the nameless suffering of this present time.

Once it was day and once it was light in the first paradise. The light shone there in the first man, created as he was in God's image. Not that the light shone in him with a heavenly brightness. Surely no. It could not, seeing that, being of the earth, earthy, and as yet having no need of Christ as Saviour, he was not seeing God in Christ's face but only through the medium of this earthy. And through this medium God shone upon him and in his heart. And walking in the light, his fellowship was with God. For God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

But the first man did not abide in the light, continue in the rest of that first day, the rest of creation. He subjected himself to sin, and the sun of righteousness went under, and the day was turned into night. Then God manifested Himself as Saviour. He came with the promise of that only day. And the heirs of the promise were persuaded, and by faith they saw afar off the glimmering of that day and rejoiced. And hope made not ashamed. The promise was fulfilled by Christ in His blotting out by His death all the sins of the heirs, and in His being raised because of their justification, and exalted at the right hand of the throne. In Him the sun of righteousness rose never again to go down, seeing that He

is the Mediator of an eternal covenant. The night is past; it is day. For as the Lord of the Sabbath He shines in the hearts of His own and lo, they are conformed according to His likeness. And their light shines. But the light is not clear. It is not day; it is not night. But at the time of the evening it will be light, gloriously light in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City.

G.M.O.

Peniel

Jacob was on his way back to Canaan, after an absence of twenty years, — years that he had spent with his uncle Laban to whom he had fled from the results of his sin. He now finds himself on the outskirts of Canaan with his household. He is afraid of Esau, whom he thinks still angry with him, and doubtless he thinks right. So on his fear he sends messengers to Esau with gifts, hoping in this way to pacify his brother. But apparently the attempt ended in failure. For the messengers return with the terrifying tidings that Esau came to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob fears the worst. He beseeches the Lord to deliver him out of the hand of his brother. Rising from his prayer, he again sends to Esau by the hand of his servants. Then he sends his entire household over the brook Jabbok, and Jacob is left alone. And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. It was the Angel of the Lord, Jehovah Himself. But Jacob knew it not. When the unknown antagonist saw that he prevailed not over Jacob, he touched his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint. Then Jacob knew that it was the Lord. Our source of information of what took place is not alone the book of Genesis but also the prophecy of Hosea (12:3, 4). The passage in its entirety reads, "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication to him." This then took place: When Jacob perceived that it was the Lord, he stopped wrestling with him in the physical sense, and began to weep and supplicate Him instead, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And the Lord blessed him there. So did Jacob end with weeping and making supplication unto the Lord.

Surely, it was only in the way of weeping and supplication that Jacob could obtain the covenant blessing. To understand this statement, we must consider Jacob's calling. This calling is known from his name, Jacob, which means not deceiver but supplanter. As borne by Jacob, the name has a good meaning. This is plain from Isa. 44:45, "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and name himself by the name of Israel." The prophet is here speaking of the calling of the Gentiles. The converts call themselves also by the name of Jacob. The name therefore denotes the calling of the patriarch Jacob. In the final instance it denotes the calling of every believer. Jacob's calling was to supplant Esau in the matter of the covenant blessing. Though Esau was the firstborn, the blessing was

Jacob's, he being the object of God's eternal and sovereign love in contradistinction to Esau who was reprobated. This blessing was in one word the Heavenly; it was and is the salvation that God has prepared for His people through Christ Jesus.

But there is this question. How must Jacob supplant Esau with respect to the blessing? Not certainly by a carnal warfare, but solely in the way of implicit faith in Christ and through Christ in God, and in the way of fighting the good fight in the firm belief that the victory over the world as represented by Esau was his in Christ. He must confess from the heart that in himself he is not better than Esau and that his only hope, therefore, is Christ. And as so confessing he must walk as a child of the light in Esau's presence and rebuke Esau for his profanity. This is his calling. This was his calling. And in the way of walking worthily of his calling and as becomes the Gospel he will triumph over Esau and obtain the blessing. But Jacob's warfare was at times carnal, as when, taking advantage of Esau's hunger he got him to sell his birthright for some food. He should have rebuked Esau for his profanity and admonished him to set his affections upon the blessing and to fear the Lord. Then he posed as Esau in his vain effort to get Isaac to bestow upon him the blessing. Isaac, too, had fault to be sure. He was determined to bestow the blessing upon the profane Esau though he knew, could know, the will of God. It had been revealed, "The elder shall serve the younger." Jacob's deception of his father was a great sin nevertheless. It proceeded from the vain imagining that the Lord cannot take care of His own cause and that He is served by deceit. Jacob was here again making flesh his expectation. He was trusting in self. What he loses sight of is that He with whom he has to do is not Esau but the Lord, and that unless blessed of the Lord he is not blessed at all but cursed. True the believer may not be passive. He may not sit still. Rebecca's duty was to use every right means for preventing the blessing for persuading Isaac. And she should have considered that it is only God who can bless and not a man. Having exhausted every right means, they should have left the matter entirely to the Lord as believing that He is able to do all His goodpleasure.

Jacob's great fault is plain. After an exile of twenty years he is again re-entering Canaan. But before he can be permitted to continue his way, he must be taught a lesson. He must get right with God. He must be brought to a point that he expects all his salvation only from the Lord. He must be made to understand and confess that it is the Lord with whom he has to do, and not Esau. He must be made to discern that, making flesh his arm, he will perish at the hand of God.

So the Lord comes to him there in the thick darkness of the night and wrestles with him in that same natural strength in which Jacob contended with Esau, no not with Esau but with the Lord. Jacob goes down in defeat with the muscle upon which he had most depended contracted. He knows now that he is in the hand of the Almighty. The hollow of his

thigh is out of joint as he wrestles with the Lord. After having laid him low the Lord does as if he wants to leave him there alone in his sorrow. "Let me go for the day breaketh," says He to Jacob. But Jacob cleaves to the Lord. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," is his answer. He is hanging to God now. He has learned his lesson as taught by the Lord. He weeps and makes supplication. "Bless me," is now his prayer. Bless me, O Lord, and I shall be blessed. The Lord inquires after his name. "What is thy name," says He to Jacob. This name is important. It is expressive of his calling to supplant Esau, to overcome the world as represented by Esau, as understanding that the victory that overcometh the world is faith and faith only. Thus as understanding that to fight the world with its own weapons is to be overcome by it and to perish with it.

So the Lord's question to him, "What is thy name," was like His saying to His servant, "What is thy calling?" And he returns answer, "And he said, Jacob." His reply is his owning his calling and a confession that he has been a discredit to his name, to the calling denoted by it. His reply is a confession that he has not walked worthily of his calling, and that, if the Lord would enter with him into judgment, he could not stand. For he weeps and makes supplication. Would that the Lord forgive him in the greatness of His mercy. And the Lord says now to him, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel, for as a wrestler thou hast wrestled with God and with man and didst overcome." Overcome whom? Overcome God and man, overcome man in overcoming God by weeping and supplication. So reads this verse in the original. The meaning is that Jacob wrestled with God in prayer. So in principle he had been wrestling with God through all the years of the past, but in principle only. At times his faith had been so weak. At times he had been so carnal. He had not been serving God with that zeal that he was bound. There were times when the evil lusts of his flesh had the upperhand. Of the true obedience he had but a small beginning. He weeps therefore and makes supplication. And in the way of his weeping he has power with God. For his weeping is of God through Christ in His Spirit. And the Lord honors His own work in Him. He overcomes therefore. He prevails with God. And therefore, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel." The thought contained in the name Israel is precisely, "One who wrestles with God and prevails." Thus the idea of the statement, "And thy name shall no more be called Jacob," is not that the Lord now frees him of this name because the name means *deceiver*. He really retains this name *Jacob*. But the Lord's speaking as He does has as its purpose this, namely, that Jacob must know that he has supplanted Esau indeed, and this, surely, only for Christ's sake, and not because of any merit on the part of Jacob. And so the Lord blesses him there. And he goes his way rejoicing in the knowledge that he, the ill-deserving and condemnable Jacob, has seen God's face and lived, been blessed of the Lord, received of the Lord the covenant blessing.

G.M.O.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Psalm 119:1-8

The Christian in the midst of the world is an a-b-c child of God. He must learn the first principles of walking as a child of light in a world of darkness, sin and death. Such learning is really a lifelong task!

That we are such little children, who must daily learn to give heed to the law of God is very evident from our entire life as a Christian in the midst of this world. Think, for instance, of our Sabbath. To keep the Sabbath implies that we maintain the ministry of the Word and the schools, diligently come to the congregation of God to *learn* His Word, use the Sacraments, give alms to the poor, and thus *begin* in this life the eternal Sabbath, by ceasing all the days of our life from sin, entering into the rest!

Whoever has made even a superficial study of the 119th Psalm will have noticed that this Psalm is preeminently an *alphabet* Psalm. It is formally controlled by the Hebrew alphabet. There are one hundred seventy-six verses in this Psalm. These are divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each. Each verse in each of these sections begins with the character of the Hebrew alphabet. In fact, each line in each of these sections begins with the Hebrew character of that section.

Thus in the verses 1-8, now under consideration, each line begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It begins with aleph. We have the a-b-c of the Christian's life of thankfulness portrayed here in this Psalm. It is the song upon the law, the blessedness of those keeping the commandments of the Lord.

This section reads in full as follows: *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: Oh, forsake me not utterly.*

It should not escape our notice that in this section the psalmist strikes the key-note of the entire Psalm. We have here the "theme" of this entire marvelous composition from the heart and pen of the psalmist. This implies that in this "aleph" of this psalm the entire "alphabet" is implied. For the law of God is one. Thus it is in the great "Shamah" (Hear, Israel . . .) and thus it is also here. Thus the church, who can put spiritual things with spiritual, has always interpreted the law as the rule of good works of thankfulness.

Does not Question 114 of the Heidelberg Catechism teach "that the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all of God's commandments"? We should, while emphasizing the former overagainst the "perfectionist," not forget to emphasize the latter overagainst the propensities of the flesh to walk in sinful licence! Both the perfectionist and the anti-nomist are a great and perpetual evil under the sun.

How different it is with the psalmist. He does not desire to walk according to his own lusts, which war against the soul, but he would walk according to the "law of the LORD" with his whole heart. He would be "undefiled" in the way. The Hebrew term for "undefiled" really means that which is perfect, whole, sincere. The German translation has "ohne Tadel," that is, without rebuke, reprimand, censure, reproof or fault. The Holland translation has "de oprechten," that is, the upright, who do not depart from the perpendicular line of God's precepts.

The straight line here, the norm of all godly conduct is the law of Jehovah.

This is not a grievous yoke in the eyes of the Psalmist, but it is the object of all his delight.

The law of the LORD is not simply the law upon tables of stone, the letter which kills (II Cor. 3) but it is the law as it is fulfilled in Christ, and as it is ours in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In this Spirit we have been renewed after God's image so that with *our entire life* we may show our thankfulness to God! (Question 86 of Heidelberg Catechism). And thus the law is the rule for a life of thankfulness. Good works ought to be performed. Sanctification must be perfected in the fear of God (II Corinthians 7:1). And so the law is here the law as it is the rule of good works having the sanction of God. Thus the law stands forth here as the rule for the people of God, who are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar treasure of God, called out of darkness into God's marvelous light to declare His praises!

This law is found under the mercy-seat! Its just demands have been fully satisfied in Christ's death. But now he writes it in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and by the preaching of the same! It is taken up in the Gospel promise. The law is established by faith (Romans 3:31)!

Thus we have the law here in this beautiful Psalm. From many aspects its beauty and grandeur are recounted. It is the joy and delight of the reborn heart.

This law is called by various other names and qualifications here in this "Aleph" section, verses 1-8.

It is called preeminently by the term "way." This implies that the law is a rule for our entire life and that we are to "walk" according to it. Of course, such a walk does not mean: merit! It means that we *walk* in the law of the Lord

by a true and living faith. For it is impossible that they who are ingrafted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness. (See Heid. Cate., Questions 64, 86, 87; Belgic Confession, Article 24; Romans 6:1, 2; Ephesians 2:10, etc.)

Then too the law is called "precepts." The Holland translates "bevelen." The German translates "Befehle." Precepts are the law from the viewpoint of its being a *sacred charge* to us. It puts us under obligation, under the "ought" of grace! Since we are "under grace" we ought to place our members servants of righteousness (Romans 6:1-14)!

For these precepts are really "statutes." This refers to law which is established by authoritative legislature. In the statute book of God as this lies upon the throne of God this is established. Heaven and earth may pass away but not one iota or tittle of this law shall pass away till it all be fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-20).

Furthermore, it is for this very reason that this law is also "commandments," that which ought to be done, and which cannot be neglected with impunity.

Yet, even so, this law of Jehovah is a "righteous judgment." The Holland translates "de rechten uwer gerechtigheid." The German translates "die Rechte deiner Gerechtigkeit." Here the psalmist qualifies the law from the viewpoint that there is nothing unfair in the law. It is all just what the law demands. For here the "can," the "will" and the "must" can perfectly find their ultimate expression in the glories of heaven. The law of God is ethically altogether lovely in divine perfection as the rule for the child of God, conformed to God's image. Is the law then evil, or has the good become evil to me? God forbid! For the law is holy, and the commandment holy, *just* and good. Romans 7:12.

Now the psalmist would keep this law with his *whole heart*. He would not *simply* speak of it with his lips. His lips too must rejoice in the law. But with all his *heart*. The heart is the *seat* of our life in relationship to God and our neighbor. "Heart" is not to be identified with "mind." In the Great Commandment Jesus notes: Heart, mind, soul, strength! Notice the order. He places "heart" on the foreground. Only when the heart is right toward the law will also the mind, soul and strength stand in the proper relationship to God. The mind is the conscious service of God with the heart. The soul is serving God with all our affections. And the strength is serving God with all the strength of the heart, mind and soul! That will be heaven's great joy. The Great Commandment in our hearts!

That life of heaven, of God's tabernacle with man, the psalmist would here achieve. He cries out: *O, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes*. When he hears the Lord say: Keep my statutes diligently, his heart responds: O that all my affections were directed, aimed at the keeping of thy law. For the psalmist has a delight in the law of the LORD, after the inward man.

But he has a constant battle!

He has to battle with the assaults of the devil, the world and his own flesh. And that, too, without ceasing! And he is so weak *in himself* that he cannot stand a moment. Hence, the longing outcry of the psalmist. He would diligently keep these commandments. But, the good that he would do he does not do. But the evil which he would not, that he does! He is wretched in his lot. He longs for the perfection. He longs to the "blessednesses" of the perfect in the way. The perfect satisfaction of those who fully walk as image-bearers of God he covets for himself.

He longs in this "Aleph" not only to live according to some but according to all of God's commandments, and that perfectly.

But he also fears that he shall not. He knows that the Lord must constantly teach him. He would "learn" the righteousness of God's judgments. When he learns this he will more fully seek these commandments with all his heart, will more and more crucify his old nature and walk in a new and holy life. For when a Christian does not seek the Lord with all his heart he comes to grief, falls into temptation, faith is interrupted, the Holy Spirit is grieved. And that to God's child is worse than death. Then he does not taste the blessedness of the LORD!

Hence, he prays: *O, forsake me not utterly!* The German translates: forsake me nevermore. The Holland translates: verlaat mij niet al te zeer, that is, do not forsake me beyond measure! How well we too know what that means when the Lord seems to forsake utterly. But we have a right to pray this prayer. For our Lord Jesus Christ by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered us from the torments and anguish of hell!

Now, we have a small beginning of the new obedience. O, do not forsake us utterly. Rather give us the blessed assurance that thou wilt make us willing henceforth to live unto thee!

Such is the a-b-c of the life of God's child in the world.

Such is the struggle. But the victory is sure. I thank God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord! G.L.

ATTACHMENT TO THE CHURCH

They come to learn Jehovah's will,
His mighty deeds to own,
For there is judgment's royal seat,
Messiah's kingly throne.

O pray that Zion may be blest
And have abundant peace,
For all that love thee in their hearts
Shall prosper and increase.

Psalm 122:3, 4

IN HIS FEAR

Freedom From Fear

(2)

“Whom shall I fear?”

That, indeed, is an interesting and important question.

And let no man accuse the psalmist, who asks this question in Psalm 27, of speaking from the heights of a shielded life. The psalmist is David and he dwelt in the walled city of Jerusalem surrounded by his mighty army that had triumphed in giving to Israel the whole land promised by God. He had hundreds and thousands round about him ready to defend him and to die to shield his life. Indeed, whom shall the king fear?

However, make no mistake by drawing the conclusion that he did not know what it is to have fear. He is not speaking here theoretically from the heights of a shielded life. He speaks experientially as a man who knows what terrors and fears there are in being a hunted man. Before he ever ascended to the throne he had to flee repeatedly for his life from before the sword of wicked king Saul. The javelin of this wicked king came frightfully near the point of terminating his earthly life. He had to flee from place to place as a wild beast is pursued by the hunter. Even after he became king he knew the terrors of fleeing before the treachery of his own son. And in Psalm 27 he does not write as one surrounded by the arm of flesh and shielded by earthly might. He does not ask, “Whom shall I fear?” because there was no earthly power to assault and trouble him. Not at all! He writes in the psalm, “When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.” He writes in the vivid consciousness of one who has had some very terrifying experiences. And he adds, “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.” He will have no fear in the midst of terrifying days.

We say, therefore, once again, an interesting question: Whom shall I fear? Surely today there are sufficient things that surround us and are reason enough for our flesh to tremble with fear. Ever since we moved into the “atomic-age” there have been added to our life many new terrors and fears. And we do not now have in mind those of which we spoke last time. The awful armament race, the feverish intensity of the East and the West to produce the most powerful and most destructive weapons of warfare is sufficient to cause every man, woman, and child to ask, “Whom shall I fear?” Shall we fear Russia or shall we fear our own leaders? Is there more danger for us in what Russia might do or in the policies and maneuvering of our own leaders? Must we live

in fear of sudden and unprovoked attack from the enemy or in fear lest our own leaders plunge us into an indescribably terrible war by their hysteria or unwarranted suspicions. We read somewhere of the possibility that either an accidental H-bomb explosion or an attack by another nation could exactly result in our immediate attack upon Russia in the mistaken notion that Russia had begun the conflagration. At any rate, so small is the world today, so do we live on top of each other, so to speak, so involved and intricately related are the nations of the world today that one little spark in one corner can touch off a universal powder keg with its world-wide devastation and agony.

But apart from all this, assuming — what can never be in this world — that all nuclear weapons are banned and the ones now in existence are dismantled, granting that all the power of the atom as man has learned to harness it is used only in peaceful pursuits, man finds that he has not at all freed himself from fear. Even in peace (so-called) man finds hundreds and thousands of things to fear. Oh, he does not fear polio as he formerly did. Cancer’s fear is being presented as not as dreadful as before. Hope also is given for prevention of the dreaded heart-attack. But man continues to fear death. And until death has no more fear for him, he does not have freedom from fear. After all, do not forget that man’s fear of death is his fear of God! At the end of this life he comes to stand before God. Man knows that. And therefore it is not only a very interesting but also important question. “Whom shall I fear?”

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that we stand before Him every step of our way also in this life. We stand before the Judge of heaven and earth every moment of our earthly existence. And He does not reserve judgment till all the “evidence” is in, as an earthly judge must do until he gets the whole picture. He knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. Every moment He is passing judgment upon the deeds of all men as to the ethical, moral value of their works. At the moment of death and to an even greater degree at the end of time His sentence will be meted out, but we stand before His judgment every moment of our lives.

Even then, the meting out of that sentence is not wholly reserved till the day of days or till the day of death. It is an evident fact from the testimony spread upon the pages of Holy Writ as well as from our every day experiences that God punishes sin in this life, yea that He punishes sin with sin. Why do men live today in the fear of what men will do to them? Why is there this tension which is called the “cold war”? Why is not the whole world one loving brotherhood? Why is there the continual struggle between capital and labor? Why are juvenile delinquency and teen-age crimes becoming a very serious menace to the peace and wellbeing of our day? Or, if you will, why does man constantly live in fear of what his fellowmen might do to him? The answer to all these questions is that God punishes sin with sin.

In fact that is the very nature of sin. We need not at this time go into detail to show that man can keep the second table of the law only as he keeps the first table of that law. We need only remind you that Jesus said that the whole law is contained in this that we love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. When we do not love Him, we cannot possibly love our fellow men whom He places next to us and with whom He demands that we serve Him. When we do not love Him, we are going to hate our neighbour and be a constant menace to him. The sin Adam and Eve committed did not in any way bring any physical discomfort, pain or bloodshed to each other. Their initial sin was entirely one of rebellion against God. It was strictly a sin of the first table of the law. What dreadful consequences, though! And what a brutal act of violence breaks forth in their firstborn! Those who desire to maintain that man always sins by imitation, who want to deceive themselves and others into thinking that a child comes into this world with a soul that is a clean slate, and that you and I can write on it what we please and mold and form his character as to whether it will be good or evil, will have a difficult time of it to show where Cain learned to murder his brother. Did he learn it from the beasts of the field? Of course not! Cain did not slay Abel for food as the beast will do. Scripture gives us quite a different picture. It was hatred in his heart that moved him to murder his brother. John tells us in I John 3:12 that he slew him because his works were wicked and because Abel's were righteous. From his parents he inherited a corrupt heart, a heart that could do nothing but wickedness, that could only hate God. In that hatred he came with his sacrifice of the fruits of the ground. And in that hatred he rose up against Abel who displayed a love to God which he had received through the regenerating grace of God. And all the murder, theft, adultery, deceit in all their forms and combinations are here because man hates God.

And rather than to restrain sin in the unregenerated by His Spirit God uses sinful men as they develop in sin to punish man in this life for his sinfulness. Do we not read in II Samuel 7:14 the word of God to David, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men"? To be sure, here we read of God chastising His elect people. He will correct them with the rod of men. But the fact remains that God uses men in their sinfulness to correct His people. What, shall the Babylonians be able to say in the judgment day: "Lord, we served the correction and instruction of Thy people, Israel, when we took them captive into our land. We did Thy goodpleasure. Bring us, therefore up out of this awful torment of hell"? Not at all. They plundered and captured not in any love to God but in hatred of Him and of His cause. Yet God used them in their sinfulness to chastise His people. They in their sinfulness were the rod wherewith He chastised them. Or, again, if you will, God tells Abram that his seed shall be afflicted for four hundred years in Egypt and shall not inherit the

promised land yet for some time to come because, "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Was there any intention whatsoever of God to restrain the sin of these Amorites? No, but according to His sovereign counsel sin would develop in these Amorites till the measure was full; and then He would destroy them and give Israel their land.

But what God did in chastising Israel with the rod of wicked men He also does when He punishes the ungodly nations in this life by the ungodly deeds of other godless nations. And that is why we have all the bloodshed, violence, greed, immorality, deceit, fraud, intrigue and deception in the world today. God is punishing mankind in this life with the rod of wicked mankind. And when he, who in Scripture is called the man of sin, shall appear, the world will rush toward its most perplexing and terrible moments of anguish in that great battle of Armageddon.

An important question it is then, Whom shall I fear? Shall we fear man through whom God afflicts the world and ignore Him Who sends them to chastise His people and to give temporal punishment to the wicked? It does make a great deal of difference whether our fear is fear of man or fear of God. It makes a great deal of difference in our fear whether it is due simply to the fact that we see man in all his cruelty and wickedness as our enemy or whether our fear is due to the fact that we see the sovereign God in all His majesty and glory. It makes a world of difference whether our fear is a matter of the painful emotions of the flesh or whether it is an act of faith in the living God.

One who sees nothing more than the man who confronts him with danger and peril for his flesh shall never obtain a true freedom from fear even when that particular enemy is removed. Death will still stand before him in another form all too soon. But he who sees the living God by faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, can say with David, "Though an host should encamp against me, in this will I be confident." He will have no fear in the midst of terrifying days.

J.A.H.

THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH

My heart had failed in fear and woe
 Unless in God I had believed,
 Assured that He would mercy show
 And that my life His grace should know,
 Nor was my hope deceived.

Fear not, though succor be delayed,
 Still wait for God, and He will hear;
 Be strong, nor by thy heart dismayed,
 Wait, and the Lord shall bring thee aid,
 Yea, trust and never fear.

Psalms 27:5, 6

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.

Introductory Survey.

The two centuries intervening between 1294 and 1517, between the accession of Boniface VIII and the nailing of Luther's Ninety-five Theses against the church door in Wittenberg, mark the gradual transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, from the universal acceptance of the papal theocracy in Western Europe to the assertion of national independence, from the supreme authority of the priesthood to the intellectual and spiritual freedom of the individual. Old things are passing away; signs of a new order increase. Institutions are seen to be breaking up. The scholastic systems of theology lose their compulsive hold on men's minds, and even become the subject of ridicule. The abuses of the earlier Middle Ages call forth voices demanding reform on the basis of the Scriptures and the common well-being of mankind. The inherent vital energies in the Church seek expression in new forms of piety and charitable deed.

The power of the papacy, which had asserted infallibility of judgment and dominion over all departments of human life, was undermined by the mistakes, pretensions, and worldliness of the papacy itself, as exhibited in the policy of Boniface VIII, the removal of the papal residence to Avignon, and the disastrous schism which, for nearly half a century, gave to Europe the spectacle of two, and at times three, popes reigning at the same time and all professing to be the viceregerents of God on earth.

The free spirit of nationality awakened during the crusades grew strong and successfully resisted the papal authority, first in France and then in other parts of Europe. Princes asserted supreme authority over the citizens within their dominions and insisted upon the obligations of churches to the state. The leadership of Europe passed from Germany to France, with England coming more and more into prominence.

The tractarian literature of the fourteenth century set forth the rights of man and the principles of common law in opposition to the pretensions of the papacy and the dogmatism of the scholastic systems. Lay writers made themselves heard as pioneers of thought, and a practical outlook upon the mission of the Church was cultivated. With unexampled audacity Dante assailed the lives of popes, putting some of St. Peter's successors into the lowest rooms of hell.

The Reformatory councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basel turned Europe for nearly fifty years, 1409-1450, into a platform of ecclesiastical and religious discussion. Though they failed to provide a remedy for the disorders prevailing in the Church, they set an example of free debate, and gave the weight of their eminent constituency to the principle that not in a select group of hierarchs does supreme authority in the Church rest, but in the body of the Church.

The hopelessness of expecting any permanent reform from the papacy and the hierarchy was demonstrated in the last years of the period, 1460-1517, when ecclesiastical Rome offered a spectacle of moral corruption and spiritual fall which has been compared to the corrupt age of the Roman Empire.

The religious unrest and the passion for a better state of affairs found expression in Wyclif, Huss, and other leaders who, by their clear apprehension of truth and readiness to stand by their public utterances, even unto death, stood far above their own age and have shone in all the ages since.

While coarse ambition and nepotism, a total perversion of the ecclesiastical office and violation of the fundamental virtues of the Christian life held rule in the highest place of Christendom, a pure stream of piety was flowing in the Church of the North, and the mystics along the Rhine and in the Lowlands were unconsciously fertilizing the soil from which the Reformation was to spring forth.

The Renaissance, or the revival of classical culture, unshackled the minds of men. The classical works of antiquity were once more, after the churchly disparagement of a thousand years, held forth to admiration. The confines of geography were extended by the discoveries of the continent in the West. (The Renaissance, although undoubtedly used by the Lord unto the furtherance of His Cause, even as He uses all things unto the furtherance of His Cause and Kingdom, was in itself a spiritual movement and conducive unto the principles of the Reformation — H.V.)

The invention of the art of printing, about 1440, forms an epoch in human advancement, and made it possible for the products of human thought to be circulated widely among the people, and thus to train the different nations for the new age of religious enfranchisement about to come, and the sovereignty of the intellect.

To this generation, which looks back over the last four centuries, the discovery of America and the pathways to the Indies was one of the remarkable events in history, a surprise and a prophecy. In 1453, Constantinople easily passed into the hands of the Turk, and the Christian empire of the East fell apart. In the far West the beginnings of a new empire were made, just as the Middle Ages were drawing to a close.

At the same time, at the very close of the period, under the direction and protection of the Church, an institution was being prosecuted which has scarcely been equalled in the

history of human cruelty, the Inquisition, — now papal, now Spanish — which punished heretics in Spain and witches in Germany unto death.

Thus European society was shaking itself clear of long-established customs and dogmas based upon the infallibility of the Church visible, and at the same time it held fast to some of the most noxious beliefs and practices the Church had allowed herself to accept and propagate. It had not the original genius or the conviction to produce a new system of theology. The great Schoolmen continued to rule doctrinal thought. It established no new ecclesiastical institution of an abiding character like the canon law. It exhibited no consuming passion such as went out in the preceding period in the crusades and the activity of the Mendicant Orders. It had no transcendent ecclesiastical characters like St. Bernard and Innocent III. The last period of the Middle Ages was a period of intellectual discontent, of self-introspection, a period of intimation and of preparation for an order which it was itself not capable of begetting.

Pope Boniface VIII. 1294-1303.

The pious but weak and incapable hermit of Murrhone, Coelestine V, who abdicated the papal office, was followed by Benedict Gaetani, — or Cajetan, the name of an ancient family of Latin counts, known in history as Boniface VIII. At the time of his election he was on the verge of fourscore, but like Gregory IX, he was still in the full vigor of a strong intellect and will. If Coelestine had the reputation of a saint, Boniface was a politician, overbearing, implacable, destitute of spiritual ideals, and controlled by blind and insatiable lust of power.

Born at Anagni, Boniface probably studied canon law, in which he was an expert, in Rome. He was made cardinal in 1281, and represented the papal see in France and England as legate. In an address at a council in Paris, assembled to arrange for a new crusade, he reminded the mendicant monks that he and they were called not to court glory or learning, but to secure the salvation of their souls.

Boniface's election as pope occurred at Castel Nuovo, near Naples, Dec. 24, 1294, the conclave having convened the day before. The election was not popular, and a few days later, when a report reached Naples that Boniface was dead, the people celebrated the event with great jubilation. The pontiff was accompanied on his way to Rome by Charles II of Naples.

The coronation was celebrated amid festivities of unusual splendor. On his way to the Lateran, Boniface rode on a white palfrey, a crown on his head, and robed in full pontificals. Two sovereigns walked by his side, the kings of Naples and Hungary. The Orsini, the Colonna, the Savelli, the Conti and representatives of other noble Roman families followed in a body. The procession had difficulty in forcing its way through the kneeling crowds of spectators. But, as if an omen of the coming misfortunes of the new pope, a furious

storm burst over the city while the solemnities were in progress and extinguished every lamp and torch in the church. The following day the pope dined in the Lateran, the two kings waiting behind his chair. Incidentally, there is no doubt about the manifestation of popular joy over the rumor of the pope's death. At the announcement of the election, the people are said to have cried out, "Boniface is a heretic, bad all through, and has in him nothing that is Christian."

While these brilliant ceremonies were going on, Peter of Murrhone was a fugitive. Not willing to risk the possible rivalry of an anti-pope, Boniface confined his unfortunate predecessor in prison, where he soon died. The cause of his death was a matter of uncertainty. The Coelestine party ascribed it to Boniface, and exhibited a nail which they declared the unscrupulous pope had ordered driven into Coelestine's head.

With Boniface VIII began the decline of the papacy. He found it at the height of its power. He died leaving it humbled and in subjection to France. He sought to rule in the proud, dominating spirit of Gregory VII and Innocent III; but he was arrogant without being strong, bold without being sagacious, high-spirited without possessing the wisdom to discern the signs of the times. He has been called "an unfortunate reminiscence" of the great popes. The times had changed. Boniface made no allowance for the new spirit of nationality which had been developed during the crusading campaigns in the East, and which entered into conflict with the old theocratic ideal of Rome. France, now in possession of the remaining lands of the counts of Toulouse, was in no mood to listen to the dictation of the power across the Alps. Striving to maintain the fictitious theory of papal rights, and fighting against the spirit of the new age, Boniface lost the prestige the Apostolic See had enjoyed for two centuries, and died of mortification over the indignities heaped upon him by France.

French enemies went so far as to charge Boniface with downright infidelity and the denial of the soul's immortality. The charges were a slander, but they show the reduced confidence which the papal office inspired. Dante, who visited Rome during Boniface's pontificate, bitterly pursues him in all parts of the *Divina Commedia*. He pronounced him "the prince of modern Pharisees," a usurper "who turned the Vatican hill into a common sewer of corruption." The poet assigned the pope a place with Nicholas III and Clement V among the simoniacs in "that most afflicted shade," one of the lowest circles in hell. Its floor was perforated with holes into which the heads of these popes were thrust. "The soles of every one in flames were wrapt — . . . whose upper parts are thrust below, Fixt like a stake, most wretched soul . . . Quivering in air his tortured feet were seen." Contemporaries comprehended Boniface's reign in the description, "He came in like a fox, he reigned like a lion, and he died like a dog."

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 6. Who teach: That in the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers or gifts can be infused by God into the will, and that therefore faith through which we are first converted, and because of which we are called believers, is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man, and that it can not be said to be a gift, except in respect of the power to attain to this faith. For thereby they contradict the Holy Scriptures, which declare that God infuses new qualities of faith, of obedience, and of the consciousness of his love into our hearts: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it," Jer. 31:33. And: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed," Is. 44:3. And: "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which hath been given us," Rom. 5:5. This is also repugnant to the continuous practice of the Church, which prays by the mouth of the Prophet thus: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," Jer. 31:18.

The above translation of this article is quite accurate.

While the preceding articles of the Rejection of Errors in this chapter of the *Canons* dealt with errors concerning the corruption of the natural man, this and the remaining articles in this chapter deal with errors concerning man's conversion and the manner of that conversion. And just as in connection with the positive part of this chapter we pointed out that the Reformed doctrine of man's corruption and the Reformed doctrine of man's conversion to God are intimately related, so that the former is the foundation of the latter, so here we point out that the Arminian doctrines of man's corruption and man's conversion sustain the same relation to each other. The very language of this article strongly reminds us of this relation. Just as we found that the Arminian wants to speak merely of the *act* of sin, so we find here that he wants to speak only of the *act* of faith. Just as previously he has denied that any spiritual gifts, or good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, could belong to the will of man when he was first created, and could be separated therefrom in the fall, so here he denies that any new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will in the

true conversion of man. And just as he denies that in spiritual death the spiritual gifts are separated from the will of man, but maintains that the will has only been hindered through the darkness of the understanding and the irregularity of the affections, so here he does not want to speak of faith as a quality or gift that is infused by God into the will, but maintains (in full harmony with the idea that the will is only hindered) that faith can only be called a gift in respect to the power to attain to faith. Hence, these three propositions may be distinguished in the Arminian doctrine of man's conversion:

- 1) In true conversion no new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will.
- 2) Therefore faith is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man.
- 3) Faith can be called a gift only in respect to the power to attain to this faith.

Looking ahead to the next article, which speaks of the grace of God whereby we are converted, we can see at once why it is necessary for the Arminian to maintain this view. If grace is to be an offer and is to be resistible, so that the matter of salvation is entirely up to the will of man, to be accepted or rejected by him, then it must needs be maintained that there is no work of God's grace whereby the will of man receives new qualities and powers prior to the point at which man faces the question whether he will believe or not believe.

Now let us try to understand the Arminian position somewhat. The first two propositions mentioned above are rather clear. The first, as we said, is closely connected with what the Arminian has taught concerning man's creation and fall. He simply maintains that it is impossible to speak of spiritual gifts belonging to the will, that therefore it is impossible to speak of spiritual gifts of the will being lost in the fall, and that therefore it is impossible to speak of new spiritual qualities being infused into the will in conversion. The will is neutral. It is in itself neither good nor evil, though it is capable of willing either good or evil things. That will with its capability for either good or evil comes through the fall entirely unscathed. The only thing that can be said is that the will, though itself untouched by the fall, is now hindered in its operation through the darkness of the mind and the irregularity of the affections.

Hence, it is both unnecessary and impossible to speak of new qualities and powers being infused into the will in conversion. In this light the second proposition is also plain. While in Reformed doctrine we make the distinction between the faculty, or power, of faith and the act of faith, or believing, the Arminian wants nothing of this distinction. He wants to speak only of the *act of faith*. And this prepares the way also for him to speak of faith, the act of believing, as *solely the act of man*. And it must be granted, of course, that if the first of the Arminian propositions mentioned above is true, the second, namely, that faith is only an act of man, necessarily follows with inescapable logic. And so the Ar-

minian always reads the term *faith* in Scripture in the sense of "man's act of believing."

Thus far the Arminian position and intention is quite clear. It is the position which is so well known in our own day, the position according to which all the emphasis is put on, "You must believe! You must believe!" The activity of faith, that is the thing! And, of course, with this stress on the *necessity or responsibility* of believing is either expressed or implied the *ability* to believe. With the rankest Arminians this ability of man to believe is frequently openly expressed. With the more subtle Arminians who often try to sail under the Reformed flag this ability of man to believe is more often implied, but then very plainly implied too by the very fact that they put all the stress on this act of faith and by the fact that they present the gospel as a well-meant offer of salvation to all, or a promise of salvation to all, on the condition of faith. For what pray, is the sense of such a general well-meant offer, or general conditional promise, if those to whom the offer or promise is made have not the ability to meet the condition?

The third proposition of this Arminian error is, however, more subtle and dangerous. That proposition is that faith can be called a gift only in respect to the power to attain to this faith. Now what does this mean? And what does the Arminian intend to do with this proposition? Answering the last question first, we must remember that the Scriptures certainly speak of faith as a gift; and the Arminian, if he is to appear at all Biblical,—which he must if he is to get a following,—must adhere to this Biblical language. This he certainly wants to do, and he attempts to do. If he is confronted by anyone with the plain teaching of Scripture that faith is a gift of God, he will certainly freely admit this and enthusiastically embrace this statement. Yet he wants nothing of the distinction between the power and the act of faith. And he wants only to speak of man's act of believing. What then does he mean by this third proposition? In the first place, let it be noted that the Arminian does not here speak of the power or quality of faith. He does not after all contradict his first proposition by the third one. But he speaks of the "power to attain to this faith." This very language makes a distinction between the faith and the power. The power is not faith itself, but it is a *power to attain to faith*. Hence, in the second place, the Arminian plays *hocus-pocus* with words again. The Bible speaks of faith as a gift. "Yes," the Arminian says, "but that does not mean that faith itself is a gift. Faith itself is only an act of man, and you cannot speak of it as a gift. An act cannot be a gift. What the Bible means is that God gives the power to attain to faith. He helps man to believe. He removes the hindrances of the darkness of man's understanding and the irregularity of his affections, and thus He makes it possible for man to perform the act of believing." Thus the grace of God is reduced to a mere helping power, faith is reduced to a mere act of man, and salvation is made to be dependent upon man's will. Grace is

resistible. Or, to illustrate somewhat more plainly the Arminian idea, think of the following example. I am in my car on the way from Chicago to Grand Rapids when I am stalled by a barricade in the road. There is nothing wrong with my car. No new qualities or powers need to be infused into it. If only the hindrance, the obstacle, is removed, then I can attain to my goal. But when by some power that obstacle is removed, I have not yet achieved or attained that goal. The removal of the obstacle is not the gift of the goal. In fact, the removing of that barricade cannot even be said to be the same as the act of travelling toward that goal. It is merely of some assistance, if I should want to go on my way toward Grand Rapids. At that point I can put my car in motion and proceed along the road; but I can also put my car in motion and drive it into the ditch or turn around and go back to Chicago if I so desire. Thus it is also with that power to attain to the act of faith. That power removes the hindrances of the darkness of mind and irregularity of affections. But then the will of man is able to will and to choose, or not to will and not to choose, all manner of good which may be presented to it. It is able to will to believe, but also not to will to believe. Grace is not irresistible.

The fathers once again do not engage in an extensive argument about this error. They do not even bother to point out that the Arminian expression concerning the "power to attain to this faith" is a piece of deceitful sophistry. They simply point to the Scriptures, Scriptures which deny the first and the fundamental proposition of the Arminians, namely, that no new qualities are infused into the will in conversion. The first two passages, from Jeremiah and Isaiah, teach this truth rather in general. The writing of the law in our hearts certainly implies the infusing of such spiritual qualities and powers as righteousness, holiness, the love of the Lord our God, and obedience. And the pouring out of the Spirit upon spiritually dry and thirsty ground implies the infusing of all the spiritual qualities and powers that are wrought only by the Spirit of Christ. The passage from Romans 5 speaks specifically of the infusing of the love of God in us: the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. And the passage from Jeremiah 31:18 is important because it teaches not only that before we turn God must turn us, but also and especially because it teaches that there is a necessary and inevitable relationship of cause and effect between God's turning of us and our turning: if God turns me, I *shall* be turned. Hence, God's converting grace is irresistible, or, if you will, efficacious. And notice that the fathers emphasize that the continuous practice of the church has been to pray as Jeremiah prayed. This is a worthwhile point. And the power of this point lies in the fact that the prayer here quoted, of course, is an infallibly inspired prayer, taken directly from Scripture. It is therefore the will of God that His people should thus pray and should thus acknowledge the absolute sovereignty and efficacy of His converting grace.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

Article 32

LITURGICAL PRAYERS (Cont.)

In our last article mention was made of the liturgical prayers that have been adopted in Reformed Churches but which are used very little, if at all, in our present time. Historically, these prayers also belong to our churches and may be used in them although they have not been incorporated in the back of the Psalter with the rest of our liturgy.

We cannot devote space to quote all of these prayers here but since Article 32 deals with the matter of prayer in ecclesiastical assemblies, we will quote the two prayers that have been composed for the opening and closing of these assemblies. They are:

OPENING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

"Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God: It has pleased Thee according to Thy infinite wisdom and loving-kindness to gather a Church unto Thyself out of the peoples of all the earth, and to govern Thy Church through the service of men. Thou hast graciously called us to this office of government, and hast enjoined us to watch over ourselves and to bestow due care upon the flock which Christ purchased with His precious blood.

"We are now assembled in this place in Thy holy Name, in order to deal, after the fashion of the apostolic churches, with such matters as shall come before us and concern the edification and welfare of Thy churches, agreeably to our office. We confess that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to accomplish any good thing. We beseech Thee, therefore, faithful God and Father, that, in accordance with Thy promise, Thou wilt abide in the midst of the present assembly through Thy Holy Spirit, and that He may lead us into all the truth.

"Remove all misunderstandings and guard us against the influence of our sinful hearts. Grant that Thy Word may be our only rule and standard, in order that our deliberations may redound to the glory of Thy Name, the edification of Thy churches, and the peace of our own consciences.

"This we ask in the Name of Christ Jesus, Thy Son, Who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the only and true God, is deserving of eternal praise and glory. Amen."

CLOSING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

"Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee from our hearts that it pleases Thee to gather a Church in our land and to employ our services to that end. Thou dost graciously so order all things that we can preach the gospel without any hindrance and may engage in public worship. Thou hast

also been present with Thy Holy Spirit in our assembly, guiding our deliberations according to Thy will, and binding our hearts together in mutual peace and unity.

"Wilt Thou, O faithful God and Father, graciously bless the efforts that we purpose to put forth, and wilt Thou finish in power the work which Thou hast begun. Continue to gather unto Thyself a true Church, and cause it to preserve the purity of doctrine; guide it in the proper use of the holy sacraments; and inspire it with zeal for the maintenance of church purity.

"Bring to nought all wicked and subtle counsels that are devised against Thy Word and Church. Give strength to all whom Thou hast placed in authority over Thy Church, to the end that they may preach Thy Word in faithfulness and steadfastness.

"Strengthen the civil magistrates of Thy people, in order that they may wield the sword of worldly power in justice and wise restraint. In particular do we pray for civil rulers, both higher and lower officers of government, whom Thou hast been pleased to appoint over us. We commend unto Thee especially the esteemed council of this city. Grant that their rule may be entirely directed toward the supremacy of the King of kings over rulers and ruled alike. May through their labors the shameful and wicked dominion of Satan be increasingly disturbed and broken down. May it be given unto us to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and gravity.

"Hear us, O God and Father, through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, Who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the only and true God, is worthy of eternal praise and glory. Amen."

Whether any prayer is proper for a given occasion cannot be determined alone from the material content of the prayer. A prayer, beautiful in composition, may be abominable in the sight of God. God looks upon the heart and attends unto that heart that is broken, contrite and humble before Him. However, whether a prayer is materially in harmony with the prayer that our Lord taught us and other prayers of Holy Writ as well as the more general principles set forth in the Word of God with respect to prayer, is another matter. No prayer that is materially in conflict with the instruction God has given us concerning prayer can be acceptable in His Holy sight!

With this in mind we may attempt to evaluate these prayers for ecclesiastical assemblies. There are several elements in them that are commendable since they form an essential part of all prayer and are certainly necessary in connection with the prayers of the office bearers of the church of Christ who are confronted with the important labors of the spiritual Kingdom of Heaven as it is manifested in the midst of the present world. Thus the confession and acknowledgment of human inability and unworthiness must be deeply sensed. It is, to our way of thinking, worthy of more emphasis than is given to it in one brief sentence in the prayer. Every delegate in the assembly has need of this consciousness because the lack of it tends only to human pride which

Jehovah hates. In close connection with this is the petition asking God to abide in the midst of the assembly by His Spirit. Since we are unable of ourselves to deliberate and decide according to truth, we are wholly dependent upon the strength and guidance of His good Spirit. Let the consciousness of this need be ever expressed in fervent prayer. It is our most fundamental need.

Also commendable in the prayer for the opening of ecclesiastical meetings is the acknowledgment that the Word of God is the sole rule and standard by which all decisions must be taken. Anything that is not harmonious with this is unworthy of the church of Jesus Christ and can never be blessed. What is done according to that standard tends to glorify the Name of God and serves the edification of the church. And peace to the conscience can only be had by abiding by the rule and standard of the Word which is truth. All this is worthy and necessary to mention in prayer and, therefore, our criticism of the opening prayer does not lie in what is said but rather in what is left unsaid and, further, in the general and indefinite form that characterizes this and all liturgical prayers. Thus, to cite but one example, no mention is made here of thanksgiving while the Heidelberg Catechism expresses that "*prayer is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us.*" Also, therefore, at the opening of the assembly it is fitting to express thanks to God Who has made the gathering possible and Who has committed to it the work to be performed. That work of the Lord may never be regarded as a burden and tedious task but rather must always be approached in the consciousness that it is a privilege indeed and to be engaged in it is an occasion for most joyous thanksgiving.

The prayer for the closing of assemblies also has in it several worthy elements. Here proper thanks is given. Noteworthy are also the various petitions asking God's blessing upon the work accomplished, His continuance and furtherance of that work, His blessing upon His Church and the prayer to destroy the works and kingdom of darkness. A revision of the entire section dealing with the prayer for civil magistrates is recommended. Scripture, in I Timothy 2:2 enjoins us to pray for "*kings, and for all that are in authority*" and, therefore, the prayer as such has its place but, if it is to be included in the prayer of the assembly of the church at the close of her labors in the interest of Christ's cause, a more definite and specific expression in the light of Psalm 2 and other Scripture passages is desirable. There is indeed a grave danger in a general, indefinite prayer of this kind of coming into sharp conflict with the prayer of Jesus in John 17 where He said, "*I pray not for the world.*"

PRE-SERVICE PRAYER BY THE CONSISTORY

A few words may yet be written concerning the practice of pre-worship service prayers by the Consistory. This custom obviously originated during the days of the *Afscheiding*, 1834, in the Netherlands and, hence, was brought about by

the press of circumstances. During these days the congregational worship was often disturbed by the interference of the government or antagonistic citizens. The office bearers, in charge of the services, felt the need of asking for Divine protection and blessing, particularly petitioning God to give courage to His people and to strengthen and qualify His servant to bring His Word without fear and hindrance. Later, during the time of the *Doleantie*, 1886, this practice was readily adopted and has become common practice since. It is only proper that the office bearers, in whose charge are the services for Divine worship, seek the benediction of God upon the minister and the congregation that is about to serve Him.

A few remarks concerning this practice are necessary. First of all, it should not be a mere *custom or tradition* but must needs be as keenly felt today as in the days of its origin when threatenings and slaughters were breathed out against the church as she gathered for Divine service.

In the second place, the prayer that is offered should be limited and appropriate to the occasion. It is made particularly with a view to the service that is about to take place. In that service the worshippers are actively engaged in song, prayer, communion of the saints, hearing and attending to the Word, etc. To properly engage in these spiritual exercises necessitates the Spirit and grace. Let these be earnestly sought in behalf of the congregation. The office-bearers in whose charge is the service have the particular functions of their office to perform. The minister must bring the Word, unfolding the mysteries of the faith for the instruction and comfort of Zion. The elders must prove the preaching of the Word, taking oversight thereof that there be no intrusion of false doctrines. The deacons must gather the alms and see that proper provision is made that the needs of the gospel may be provided and the poor and indigent properly cared for. The needs of each may well be committed in brief to the throne of grace from whence alone a sufficient provision is made so that these functions may be rightly and profitably performed.

G.V.D.B.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Bible Class of the Grand Haven, Mich., Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its heartfelt sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. George Lanting, and to our President, Rev. George Lanting, in the recent sorrow they experienced in the death of their sister,

MRS. TILLIE FISCHER (nee Rutgers)
of Oaklawn, Illinois.

We desire for them the comfort of the Lord in this experience of deep sorrow.

Mrs. Fred J. Peterson, Secretary

ALL AROUND US

The State A Result Of Common Grace?

The above question was evoked by the reading of an article appearing in the March, 1958 issue of *The Reformed Journal*, entitled *Reformed Theology and the First Amendment*, written by the Rev. Leonard Verduin.

We cannot quote all that the writer has to say on this subject, nor is this necessary for our purpose. But that our readers may know a little of the argument Rev. Verduin sets forth in his article, and to meet the charge that we might be quoting him out of context, we feel it necessary to summarize briefly what the article is about.

The First Amendment refers to the Constitution of the United States which stipulates that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ." Concerning this Verduin asks and attempts to answer the question: "What are we to think of this amendment? That is, what are we to think of it as *Christians* who take the Word of God seriously?"

The questions propounded by Rev. Verduin suggest the problem that he wishes to solve, at least to his own satisfaction. The problem is this. On the one hand, the First Amendment of the Constitution declares that the government of the United States must remain neutral in matters of religion. It must condone all religions, whether true or false, as having equal right of existence under our government. It must sustain the right of our citizenry to worship as they please or not to worship as they please; to be Protestant, Catholic, or Jew, Mohammedan, Buddhist or Atheist; without interference. Very simply, the position assumed by our government as expressed in the First Amendment is a hands-off policy as far as the matter of religion is concerned.

On the other hand, Rev. Verduin foresees the objection of Reformed Christians that all neutrality is wrong, in fact they may conclude that government is even antichristian that does not avowedly acknowledge the kingship of Christ.

Now Rev. Verduin does not go along with the idea that neutrality is always wrong. He concedes that it may be wrong in certain cases. All depends on the question, "What does God ask? If He asks non-neutrality, it is sinful for us to be neutral; but if He asks neutrality, as we think He sometimes does, then non-neutrality is sinful. The question that needs to be faced is, What does God ask of the State, His creature? If He asks neutrality, then the First Amendment is right in His sight. If He asks non-neutrality, then it is wrong in His sight. And in that eventuality we Christians had better try to do something about it."

In regard to the First Amendment's "neutrality," Rev. Verduin writes, "It should be pointed out that the 'neutrality' of the First Amendment is better called impartiality.

The First Amendment was written to prevent favoritism, devised to keep Congress from giving to one religiosity the right-of-way and so put the other religiosities at a disadvantage. The First Amendment does not intend to commit America to religious vacuity, as is sometimes imagined. It does not commit America to secularism, as is sometimes said. It does not seek nor anticipate the cessation of religious commitment on the part of its citizens. In fact, it not only expects them to continue to have such commitments but it seeks to provide a climate where religious commitment is most likely to flourish. It does this by providing that every religious conviction shall have the same status at law, the same protection, the same opportunity. The intention of the First Amendment is not to carve out an anti-Christian or anti-religious State. As far as the Constitution is concerned America is not, and cannot become, a 'godless America.' There may be godless people in America — we have our share of them — but there is no 'godless America.' A godless State is a non-neutral State. It precludes religion and the free exercise thereof, things which in the American State are guaranteed by constitutional provision. Not only is this the theoretical intent of the First Amendment; it is likewise the practice. Any one who is in position to speak with authority on the matter knows that on the American scene religion and the free exercise thereof are not obstructed but encouraged — within the framework of the First Amendment, of course."

Rev. Verduin is convinced that "non-neutrality where neutrality is enjoined is just as vicious as neutrality where non-neutrality is commanded."

What is written so far should give the reader some idea as to what the Rev. Verduin is concerned about in his article. Though we did not desire to comment especially on this part of his article, it is difficult to refrain from asking the question: But does not the government have the bounden duty to maintain both tables of the law? And if this is so, can the government be neutral when these commandments of God are transgressed? Can the government keep still when for instance a false religion sets itself up on the basis of principles that deny the very God of Scripture?

But, as we noted in the title of this article, we are more interested now in the question: is the State a result of common grace? Verduin answers this question affirmatively in the following quotation.

"If impartiality on the part of the State is not only permissible but actually in keeping with God's will, then there must be a theology upon which such impartiality rests. Do we have such a theology? We think we do have — in the doctrine of God's common grace. Although the doctrine of common grace is still largely a tract of virgin territory, one that calls for frontiersmen of great stamina and strength, we feel that the main lines of this doctrine are already visible. The brush has been cleared sufficiently so that we may see the sunlight and the soil. We wish to put forth an exploring foot upon this terrain.

"It will perhaps be granted by all that the State results from God's common grace. Now if that be granted then it follows that the rule-right that comes to expression in the State is not of a piece with the rule-right that expresses itself in the area of God's special or redeeming grace. We may put this in mathematical formula. The rule-right of the State is to the rule-right on the redemptive level what common grace is to special grace. Just as it is a serious fault to deal with common grace and special grace without further distinction, so is it quite erroneous to talk about rule-right without further differentiation."

Verduin further develops his philosophy (for philosophy it is, pure and simple, without Scriptural or Confessional context) in the remaining part of his article. However, we are concerned now only with the statement "It will perhaps be granted by all that the State results from God's common grace."

Now we are not ready to grant this at all. We repeat, this is pure philosophy. We know the presentation of those who teach the theory of a certain common grace of God. Their contention is that government was instituted as a blessing of common grace for the restraint of sin. Accordingly, so we are told, this is especially emphasized in the establishment of the covenant with Noah. Here, so it is said, God gives the government the power of the sword in His common grace for the restraint of sin.

Though we also believe that the government bears the sword, and that the sword is given to the government for the punishment of evildoers, this does not imply, as is the contention of the common grace theorists, that government itself is instituted because of sin, and for the restraint of sin. It should be very plain to the student of Scripture that government is not instituted because of sin at all, but it rises organically and directly from the family. Sin and the restraint of sin had nothing to do with the institution of government. And what was true in the creation of man and of the world, is true also in heaven among the angels where there are principalities and powers, and this is true also in the kingdom of Christ where there is government, authority and obedience to authority apart from any consideration of sin. It must be plain also to all who are acquainted with our Reformed Standards that this is the view expressed by our fathers and is clearly the principle set forth in the exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 39 relative to its treatment of the 5th Commandment. Let Rev. Verduin prove the contrary, if he can.

But if Verduin will grant that our contention is right, it seems to me that all the rest of his argument becomes exceedingly faulty. And he will have to answer negatively the question we raised above, namely, Can the government be neutral when the commandments of God are transgressed?

In conclusion, we call attention to a foot-note which Rev. Verduin attached to his article which is very interesting not

only, but which may lead to some serious debate within the Christian Reformed constituency itself. The foot-note reads as follows:

"The writer of these lines has always felt that it is not good schematization to treat (as did the Synod in the now famous Three Points) of the 'well-meant offer of salvation' under the heading of 'common grace.' The problem of the bona fide offer of salvation to all who hear is a problem concerning *the administration of special grace* rather than a problem of common grace. One of the first points made by Dr. Abraham Kuyper in his monumental work on *De Gemeene Gratie* is that common grace 'does not have so much as the germ of salvation in it and for that reason is of a *totally different nature* (italics are Kuyper's) than is the case in both particular grace and Covenant grace.' It would therefore be better to discuss the question of the well-meant offer of salvation not when non-redemptive grace is in focus but when redemptive grace is being treated."

It is quite gratifying, at least to the undersigned, to learn from the above foot-note that at least the schematization of the Three Points is not above criticism in the Christian Reformed Church. After thirty or more long years this is the first public criticism offered against the formulation of the First Point, at least to our knowledge.

We realize, of course, that Verduin in the above foot-note is not critical of the "well-meant offer of salvation" to all who hear the Gospel. All that he is insisting upon is that this conception does not belong in the context of the Three Points of Common Grace. To him it is merely a matter of schematization. To us, however, it is a matter of principle and of truth, as has been clearly enunciated throughout the last thirty or more years in *The Standard Bearer*, which incidentally has been the cause for *The Standard Bearer's* very existence. We have denied the theory of common grace not only, but, relative to the "well-meant offer of salvation" to all who hear the Gospel, as stipulated in the First Point, we insist that this is the doctrine of Arminius.

At any rate, it will be very interesting to see whether there will be any repercussions to Verduin's foot-note. If there are, and these are made public, our readers will be kept informed.

M.S.

AN INVITATION TO WORSHIP

O come before the Lord, our King,
And in His presence let us sing;
Let us in glad and joyful lays
The Rock of our salvation praise;
Before Him come with thankful song,
In joyful psalms His praise prolong.

Psalm 95:1

CONTRIBUTIONS

CALVINISM — THE TRUTH

(Arminianism the Lie)

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

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Unconditional Election

(Continued)

CALVINISM maintains with Scripture that the Lord chose us, not because we were holy, but "he hath chosen us in Him . . . *that* (in order that) we should be holy" (Eph. 1:4); nor because He foresaw our obedience; but we are "elect . . . *unto* obedience" (I Pe. 1:2); nor because He foresaw our faith. For "God hath from the beginning chosen you *to* salvation, *thru* . . . belief" (II Th. 2:13). The effect is that none believe except those ordained *to* eternal life, chosen *to* faith, and *to* every saving good. The word "ordained" pertains to the eternal, sovereign counsel of God. According to that counsel it means, "to place": "as many as were placed to eternal life believed," i.e., to be rooted in and invested with eternal life; "to give": "as many as were *given* to eternal life," i.e., those under the dominion and ownership of eternal life believed. And since the word is a passive verb ("had been ordained"), it implies that a word omitted is to be understood. That word can be nothing else but "Lord," which appears in the first part of the text. "As many as had been ordained"—by whom? by the *Lord*! It is not man's act, but God's. "I speak not of you all: I know whom *I* have chosen" (Jn. 13:18), for, "ye did not choose Me, but *I* chose you, and ordained you" (15:16). Our election does not depend upon anything in us, therefore, but upon His own sovereign ordination. From God's point of view, it is absolutely and eternally firm and sure. Our diligence cannot make His decree any more secure; but rather furnishes us with the comfort and joy which knowledge of election affords (I Th. 1:4). God's election guarantees that none of His elect can be fatally deceived (Mt. 24:24), that none can perish (Jn. 10:27ff), nor be lost (6:39). For His people, *their* names were forever written in heaven (Lk. 10:20), and He unconditionally promises that He will *not* blot out their name from that record (Rev. 3:5).

Reprobation

4. ARMINIANISM bitterly repudiates the doctrine of sovereign reprobation. It is this point which raises the most controversy. When we ask the question, What of those who were *not* "ordained to eternal life"? the answer often given is, that "God never sends anyone to hell," for His cross bars the way thence, so that the damned send themselves there, as a result of treading the cross underfoot: "who hath trod-

den under foot the Son of God," etc., (Heb. 10:29). Indeed, for the sake of Christ's cross God does not determine, by an indisputable will to leave anyone in the Fall of man, nor to pass by or leave anyone in the state of sin and condemnation. For "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pe. 3:9). Then it cannot be absolute predestination which determines the reason why God sends the gospel to one people and not to another, but rather because one is better and worthier than the other to whom the gospel is not sent: "But seeing ye put it (the gospel) from you, and judge *yourselves* unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Ac. 13:46). Why is one consigned to perdition? Not as the result of an arbitrary partiality ("there is no respect of persons with God," Rom. 2:11), but because one is good and the other bad; the one is a believer and the other an unbeliever ("some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not," Ac. 28:24); or the one is obedient and the other rebellious (cf. "Come, ye blessed . . . For I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat," etc., with "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire . . . For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat," etc. Mt. 25:34f, 41f).

CALVINISM declares that we know only so much about reprobation as God has seen fit to reveal, and it is important we know *that* much. The Bible teaches that the elect are by nature just as wicked, depraved and worthy of damnation as the reprobate: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord" (Am. 9:7). Yet the Lord has chosen the Israel of God (Ga. 6:16), and rejected the rest. For there is a personal election of some to salvation (II Th. 2:13). There must, then, be other persons who are *not* elected to salvation. God has not appointed His elect unto wrath (I Th. 5:9); there must, then, be others who *are* appointed to wrath, and to fatal stumbling (I Pe. 2:8). There are some God gave to Christ (Jn. 6:37); there are others He did *not* give to Christ (Jn. 17:9). There are some whose names were written in the book of life (Re. 21:27); there are others whose names were *not* written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Re. 17:8). To some "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (others) it is not given" (Mt. 13:11). "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God . . .? *we* shall not die. O Lord, Thou hast ordained *them* for judgment" (Hab. 1:12). The reprobate are such children of disobedience that they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; they make a covenant with death (Is. 28:15). To that disobedience they were sovereignly appointed (I Pe. 2:8)! and that unworthiness is their actual state and condition to which they were of old (from eternity) ordained (Jude 4). "For our God is a consuming fire." He is not only sovereign in His goodness, but also in His severity. "He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth" (Ro. 9:18).

(To be continued)