

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

THE GREAT "SKANDALON"

"And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

Then the high priest rent his clothes

Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? and they all condemned Him to be guilty of death."

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Mark 14:53, 63a, 64

Psalm 110:4

What is a "skandalon"?

It is a Greek word, meaning: the movable stick or trigger of a trap. That is the literal meaning of the word. Further it also means a stumbling block, a trap, a snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble and fall; an occasion of stumbling.

It's a purely Biblical word, and, as you know, it refers to Christ.

Christ is the great Skandalon. (Incidentally, this Greek word found its way into the modern languages, but the original meaning is almost lost: Dutch: het schandaal; English: the scandal; German der Skandal; French: le scandale.)

But Christ is the rock of offense. And He is placed among wicked men so that they may stumble over Him: the trigger goes off, and they are ground to powder.

We see this today when we enter a court room: the Sanhedrin.

Oh yes, it is indeed a court scene. There are the judges, the witnesses, the Accused.

Court scenes are fascinating. They always have a particular charm for me, although I must hasten to add that the charmed feeling is not unmixed with fear and trembling.

And the reason for this attraction is simple: when you enter a court room, you have a pre-audition and pre-vision of the great Judgment Day.

Today we see the greatest Court Case of all the ages.

Christ, the Son of the living God is the Accused.

Jehovah God stands before the tribunal of man.

* * * *

Let us look for a while at that judge there.

His name is Caiaphas. And he is a judge among the judges. He is the High Priest.

What kind of man is he?

First, he is of the sect of the Sadducees. I hear you ask: Is that bad? And the answer is: yes, that is very bad. The Sadducees were the materialists of the day of Christ's trial. They were the Hellenists, that is, those who were charmed by the Greek culture of the day. They were those who denied the existence of spirits and angels, the resurrection from the dead, and of heaven. They were a very carnal, sinful sect. Caiaphas belonged to the rich, cultured, materialistic class. You may sum it all up in saying that he was worldly minded.

What kind of man ought he to be?

Oh, but that is beautiful. He ought to be the representative of God, the Redeemer of Israel. He ought to be the representative of the love of God. It belonged to the office of the High Priest to be full of love and compassion for those that were miserable, and then especially, miserable because of sin and guilt. A High Priest should be very concerned about the sins of the people. It belonged to his office, in fact, it was the very heart of his office to appear before God with all the sins of God's Israel, and confess them, pray and supplicate regarding them to the God of Israel, and to make atonement for those sins, by prayer and sacrifice.

But a High Priest especially should have a loving heart: toward God and toward the people of God.

Once each year he must carry the blood of atonement before the Face of God the Redeemer. Today we would say: the High Priest must take Jesus and carry Him to God the Father in the midst of the songs of his heart!

But, alas, there is not an inkling left of all those beauties

in this man Caiaphas. He is an evil-doer, a man who tramples under foot all law and justice. He piles sin upon sin and tramples under foot the very God of Israel's redemption.

* * * *

Now look at the Accused!

Who is He?

He is the real High Priest. The other is a pseudo-priest.

But this One is the true High Priest. Stands even at this moment before the Face of God, doing the very work of the High Priest.

Remember the qualifications of the High Priest? He must have the love of God and for God in His heart, and also the love of God for God's Israel.

Well, that is all true of this Man!

He certainly is concerned with the sin of God's Israel.

All the High Priests of the former ages bore the blood of atonement in their censers, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

But this Man is even now shedding His own blood: His heart is slowly breaking, and will break completely before the day is done: Good Friday.

He is the ONLY High Priest. His was the ONLY sacrifice. He is priest, altar and sacrifice, all in one.

But note: He is the real High Priest, although without pomp and circumstance.

What do I say? His appearance is the very opposite of pomp and circumstance.

Look at Him! "Ecce Homo!"

Bloody, weary with an eternal weariness, bound: He could not wipe away either the blood, the spittle of counsellors, the sputum of the soldiers or the saliva of the mob.

And they all laugh Him to scorn.

Oh, leave Him be! He is doing the Holy work of atonement.

He is interceding for the elect church of God.

He is paying the awful price of God's demanding righteousness.

No, you cannot read all that in the pages of Mark 14. Or, for that matter, in the whole Bible.

You need with all that faith, the power to see spiritual things.

Caiaphas did not see the Godhead of this High Priest, doing there at his feet the work of atonement. All he saw was a Man who had bothered him no end. And what bothered this wicked high priest? His goodness, His sublime goodness, His unbelievable goodness. The goodness of this Christ of God shone in this very judgment hall. Why look for false witnesses, except because you know you have a rotten case?

No, Jesus is the great Skandalon.

Remember the trigger of the trap?

Caiaphas is one of those who is set for the fall, for the awful fall into hell. And He who is the occasion for this fall stands there before him.

Tonight, while despising this miserable Jesus, he does not realize that he is going to weep in hell for all eternity. The trap will be sprung soon enough.

Oh, this wondrous High Priest is the great Rock of offense.

* * * *

And when the day of reckoning will come, it will become very plain.

God will be just when He judges: you can rely on that.

No, in the real sense Jesus is not on trial here, but Caiaphas is, and with him, the whole Sanhedrin.

They were beautiful men, that is, externally. Membership among the castes of chief priests, elders and scribes did not come easily. They were men of repute. Whenever one of them passed the market place with solemn steps, he heard it from every side and at every step: Rabbi! Rabbi!

They were leaders, chiefs, masters in Israel, the church.

But be not fooled by outward appearance. There are and have been very many crooked judges. The whole history of the world cries for a true JUDGMENT.

There are many crooked judges, lawyers, witnesses, prosecuting attorneys.

This "outfit" belongs to them, is composed of them.

It is no trial: it is a mockery of justice and righteousness.

Caiaphas, and the whole Sanhedrin with him, is working a work of darkness. What do I say? They are working the greatest work of darkness ever!

There is no trial which can be compared to this trial.

It militates against all concepts of justice and truth.

Attend to this:

Sanhedrin must meet at a neutral place: here they meet in the palace of the high priest.

They might not begin a trial in the night.

There might not be a hearing on the feast days.

All witnesses had to be severely warned against lying: here they encourage, they seek for *false* witnesses.

The witnesses do not agree, yet they punish and condemn.

Accusation and witnesses had to be ready before the trial began: here they have to seek for crooks while the hearing is in progress.

The Sanhedrin hated and envied Him.

Contrary to all righteousness, they condemn Him of

Whom heaven and earth, yea, and even hell testified to His goodness: He went about the country doing good; the necessity of *false* witnesses testifies of His truth; the dream of Pilate's wife; God's voice from heaven: This is My beloved Son!; Judas' poignant cry: I have shed the innocent BLOOD!

Note the terrible conduct, condoned by the judges (?), and participated in by them: they spit upon Him, cover His face and buffet Him; mock Him: Prophecy to us: Who beat you last? They strike Him with the palms of their hands. They laugh at Him and set Him at nought.

* * * *

And what is the real High Priest doing all this time?

He is saving you and me, my brother; He is redeeming you, my sister.

He is often silent, that is, about His disciples and doctrine. Why?

He will not divert the attention from Him.

He beholds a Vision of God, there, there, behind the seat of the judge Caiaphas.

Jesus has seen the Godhead.

He knows it is beautifully just.

It became Him: all this sweat, tears, blood, spittle, shame, dishonor, pain, anguish, yes, and finally, death, eternal death.

Be very still now: your Jesus is suffering eternal, everlasting torment of death for you and me.

The trap is set; will be sprung, is sprung. The wicked judges are ground to powder by the Rock.

And what will we do? We will worship, we will worship!

G.V.

Attention: Synodical Standing Committees

We call attention to Article 9 of the Rules of Synod, part 1 which reads: "*The reports of all committees, except of the standing committees shall be published three months before Synod convenes, so that all the churches may be duly informed.*"

Will the following committees kindly take note: Committee on Liturgy, Rules, Catechism Books, Foreign Missions, Declaration of Principles.

G. VANDEN BERG, *Stated Clerk*

Teacher Needed

The Hope Protestant Reformed School will need a Teacher for grades 3 and 4 next September. Since we already know that this vacancy will exist, we are making our need known to anyone interested in applying. Write or call Miss A. Reitsma, principal, 1111 Boston, S. E., Grand Rapids, or Mr. John Kalsbeek, School Board Secretary, 4132 Hall St., S. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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EDITORIALS

The Declaration of Principles

This, as practically all of us know, is a document which was composed at the request of the Mission Committee of our churches, was proposed to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Church in 1950, and was finally adopted by our synod in Oct. 1951.

I would consider this Declaration of Principles one of the most important documents that was ever adopted by our churches, a document that was proved to be very necessary and salutary for the continued existence of our churches and for the maintenance of our Protestant Reformed faith and principles.

If the Declaration had not been adopted it is not impossible that we would have been swallowed up by the so-called "Liberated." In fact, that was what some of those who, at the time, still belonged with us, especially De Jong and Kok, wished to see accomplished. It is evident that, when they made their trip to the Netherlands and remained there for some time, they already denied the Protestant Reformed truth and were willing to sell our churches to the Liberated.

And now, according to all reports that reach me, they are about ready to agree with the "three points" of 1924, and would like to join the Christian Reformed Church if possible. All this is sufficient proof that those that departed from us and from the Protestant Reformed truth are not men of principle and have no definite convictions. I am referring especially to their leaders. No doubt, there are others that are simply led astray by them and would not go along if only they had different leadership.

In our *Standard Bearer* of Jan. 1, 1951, you may find an article by B. Kok under the caption "The Declaration, A Mistake." In it, the Rev. Kok condemns the Declaration of Principles on four alleged grounds. They are: 1. The decision to propose this Declaration was in conflict with Art. 30 of the Church Order; 2. The Synod of 1950 acted too hastily in the matter. 3. The adoption of this Declaration may cause a schism in our churches. 4. The questions involved are extra-confessional and, therefore, should not determine membership in our churches.

In the same number of *The Standard Bearer* the reader may find my answer to the alleged objections to the Declaration.

At present, however, I wish to call special attention to the third of these alleged grounds namely, that the adoption of the Declaration may cause a schism in our churches. For this schism has now become actual fact. And the question that arises and should be answered is: what was the cause of the schism? Was it the Declaration of Principles? Was the Declaration itself of a schismatic character? Or is that

Declaration soundly Reformed and in accord with the confessions so that those that departed from us forsook and denied the Protestant Reformed truth and became schismatic?

The latter is, undoubtedly, the truth.

Even the schismatics never protested against the Declaration on the ground that it was not Reformed. The most that Kok declares in the above grounds is that it is extra-confessional and even this is not the truth.

But that it may become perfectly evident to all our readers that the Declaration of Principles is not the cause of the schism in our churches, but that rather they who repudiate this Declaration are the cause, I wish to call attention to this document that was adopted by our churches.

The complete title of this Declaration is: "A Brief Declaration of Principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches."

It then continues to state that the Protestant Reformed Churches stand on the basis of Scripture as the infallible Word of God as well as on the basis of the Reformed Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Netherland or Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht. These confessions are briefly called the Three Forms of Unity. Moreover, in its introductions the Declaration also states that the Protestant Reformed Churches accept, as confessions as a minor order the several forms that are used in public worship, such as the Baptism Form, the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, and others.

And now I quote literally:

"On the basis of the Word of God and these confessions:

"They repudiate the errors of the Three Points adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, 1924, which maintain:

"A. That there is a grace of God to all men, including the reprobate, manifest in the common gifts to all men.

"B. That the promise of the gospel is a gracious offer of salvation on the part of God to all that externally hear the gospel.

"C. That the natural man through the influence of common grace can do good in this world.

"D. Over against this they maintain:

"1. That the grace of God is always particular, i.e., only for the elect, never for the reprobate.

"2. That the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer on the part of God to all men, nor a conditional offer to all that are born in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith.

"3. That the unregenerate man is totally incapable of doing any good, wholly depraved, and therefore can only sin."

This, then, is the first part of the Declaration of Principles.

That this is based on the Word of God and the Reformed Confessions has been repeatedly proved. Moreover, the schismatics never denied this. They never even made

an attempt to prove that this is not true. We, therefore, will not, for the present, try to show the truth of this again. But this has always been the truth that is disitinctively confessed by and proclaimed in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

And the question that is of immediate importance to us is: Is this Declaration of Principles the cause of the schism in our churches?

Our answer is an emphatic NO!

Not we who maintain this Declaration but those that deny and repudiate it are the schismatics.

Already they have officially repudiated this Declaration.

We may ask the question: why did they repudiate and reject it?

My answer is: not as a matter of principle, but because they were not satisfied with the fact that, as churches, we were small. They wanted to become big and in order to grow outwardly they were willing to compromise and to deny the truth.

This is the reason why, first of all, they were willing to compromise with the liberated doctrine of the covenant. When Kok and De Jong were in the Netherlands, they openly denied the Protestant Reformed truth of the covenant and catered, to say the least, to the liberated conception. This became evident from a letter of Professor Holwerda to the liberated church in Chatam, Ont. In that letter Holwerda stated that, according to Kok and De Jong, Hoeksema's conception of the truth of election was not the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and that no one was bound by it. Some, according to them, emitted a totally different sound. This refers, of course, to the relation between election and the covenant. The liberated must have nothing of the truth that only the elect are in the covenant even though in the historical realization of the covenant the carnal seed appears together with the spiritual. And this touches the very heart of the Protestant Reformed truth. Again, according to Holwerda, Kok and De Jong said in the Netherlands: that most of the Protestant Reformed people and ministers do not agree with Hoeksema and Ophoff, which refers, of course, to the same doctrine of election in relation to the covenant. They even said, according to Holwerda, that there was much sympathy in the Protestant Reformed Churches for the doctrine of the Liberated even as regards their conception of the covenant, and that, in our churches there is ample room for this doctrine. Now, if we remember that this refers to the Heynsian doctrine of the covenant of grace, we can understand how far, even already at that time, Kok and De Jong had departed from the truth as it is confessed in our churches.

Not the Declaration of Principles is the cause of the schism in our churches but those that left us are the cause.

In the light of the above, we can readily understand, however, the opposition that was raised by the schismatics against the Declaration of Principles, even to the extent we quoted it above.

How could they accept a statement such as that under 2 above:

"That the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer on the part of God to all men, nor a conditional offer to all that are born in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith."

This statement, although thoroughly Reformed and emphatically Protestant Reformed, the liberated would never accept and, therefore, Kok and De Jong and the rest that departed from us, could not condone. For the sake of becoming big they were willing to compromise the truth.

At the present time, however, it seems that their union with the liberated has lost some of its attraction. Hence, they now attempt to join the Christian Reformed Church.

H.H.

Waiting Till Next Synod

On the seventeenth of February we, the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., had a congregational meeting in order to decide what to do in regard to an answer to the schismatics and their claim to the property of our congregation.

It was a very nice meeting, and a very good spirit prevailed even though opinions differed somewhat in regard to the proper course to follow.

The schismatics, in their correspondence with us, were very bold and insisted that the property is theirs, in spite of the fact that the supreme court of the State of Michigan assigned the property to us. They evidently base their contention on the decision of the same supreme court in the case of the Second Church of Grand Rapids.

Personally, I do not agree with this contention of the schismatics.

But we shall see.

In the above mentioned congregational meeting, the congregation was first of all informed about all that the consistory had done about the property.

After this a proposition of the consistory was adopted by a very large majority to the effect that we assume a waiting attitude till the time of the next synod in June.

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Harry Leep and family in the loss of her mother,

MRS. WILLIAM ALBERDA

May the Lord comfort them with the assurance that all His ways are for the good of His own and that for the believer death is gain.

P. Vis, President

Mrs. Chris Visser, Secretary

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER I

The Sealing of the One Hundred Forty-four Thousand

Revelation 7:1-8

Spiritual Israel, and not Israel as a nation, must be considered the true Israel. Rom. 9:6-12. And therefore, we must distinguish also in the days of the Old Testament between Israel as a nation and the true, spiritual Israel. Not all the national Jews were true Israelites. But all true Israelites in the Old Testament were also Jews, belonging to the nation. True Israel, that is, the true, spiritual people of God, were enclosed in Israel as a nation. Now, however, this has been changed. The nation as such has been rejected in the days of the new dispensation. And spiritual Israel, the elect of God, are now gathered from Jew and Gentile alike, as also Moses had already prophesied, 9:24-29. The result is this, that the Gentiles, who did not seek after the righteousness of the law, have obtained the righteousness which is by faith, while Israel, who was seeking in its national blindness after the righteousness of the law and of works, failed to obtain the righteousness in Christ Jesus by faith, 9:30-end.

This righteousness, which is by faith in Christ Jesus, — so Paul continues in chapter 10, — is the main and the only true blessing and characteristic of the people of God in the old as well as in the new dispensation. There is, therefore, in the days of the New Testament no difference between Jew and Gentile: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, for the same Lord is over all and is rich unto all that call upon his name." It was in that righteousness of faith that the true Israelites of the Old Testament were saved. But the nation as such sought after the righteousness of the law, the righteousness of works. They did not subject themselves to this righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus, and therefore as a nation they were rejected from that time forth. And this rejection of Israel as a nation simply meant that salvation from now on was no more confined within the limits of Israel as a nation, but that it became the common property of Jew and Gentile both. If the true people of God in the days of the Old Testament were found only among the Jews, the rejection of the Jews as a nation became the occasion of a universality of salvation.

Finally, the apostle in chapter 11 approaches the question whether Israel is then rejected of God in such a way that there is no salvation for them, either for them as a nation or for any individual among them. And this idea the apostle refutes very strongly. No, Israel is not rejected in that ab-

solute sense, that no Jew can be saved. On the contrary, the apostle argues that he too is a real Jew, and yet he is saved. And he quotes from the time of Elijah to prove that even then there was a remnant according to the election of grace, the seven thousand that did not bow before Baal. And thus it is also now. Even in the days of the New Testament there is undoubtedly a remnant also among the Jews, that certainly will be saved. But they will be saved in no other way than the Gentiles are saved, that is, by the righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus. And therefore, though Israel as a nation failed, that remnant according to the election of grace will certainly be saved in Christ. Hence, in the New Testament day this is the relation. If Israel is likened unto an olive tree, then many branches have been cut out of the olive tree. For a hardening in part has come over Israel. But instead of those branches that have been cut out of the olive tree, other branches are grafted in, and that from Jew and Gentile both. And thus, the apostle concludes, all Israel, namely, the true, spiritual Israel shall be saved. When the fulness of the Gentiles has been ingrafted upon the olive tree of Israel in the spiritual sense, and the fulness of Israel also have been ingrafted upon that same olive tree, then all Israel shall have been saved. Thus is the reasoning of the apostle. And therefore, in short we may conclude these principles: in the first place, that true Israel, in the old as well as in the new dispensation, is spiritual, and not carnal Israel. In the second place, that the nation as such has served its purpose, and that true, spiritual Israel in the present dispensation is gathered from Jew and Gentile both. And in the third place, that there is no difference between the two in the present dispensation. They can be saved only in the same Christ and by the same righteousness which is by faith. In Christ there is no Jew or Greek. And therefore, if you would be Scriptural, then the only conclusion is that there is no such thing in the new dispensation as a special nation with special privileges over and above the Gentiles, and perhaps with a special future. This certainly is not the case.

Let us now return to the Book of Revelation and to the words of our text. If, in the light of Scripture, as was indicated above, we study this wonderful book, we soon find that it never speaks of Israel in the literal and carnal sense of the word. Thus, when it speaks of Jerusalem, it either refers to apostate Christendom, that crucifies the Christ, or it refers to Jerusalem that is above, the bride of Christ Jesus in glory. Jerusalem, Israel, the names of Israel, Zion, — all these are not used in the literal sense of the word, but always in the symbolical sense. And the book goes even so far, that it speaks of those who claim that they are Jews merely because of their physical relation to Abraham as a synagogue of Satan. 2:9. And if you say that in this portion we have nevertheless a reference to the Jews as a nation, then let me call your attention to the following clear facts. In the first place, in chapter 9, verse 4, we meet these sealed ones again. The locusts out of the abyss have been let loose, and they

are about to begin their destructive work. And what is the commission they receive? Whom may they hurt? Only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. Now if these sealed ones in this chapter are only Jews, then the portion in chapter 9 would mean that the locusts might indeed hurt the Christians from the Gentiles, but that only the saved ones from the Jews are immune. The absurdity of such a position is very plain. No, only on the basis that with Israel in this chapter both Jews and Gentiles are meant, the spiritual Israel of the New Testament, can that portion be explained. And therefore, as such we accept it. Secondly, let us look at the portion itself. First of all, let me call your attention to the fact that in verse 3 these sealed ones are called the servants of God. The servants of God must receive the seal. Are then the Jews only the servants of God, or also the Christians from the Gentiles? The answer is, of course: also the latter. Further, notice the haphazard way in which the twelve tribes are mentioned. Ephraim is not mentioned here, nor is Dan. Have they then forfeited all right to salvation? Must we then assume that there will be no saved ones at all from these tribes? Secondly, Joseph is mentioned, who as such never formed a tribe among Israel. And if you would argue that this name takes the place of his two sons, then you are again mistaken: for Manasseh, one of the sons of Joseph, is mentioned indeed by name. In the third place, they are mentioned without any arrangement as to order. Judah is first, and then Reuben, while also Levi has a portion here as one of the tribes of Israel, though in actual fact he never did have a heritage among them. Now, whatever else this may be found to indicate, it certainly tells us that we may not think here of the literal tribes of the nation of Israel, but of the spiritual Israel here upon earth, or rather, of the church of the new dispensation gathered from Jew and Gentile both. Finally, I also insist that if one part of this portion is taken literally, consistent interpretation of the Word of God demands that we take the whole in the same sense. Then we must dare to assume that this text literally tells us that there will be exactly one hundred forty-four thousand Jews in the future, or in this entire dispensation, that will be saved. No one will accept such an interpretation.

Hence, we maintain that also this portion of the Book of Revelation must be understood in the symbolical sense of the word. Israel is the church of the new dispensation. And the only question that is still to be answered is: how must we conceive of this church according to the passage? It is evident that the number must give us the answer to this question. One hundred forty-four thousand is the number John heard, twelve thousand out of every tribe. It needs no argument that, in the first place, we have here the symbol of completion. Dominant in the number is the number *ten*. Moreover, it is the number of completion also because of the fact that one hundred forty-four contains the number *twelve* multiplied by itself. It makes us think of a square, even as the perfected Jerusalem is also represented as a perfect

square, just as long as it is wide, and just as the holy of holies was ten times ten. It is therefore the number of completion and the number of perfection. But the second question arises: complete in what sense? If one hundred forty-four thousand indicates a complete number of the people of God, does it indicate the number of God's people of all ages, or rather of those that exist during a definite period? In order to answer this question we must look at the number a little more closely. The basic numbers of one hundred forty-four thousand are evidently *ten* and *twelve*. Now *twelve* is the number of God's people on earth from the point of view of their free salvation. It is like the number *seven* in that it contains both *three* and *four*, but with an important difference. As we know, the number *seven* is also employed in Scripture as a symbol of the church and of the completed kingdom of Christ. And so also is the number *twelve*. But Scripture does not simply employ these different numbers for the sake of variety, but to express a different thought. The difference between the number *seven* and the number *twelve* is evidently this, that *seven* is the mere union of *three* and *four*, while *twelve* is obtained by the process of multiplication of *four* by *three*, thus representing the influence of *three* upon *four*. If you bear this in mind, the thought is clear. *Seven* is employed with a view to the church where the union of the church and their head, the union of *four* and *three*, is to be indicated, as, for instance, in the first chapter of Revelation. But *twelve* is the number of God's people from the point of view that they are the ones that are saved by grace, by the free grace of God. It points to the influence of God upon the world, *three* being the number of the Trinity, *four* being the number of the world. Hence, we have in this number *twelve* an indication of the people of God from the point of view of their reconciliation to God through the influence of divine grace. In the second place, *twelve* is also the number of the people of God from the viewpoint of their earthly existence in any period of time. In the Old Testament there were twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes of Israel. And in the New Testament there are twelve apostles and twelve elders. In the state of perfection they are combined, and you obtain the number *twenty-four*. But here upon earth, the church, both in the Old and in the New Testament, appears under the symbol of the number *twelve*. And thus we come to this conclusion, that this number, *twelve times twelve*, is the symbol of the church of God from the viewpoint of their reconciliation to God through His free grace, and that also, during any period of their existence. And since, as we found, *ten* is the number of God's decree, and this number is contained in the one hundred forty-four thousand three times, we evidently have here the complete number of God's elect people, reconciled by grace, as they are upon earth in any period of this present dispensation.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

The Sword Awakened against the Shepherd and his Flock

Chapter 13:7

Awake, O sword, against the shepherd, and against a man, my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will stretch out my hand upon the little ones.

Here again there is an abrupt change of subjects. The prophet at once passes from recounting the evasions of a false prophet interrogated regarding wounds between his hands to another representation of the good shepherd. It is this shepherd's fourth appearance in this discourse. In the 9th chapter he is the lowly king of Zion who comes to his people, as riding upon the colt of an ass. In the 11th chapter he is set forth as an object of abhorance to the flock of slaughter. Here there is a distinct allusion to his suffering. The implication of chapter 12:10 is that he is pierced by the covenant people. In the verse now under consideration he is brought into focus as smitten of God through men's agency. That the good shepherd is Christ has already been established on the basis of the New Testament Scriptures. Attention may yet be called to the fact that the words, "Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered," were quoted by Christ in a somewhat modified form to show that all His disciples would be offended because of Him that night because it was written (Matt. 26:31). Hereby He again identified Himself with the good shepherd of our prophet's vision.

The verses 7-9 form a distinct passage closely connected with the 14th chapter, the final section of this prophecy. The predictions and promises are the same, with this difference that in the 14th chapter they receive a fuller treatment. The good shepherd will be smitten — the church, centrally Christ, will come in the crucible of affliction. A way of escape will be opened for the surviving remnant, which will be further refined and ultimately given the victory. Christ will reign over the whole earth, and Jerusalem will be exalted. These are here the promises, the germ of which was the protevangel that was proclaimed in the first days of paradise. These promises, therefore, are not new in the sense that they were now being proclaimed for the first time. They form the themes of all the prophets upon which each of them as God's organ shed a new light, and in the totality of whose discourses they continued to unfold through the ages of the old dispensation.

The first part of verse 7 is a command, the speaker of which can be none other than God. The command is addressed to the sword, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd . . . smite the shepherd." Actually addressed are the persons appointed to take up the sword against the shepherd, which does not mean that they are being mandated by an audible

voice from heaven. In the context these persons are the inhabitants of Jerusalem including the people who later as God's penitent ones will mourn for him whom they have pierced. According to the counsel of God they must slay His shepherd at a time appointed of God in His counsel. And as this time is now at hand, God speaks, "Slay my shepherd," and it is done. For it is God who speaks — God whose word — the word of His power — never returns to Him void but always accomplishes what it says. Not that He can be charged with being the creator or author and in this sense the cause of the great sin that the smiting of the shepherd involves the smiters. God is not the creator of sin. Sin has not its origin in Him. But He did create the smiters, when He created the first man in His image. And, therefore, being His creatures, they exist solely by His power. In Him do they live and move. They have in Him their very being. What, therefore, could be easier for Him than by the word of His power turn the hearts of the smiters to hate and smite the shepherd without implicating Himself in their great sin or destroying their accountability to Him, as once by the same word of His power He had turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate and oppress His people (Ps. 105:25)? Surely the good shepherd was given over by the word of God's power in accordance with the counsel of His will, which is sovereign. It was God who reigned at Christ's cross and not men and devils. The cross, therefore, was not an accident. How, if it were, could it be true that He was wounded for our transgressions? If by the word of God the sword was wakened to smite the shepherd, it is correct to say that it was God who smote Him and not men except as His responsible agents.

The sword is bidden to awake against "my shepherd," and "against a man, my fellow." This shepherd is God's. He is God's in a sense and for reasons that no other shepherd is God's. Of all men He alone as man was not begotten by another man but was born of a virgin overshadowed by God's Spirit. Also in His humanity, therefore, He is the only begotten Son of God. He is God's as the Lamb that took away the sin of the world, for the human nature in which He bore the penalty of our sins was prepared for Him of God in the womb of the virgin. He is God's as the Christ, for He was anointed of God. He is God's as our sanctification, justification, wisdom, and redemption, for so He was made of God unto us. He is God's as the resurrection, for God raised Him up. He is God's as our life, for the fulness of the godhead dwells in Him bodily. He is God's as head over all things in the church. For God gave him for this purpose. He is God's as one who reigns over the whole earth, for God exalted Him. He is God's as one with a name above every name, for God gave Him this name. He is God's as the mediator of an eternal covenant, for the covenant is God's. He is God's shepherd and as such the shepherd of Israel, the good shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

And He is God's fellow, friend, companion. With God He walks. With God is His fellowship. He is of the party

of God and so He takes God's side always. The zeal of God's house consumes Him. To do the will of His Father is His meat and drink. To fight the good fight is His only ambition, to love God and run the way of His commands His only delight. And He knows no sin at all. He is holy, undefiled and separated from sinners and, therefore, capable of a perfect devotion. Such a one is God's shepherd. Surely He is God's fellow, He alone of all men. That the Lord should waken the sword against Him! Surely, yes. For He is Jehovah's shepherd and as such the shepherd of a flock ill-deserving and condemnable in itself for whose sins it pleases God to make His soul an offering. Unjust? No. For the good shepherd Himself is God, so that, in being smitten, it is God in the assumed humanity being smitten of God, or rather God smiting Himself for the sins of the sheep. Amazing? Yes, amazing love.

But if the shepherd is to be smitten, what is to become of the sheep? They will be scattered. Also for the fulfilment of this prophecy we must go to the Gospel narratives. When the multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the elders of the people is come and lay hold on Jesus, all His disciples forsake Him and flee. So is the shepherd smitten and are the sheep scattered. They are scattered. They forsake Jesus and flee.

Yet these men, the disciples of the Lord, are not cowards. Nor are they lacking in devotion to their Master. They are resolved to fight for Jesus to the death. Peter gives the signal for the attack. He begins swinging his sword and neatly shaves off the ear of one of them in the multitude. Doubtless the stroke was meant to split the scalp of the victim. But the zeal of Peter draws from Christ the sternest rebuke, "Put up thy sword into the sheath," says Jesus to him, "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Presently Christ is taken, bound, and led away. So it goes with Him because He allows not His followers to fight for Him and refuses to call in the help of His Father, which He could have done and the Father would have responded by giving Him more than twelve legions of angels. Or He, Himself, could have vanquished the adversary simply by the breath of His mouth. But He forbears and voluntarily gives Himself over into their hands. Said He not to the soldiers who came to take Him captive, "If it is me that ye seek, it is I." What can be plainer than that He wants them to lay hold on Him? To the disciples His behaviour is soul-agonizing. It confounds and grieves them. For He has blasted by His behaviour all their hopes and made all their expectations to perish. This throwing Himself into the hands of His enemies, what can it mean for His cause but that it perishes with Him. And doubtless they also fear for their own lives. So they all forsake Him and flee. The sheep are scattered.

The root of all their troubles is their misconception of His calling. They imagined that He was come to restore Israel's earthly kingdom with its headquarters in the earthly Jerusalem where, they fondly had imagined, He would

reign as Israel's king with them at His side as His chief ministers, and with all His and their enemies His footstool. How they would bask in the light of His glory. They understood not that this earthly kingdom, seeing that it was but shadow, had served its purpose now that Christ was come, and that, therefore, it was on the verge of vanishing away together with the rest of the shadows of the law. They understood not that the real kingdom is heavenly — the kingdom that Christ was now about to establish by His sufferings and death upon the cross. That Christ ought to suffer these things and to enter His glory was not in all their thoughts.

The shepherd is smitten and the sheep are scattered. Surely, the sheep are scattered. This is true in the first instance of the eleven disciples. It is true of them in the hour that Jesus gives Himself over into the hands of His enemies. Then are the sheep scattered. But it continues to be true of them also in the hour of Jesus' trial in the courts of His earthly judges. Then, too, are the sheep scattered. It continues to be true of them in the hour of Christ's crucifixion and in the hour that He lies in the tomb. Then, too, are the sheep scattered. If so, their being scattered must mean something more than that they locally forsake Jesus and flee in the hour that the enemies lay hands on Him. As was pointed out, Christ sees in their being offended because of Him the fulfilment of the prophecy, "And the sheep shall be scattered." This tells us wherein their being scattered really consisted. It reveals to us what it really means that they be scattered. It does not mean that in the dark hours that intervene between their laying hands on Jesus and His resurrection His disciples are locally separated from one another. Surely also during these hours they seek each other's presence. That in these hours they be scattered means, according to Christ's own words, that they are offended because of Him. And this in turn means first that, when they see Jesus delivering Himself into the hands of the adversary, and that especially when they see Him hanging on a cross, they are amazed, confounded and troubled in their hearts. This is what it means that they be scattered. That they be scattered means, further, that doubt rises in their minds as to whether He really is the Messiah. Once more, that they be scattered means that their faith nearly ceases. That it does not cease is only owing to the fact that Christ prays for them. Again, that they be scattered means that in these terrible hours they walk in thick darkness. The Scriptures plainly foretell that Jesus must suffer and die for the sins of His people. The sufferings and death of Christ, His resurrection and glorification and the resurrection and glorification of His church with Him is the very theme of all prophecy. Besides, they have the instruction of Jesus. And He has spoken plainly. "Behold," he said to them at the close of His public ministry, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock,

and to scourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. 29:18-19).

They have then, the sure word of prophecy that, as a light, shines in a dark place. But they do not take heed unto it. As blinded by their unbelief and carnal prejudices, they do not comprehend the light. And not comprehending the light, they walk in total darkness in those first hours. It need not be doubted that they are together locally. But though together, they have no true and conscious fellowship with God and with one another. For characteristic of the darkness is that it separates. How can their fellowship be with God and with one another as long as they be offended because of Jesus. Walking in darkness, each of them walks alone, silent as the grave. For what have they subjectively in common to rejoice in and to speak about? Not the Christ about to rise again with His people from the dead. For they believe not that He will rise again. Not the Father as the God of their redemption. For they have no understanding of the meaning of the shedding of Christ's blood. All they have in common is a great grief that each of them nurses in silence. If any of them does open his mouth to speak, it is for voicing thoughts of unbelief and despair. To see how true this is we need but listen to the unbelief of Thomas, "Except I see in his hands the print of his nails and put my finger into the print of his nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." This is his reply to the glad tidings that Christ is risen. Indeed the sheep are scattered. And yet, certainly, they are reborn men with a genuine and imperishable love of the Saviour. But they are woefully lacking in understanding. For the Spirit is not yet. And they are sinful men. And oh, that terrible cross! But seeing that they have the word of prophecy, how is this amazing unbelief and ignorance on their part, particularly in these first hours, to be accounted for? We must end also with this unbelief and ignorance of the disciples in God. He willed it. And doubtless His principal purpose was to show us how needful it was that the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and pour out His Spirit on the church that she might be led of Him in all truth.

Surely, the sheep are scattered. And the scattered sheep must be thought of as including all the people of God that were living during that dreadful hour when Christ was on the cross. The sight of the crucified Saviour amazed, confused and confounded them all. All were just as bewildered, and just as profoundly grieved and disappointed. For Christ was being cut off in the midst of His days, and the earthy kingdom of Israel had still to be restored. And that, they all believed, was to be the task of the Messiah, when He should have come. So He could not be the Messiah after all, as they all had so hoped. That these were the cogitations of all of them is plain from the communications of the wayfarers to the village of Emmaus. Said they to Jesus, "The chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him, but we trusted that it had

been he which should deliver Israel." The proof that the redemption of Israel by His blood was not in their thoughts is the reply of Jesus, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

The sheep are scattered. Should not the scattered sheep be thought of as including all the people of God, the elect, that were still to be born through the ages to come? Thus be thought of as including also us? For had we been living in the hour of His crucifixion, our reaction would have been identical to that of the disciples. We would have been just as offended because of Christ, just as amazed, confounded, disappointed and grieved, just as unbelieving and scattered. Is not saying this just as right as the teaching of the apostle to the effect that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us?

And may the saints that were already in heaven at that hour be counted among the spectators of the crucified Christ? If so, were they, too, amazed but without sinning? Or had they attained to a perfect knowledge? This is not likely seeing that the Holy Spirit still had to be poured also on the church in heaven. It is not likely also in view of the following: Of the salvation that Christ by His suffering and death on the cross was preparing for His people, the prophets of the old dispensation inquired and searched diligently. They searched what the Spirit of God that was in them did signify, when He, the Spirit, testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. In this same connection it is stated that the angels desired to look into these things (I Pet. 1:10ff).

The shepherd is smitten and the sheep are scattered. But this is by no means the end of it. For the verse with which we are now occupied contains a promise. It is this: But I will stretch out my hand upon the little ones. If it is the Lord who smites the shepherd and who scatters the sheep, it is also He and none other who gathers them again. He gathers them by stretching out upon them His hand. This hand of the Lord is the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ. He made a beginning of gathering His scattered sheep immediately after His resurrection. He did so by assuring them in their hearts through His appearances that He was risen indeed from the dead and that He, therefore, is the Messiah indeed, who by His sufferings and death on the cross truly did redeem Israel from all his sins. And through the ages He continued to gather His scattered sheep by that same Gospel as sanctified unto their hearts by His Spirit that as the glorified Christ He poured out upon His church when the day of Pentecost was fully come. And the scattered sheep, as gathered, are one by a conscious and flowering and common faith in Him their risen Lord. And walking in the light, they have fellowship with

(Continued on page 264)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 7

VI.

(I Corinthians 7:17-24)

It should be borne in mind that Paul is discussing various questions pertaining to the matters of matrimony, celibacy, as these relate to our calling as christians in the midst of this world in a walk of thankfulness. We have noticed in former essays what Paul has to say concerning the honorableness of not entering into the marriage-state, provided one has the *gift* of continence. He touched upon the unmarried and the widows in relationship to remarriage. He maintains the word of Jesus in relationship to the unchangeableness of the marriage-tie. And he gives sanctified advice, applying the principle for the marriage state as given by Jesus to such marriages where one is called unto faith and the other is not, showing the *new status quo* in such a family due to Christ's having come to sanctify such a home, causing also the children to be holy for the sake of the believing parent.

To this matter we have given considerable attention in the former two issues of *The Standard Bearer*.

We noticed that even in such cases, it stands "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"!

Although the believer-partner is not under "bondage" but a free-man in the Lord; in such cases, he does not have the prerogative nor the calling to set aside God's inviolable ordinance concerning marriage, but must maintain that tie in the fond hope of being an instrument in the hands of God to save the unbelieving husband or wife. For God's power to save such an unbelieving partner is not to be doubted.

To show that such is indeed the intention of God, and is a rule in all the churches, Paul elaborates just a bit more upon the relationship of the natural ties to the spiritual ties in Christ; the natural is also here first, and then the spiritual.

From this follows that in these verses Paul does not go off on a tangent in the verses 17-24 from the general subject he is treating in this chapter, but rather expands a general principle to other relationships to which this same principle of the relationship of the natural and the spiritual is applicable in life. We take this stand in spite of what Meyer says in his Commentary of this chapter. Writes he: "A further explanation of this injunction (to abide in that place where we were when called, G.L.) by way of example, and not bearing on the case of those christians living in mixed marriages."

When we compare what Paul writes in Ephesians 5:22-

6:9 it is quite evident that the relationship of husband and wife, parents and children, quite naturally falls into the same classification of the relationship of the natural to the spiritual, as in the cases of slave to master and of master to slave. It is the question of sanctifying all the relationships by faith in Christ, by virtue of our having been made free in Christ, His property, bought with a price. We are to walk in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, by a faith that is energized by love.

In the verses 18-20 we read the following: "*Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*"

At the close of this passage, verse 20, Paul reiterates the principles which he ordains in all the churches. For the fact that a man was in a certain station in life when called is not his own doing. That was the "distribution" of God to every man in his counsel and providence. And in this will of the Lord a man is to rest, shall he ever rest at all, and not suffer his soul to be in "bondage," where God has made him spiritually free.

What Paul here writes about "abiding in the calling" where one was, when called, is not a good piece of advice, but it is something "*ordained in all the churches.*" It is a universal rule of Christ for his people to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Only thus will the church not be *revolutionary* in society, but she shall be the *new leaven* in an old lump, the mustard-seed that shall fill the entire earth!

Paul applies this to two classes in the verses 18-20. He first speaks to those who were "circumcised" when called unto faith and obedience in Christ. These must not try to undo the physical mark of circumcision by artificial means. Let it remain as it is. It means nothing. It is neither honorable nor dishonorable as such. It is simply to be viewed as having no meaning in itself. That one was *thus* when called to faith is God's "distribution." Rest in it. On the other hand, is one in the "foreskin" when called, do not have the physical act of circumcision performed. It is not necessary. Should one attribute real significance to the external rite of circumcision, such a one places himself under the "bondage" of the law from which Christ has come to set us free. We are to stand as the sons of Sarah in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

To do either the one or the other would be, becoming the "servants of men"; it would be a denial of the Cross of Christ through which we have been crucified unto the world and the world crucified unto us.

Paul demonstrates this principle of the liberty which we have in Christ also in the case of two classes of men in society: the *slave* and the *free-man*. We read in the verses

21-24 as follows: "*Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men, Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*"

Notice: the slave is a free-man in the Lord!

Again: the free-man is a servant in the Lord!

He who is interested to study this just a bit more may find that Paul has worked this matter out a little more in detail in Ephesians 6:5-9 where we read, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

Here we see the freedom unto which God has brought the "slave." His *freedom*, paradoxical as it may seem, is in serving all the more his master, in view of the reward which he will receive when he keeps the commandment of "love" to his master. Only thus will he walk in the freedom where-with he is free. He is "free" from the servitude of slavery in the measure that he serves his master in the love of Christ. Such is, incidentally, also the teaching of Paul in the letter to Philemon. For the old relationship has a new and higher principle in it. It is the new relationship to the "master" because of the superceding new relationship to Christ.

Conversely it is also true that the "master's" relationship to this slave has principally undergone a change in Christ's sanctifying work. Thus it was with Philemon. He was a free-man indeed. Yet, he was truly a servant of God. In this he and his run-away slave were on the same level. There was the new relationship of being a "brother in the Lord" which changed the relationship of the master to his slave. They were equals in their inequality. Christ has placed them on the same levels, even while they stood on different levels in society.

Only when this is seen will there be no revolution in society, nor will there be civil war. Indeed, Christ has come to make peace among the "men of His good-pleasure," even there where it seems most impossible. It is a bit of heaven in the sin-infected world-order.

Thus Paul ordained in all the world. Christ's kingdom was not of this world indeed. It was from above and really and actually made *all things new!*

For a christian slave to "care for" social freedom is wrong. If it is offered to him let him use it as a good gift from the Lord. And for a Jew to wish to be as a Gentile is erroneous, even as it was erroneous for a Gentile to wish to be as a Jew!

Thus they would not walk in their new role as servants before God, but would again fall into servitude.

And now we come to the application of this entire matter to the case of the man or woman (brother or sister) who has an unbelieving partner.

What does this principle of spiritual liberty imply? License? Not at all!

It simply means that when a man by the "distribution" of God has an unbelieving partner, he is to let the ordinance of marriage as it was "from the beginning" stand! To do otherwise is to walk in sin, not to trust (in either possibility of a saved partner, or a "distribution" of God) in God which is freedom from sin, keeping the commandments in true liberty. Any other course places a man "under bondage," bondage unto men and to the relationships between men.

Thus Paul does not "play out" the original ordinance of marriage against a circumstance in life where clearly the cross of Christ must be borne, which is not a hard yoke, nor is it a heavy burden! He consistently maintains the relationship of "as things were from the beginning" and as they have again been set upon the Rock Christ Jesus, who came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil it.

Not all can receive this word but to whom it is given. The spiritual man puts spiritual things with spiritual also in this matter. If our flesh says, "If the case of a man be such with a woman, it is expedient not to marry," then the Lord says, "There be Eunuchs who have made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom's sake."

This may be the way then of self-denial. But it is the way of God. The way of pain and a good conscience is always far to be preferred above the way of indulgence and anguish of heart.

And thus Paul ordained in all the churches.

G.L.

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, in Doon, Iowa, Wednesday, March 19, 1958.

The consistories are reminded of the rule that they are expected to nominate an elder or elders who are able to serve as synodical delegate. And, all matters for the classical agendum must be in the hands of the stated clerk not later than thirty days before the date of Classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

Those desiring lodging for the coming meeting of Classis West, please write to: Mr. Edward Van Egdom, Rt. 1, Box 82, Hawarden, Iowa.

IN HIS FEAR

Spiritually Sensitive

(8)

Tremendous strides have been made in the printing and publishing world since the Scriptures were written and published as one book. When the various books of the Bible were written by the men whom God moved, guided and illumined, they existed for a long time as bulky rolls of parchment. Thus in Nazareth Jesus could be given the book of Isaiah from which to read. But now in a very compact book containing all the books of the Scriptures the Bible may conveniently be carried in one hand. And thousands upon thousands of copies are distributed over the length and breadth of the earth. You will find one in well nigh every hotel room, motel room, hospital waiting room. And it is still considered to be the best seller of any book on the market.

Religious material (and often irreligious material passes under the name religious material) likewise is quickly and neatly printed, bound and sold over the counter or placed on the library shelf. Religious magazines in countless numbers are running off the presses every day. Pamphlets, tracts and brochures, likewise, run into the thousands upon thousands and appear in neat form and are set up with type that is easy on the eyes and requires the least amount of strain for the eyes.

Means of transportation of the present day also have made tremendous strides in the way of progress compared to the things our forefathers accepted as the ultimate of travel facilities. Today we speed smoothly in cozy, warm automobiles, seated upon foam rubber seats, over level roads of concrete or asphalt pavement.

And yet we find today that there is less and less interest being shown in reading these religious magazines and to congregate for spiritual edification. Societies organized for the purpose of the study of God's Word, for the searching of the Scriptures, for the instruction and spiritual upbuilding of the child of God are poorly attended. Usually a very small fraction of the membership of the congregation shows any interest in the study of God's Word. A lecture or speech on a religious topic today draws only half of an auditorium's capacity in distinction from the time when travel to and from such a lecture was much harder on the flesh.

This is not a healthy sign.

It does indicate that more and more we are approaching and living in those days of which the apostle speaks and which he calls perilous times that are coming when men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, II Timothy 3:4b. We have in our churches a form for the ordination of elders and deacons wherein the elders about to be ordained

are told that "the apostle (in Acts 20) exhorteth (these elders) to watch diligently against the wolves which might come in the sheepfold of Christ; for the performance of which the elders are in duty bound diligently to search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith." That is quite a different picture from the one we usually see today. And lest we quickly brush this aside and refer this to others since we are not in the office of elder in the church of God, let us remember that the elders are so exhorted that they may protect you, one of the sheep. Consider also that in this same epistle of Paul to Timothy and in the same chapter from which we quoted above, Paul writes, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The man of God is not simply the man of God in Timothy but in every child of God. The Scriptures were not given, in other words, simply for Timothy's sake that he might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, but the man of God wherever he may be; every child of God. And these words were not preserved up till this day for none others than elders in the Church of Christ, but for all the people of God.

Or if you will, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews writes in Hebrews 3:13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," and again in Hebrews 10:24, 25, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

These passages certainly refer to all the members in the congregations. And yet we fear that many of our families have no actual study and discussion of the Word of God from the last service on one Sunday to the first service on the following Sabbath. O, there is a little reading at the table without any thought given to what is read or without a pause to reflect upon what is read. There is no reflection afterward on what is read or study of the Scriptures to see more clearly what is meant by what is read. No actual instruction from the Word is sought, and more than even superficial contact with it there is not, except once or twice for a short time on the Sabbath. And meanwhile the world and all that it contains crowds well nigh all thought of the spiritual out of our lives. Our magazines have to be read from cover to cover — except religious magazines — and we would not think of leaving our daily newspapers remain unread before we retire at night. How we hate to miss our daily newscast of the radio station of our choosing. We surely want to keep posted on material, earthly things, the things of the kingdom here below. We simply have to hear what prices are being paid for our commodities and read and analyze carefully the claims and counterclaims of the politicians of

our Republican and Democratic parties. And we learn to be pretty shrewd, too, in our analysis of world affairs. With our great wisdom we are able to point out the folly of learned politicians and authorities over us. We usually have a solution for the problems which they cannot solve. And then, sometimes our knowledge of the Scriptures is as scanty and vague as the man who, in referring to the saints in the Old Testament, was able to say to us nothing more than "Jacob and those other men." Doctrine we avoid. Discussion of our confessions with their rich heritage of the truth we deem too deep for us. O, yes, but our minds are pretty sharp and keen when it comes to buying and selling, politics and business. But Jesus said, did He not, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matthew 6:21. Let us not call Him a liar. We have no interest in the study of His Word? We can find a million dozen reasons of the flesh why we ought not to do so? Our answer to all this is, "Go tell Him that!" After all, it is before His judgment seat that we must appear and not before the bar of the whims and fancies of men. And can we honestly say that our heart is in the study of God's Word and in the things spiritual when we so carefully and repeatedly avoid it? When our hearts are not in it, can we honestly say before Him that His Word is our treasure? We do the very minimum, we come in contact with His Word no more than is absolutely necessary to avoid being an object of discipline by the church; and then we say that we hunger and thirst after God and after righteousness? Let us not deceive ourselves. For it is certain that we do not deceive God.

And the sad thing is that we are caught up in a vicious circle. Because we are not attracted to the Word of God as we ought; because we are not sufficiently strong to approve the things that are excellent, we stay away from the very thing that we need for improvement. And instead we turn to the world, its entertainment, its vain pleasures and treasures. The result is that we learn to love these things of the world and of the flesh so much better, and our craving for them grows so great that we become more and more strangers to the truth of God's Word. And more and more we condone the things of the world and find fault with the doctrines of Scripture and with the limitations it imposes upon our walk of life. Instead of exhorting one another "lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" and instead of "provoking one another unto love and to good works" we forsake even more "the assembling of ourselves together" and set an evil example for our brethren and, even worse, for our children, who are happy to see such freedom and separation from the things of God's kingdom.

It simply is a fact that little nourishment cannot make a strong man. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews likewise declares that some are dull of hearing because they do not have, by reason of use, their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

If we are to be spiritually sensitive we will need to live

close to God's Word. And the closer we live to it, the more we study it, and not simply thoughtlessly read it, the more spiritually sensitive we will become. With all the religious literature that can be gotten so easily we ought to be a people that reads and studies more rather than less than our forefathers. With our modern automobiles with their greater comfort and speed, we ought to be a people that would welcome the opportunities of gathering for an evening of edification when the things of God's kingdom and of our salvation are treated in a lecture. Yet we find a growing tendency towards greater laxity in both.

To be sure, these are not required of us by the rulers in the church. We will not be put under discipline if only we show up in the services for divine worship on the Sabbath. That is not the point. The question never is whether we can satisfy the demands of men. The question always is whether we are doing that which God demands of us. The question always is whether we sincerely hunger and thirst after righteousness and after God and the knowledge of Him.

We firmly believe the words of Jesus, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." Do you say, But I do attend services on the Sabbath. I do read my Bible. Well, but do these not result in an increasing desire for more knowledge and the joy of its truth? And must we not judge how greatly you treasure the things spiritual by your activity in seeking them? A healthy child is always asking for food, and when your child begins to nibble a little bit and leave the food on the table untouched, you correctly conclude that he is getting sick. How often do you leave untouched the truth and the things spiritual which God has made available for you? You say that you have good reasons? We say again, Go tell Him, and be sure that your case is good and that He will say that you do indeed live in His fear.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

On February 1, 1958, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take out of our midst and unto Himself our beloved husband, father, and grandfather,

JAKE MERKUS

at the age of 72 years.

Although we shall miss him, we know and experience that "... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

Mrs. J. Merkus (nee Cecilia Kuipers)
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Sawyer (Alice)
Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Paauwe (Florence)
Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Terpstra (Grace)
and twelve grandchildren.

Redlands, California.

Also two sisters and one brother in the Netherlands.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

THE PAPACY FROM THE DEATH OF INNOCENT III
TO BONIFACE VIII. 1216-1294.

(continued)

The First Council of Lyons and the Close of Frederick's Career. 1241-1250.

Gregory's successor, Coelestin IV, survived his election less than three weeks. A papal vacancy followed, lasting the unprecedented period of twenty months. The next pope, Innocent IV, a Genoese, was an expert in the canon law and proved himself to be more than the equal of Frederick in shrewdness and quickness of action. At his election the emperor is reported to have exclaimed that among the cardinals he had lost a friend and in the pope gained an enemy. Frederick refused to enter into negotiations looking to an agreement of peace until he should be released from the ban. Innocent was prepared to take up Gregory's conflict with great energy. All the weapons at the command of the papacy were brought into requisition: excommunication, the decree of a general council, deposition, the election of a rival emperor, and the active fomenting of rebellion in Frederick's dominions. Under this accumulation of burdens Frederick, like a giant, attempted to bear up, but in vain (a certain M. Paris says he had never heard of such bitter hatred as the hatred between Innocent IV and Frederick). All Western Christendom was about to be disturbed by the conflict. Innocent's first move was to out-general his antagonist by secretly leaving Rome. Alexander III had set the precedent of delivering himself by flight. In the garb of a knight he reached Civita Vecchia, and there met by a Genoese galley proceeded to Genoa, where he was received with the ringing of bells and the acclamation, "Our soul is escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler." Joined by cardinals, he continued on his journey to Lyons, which, though nominally a city of the empire, was by reason of its proximity to France a place of safe retreat.

The pope's policy proved to be a master stroke. A deep impression in his favor was made upon the Christian world by the sight of the supreme pontiff in exile. The division of European sentiment is shown by the method which a priest of Paris resorted to in publishing Innocent's sentence of excommunication against the emperor. "I am not ignorant," he said, "of the serious controversy and unquenchable hatred that has arisen between the emperor and the pope. I also

know that one has done harm to the other, but which is the offender I do not know. Him, however, as far as my authority goes, I denounce and excommunicate, that is, the one who harms the other, whichever of the two it be, and I absolve the one which suffers under the injury which is so hurtful to the cause of Christendom."

Innocent was now free to convoke again the council which Frederick's forcible measures had prevented from assembling in Rome. It is known as the First Council of Lyons, or the Thirteenth Oecumenical Council, and met in Lyons, 1245. The measures the papal letter mentioned as calling for action were the provision of relief for the Holy Land and of resistance to the Mongols whose ravages had extended to Hungary, and the settlement of matters in dispute between the Apostolic see and the emperor. One hundred and forty prelates were present. With the exception of a few representatives from England and one or two bishops from Germany, the attendance was confined to ecclesiastics from Southern Europe. Baldwin, emperor of Constantinople, was there to plead his dismal cause. Frederick was represented by his able counsellor, Thaddeus of Suessa.

Thaddeus promised for his master to restore Greece to the Roman communion and proceed to the Holy Land in person. Innocent rejected the promises as intended to deceive and to break up the council. The axe, he said, was laid at the root, and the stroke was not to be delayed. When Thaddeus offered the kings of England and France as sureties that the emperor would keep his promise, the pope sagaciously replied that in that case he would be in danger of having three princes to antagonize. Innocent was plainly master of the situation. The council was in sympathy with him. Many of its members had a grudge against Frederick for having been subjected to the outrage of capture and imprisonment by him.

At one of the first sessions the pope delivered a sermon from the text, "See, ye who pass this way, was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?" He dwelt upon five sorrows of the Church corresponding to the five wounds of Christ: the savage cruelty of the Mongols or Tartars, the schism of the Greeks, the growth of heresy, the desolation of Jerusalem, and the active persecution of the Church by the emperor. The charges against Frederick were sacrilege and heresy. As for the charge of heresy, Thaddeus maintained that it could be answered only by Frederick in person, and a delay of two weeks was granted that he might have time to appear. When he failed to appear, Innocent pronounced upon him the ban and declared him deposed from his throne. The deliverance set forth four grave offences; namely, the violation of his oath to keep peace with the Church, sacrilege in seizing the prelates on their way to the council, heresy, and withholding the tribute due from Sicily, a papal fief. Among the grounds for the charge of heresy were Frederick's contempt of the pope's prerogative of the keys, his treaty with the Sultan on his crusade, allowing the name of Mohammed to be

publicly proclaimed day and night in the temple, having intercourse with Saracens, keeping eunuchs over his women, and giving his daughter in marriage to Battacius, an excommunicated prince. The words of the fell sentence ran as follows: "Seeing that we, unworthy as we are, hold on earth the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said to us in the person of St. Peter, 'whatsoever ye shall bind on earth,' etc., do hereby declare Frederick, who has rendered himself unworthy of the honors of sovereignty and for his crimes has been deposed from his throne by God, to be bound by his sins and cast off by the Lord and we do hereby sentence and depose him; and all who are in any way bound to him by an oath of allegiance we forever release and absolve from that oath; and by our apostolic authority, we strictly forbid any one obeying him. We decree that any one who gives aid to him as emperor or king shall be excommunicated; and those in the empire on whom the selection of an emperor devolves, have full liberty to elect a successor in his place."

Thaddeus appealed from the decision to another council. His master Frederick, on hearing what was done, is said to have asked for his crown and to have placed it more firmly on his head. In vain did the king of France, meeting Innocent at Cluny, make a plea for the emperor, finding, as the English chronicler said, "but very little of that humility which he had hoped for in that servant of the servants of God." Frederick's manifesto in reply to the council's act was addressed to the king of England and other princes, and reminded them of the low birth of the prelates who set themselves up against lawful sovereigns, and denied the pope's temporal authority. He warned them that his fate was likely to be theirs and announced it as his purpose to fight against his oppressors. It had been his aim to recall the clergy from lives of luxury and the use of arms to apostolic simplicity of manners. When this summons was heeded, the world might expect again to see miracles as of old. True as these principles were, and bold and powerful as was their advocate, the time had not yet come for Europe to espouse them, and the character of Frederick was altogether too vulnerable to give moral weight to his words. Too much credit must not, be given to Frederick for a far-seeing policy based upon a love of truth or a perception of permanent principles. The rights of conscience he nowhere hints at, and probably did not dream of.

The council's discussions of measures looking to a new crusade did not have any immediate result. The clergy, besides being called upon to give a twentieth for three years, were instructed to see to it that wills contained bequests for the holy enterprise.

One of the interesting figures at the council was Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, who protested against ecclesiastical abuses in England, such as the appointment of unworthy foreigners to benefices, and the exorbitant exactions for the papal exchequer. The pope gave no relief, and the English bishops were commanded to affix their seals con-

firming King John's charter of tribute. The only notable achievement of the council of Lyons was the defeat of Frederick. Innocent followed it up with vigorous measures. Frederick's manifesto he answered with the reassertion of the most extravagant claims. The bishop of Rome was entrusted with authority to judge kings. If, in the Old Testament, priests deposed unworthy monarchs, how much more right had the vicar of Christ so to do. Innocent stirred up the flames of rebellion in Sicily and throughout the mendicant orders fanned the fires of discontent in Germany. Papal legates practically usurped the government of the German Church from 1246 to 1254. In the conflict over the election of bishops to German dioceses, Innocent usually gained his point, and in the year 1247-1248 thirteen of his nominees were elected. At the pope's instigation Henry Raspe, landgrave of Thuringia, was chosen emperor, 1246, to replace, and at his death, a year later, William of Holland.

In Italy civil war broke out. Here the mendicant orders were also against him. He met the elements of revolt in the South and subdued them. Turning to the North, success was at first on his side but soon left him. One fatality followed another. Thaddeus of Suessa fell, 1248. Peter de Vineia, another shrewd counsellor, had abandoned his master. Enzo, the emperor's son, was in prison. Utter defeat fell upon him before Parma and forced him to abandon all Lombardy. As if there had not been cursings enough, Innocent, in 1247, had once more launched the anathema against him. Frederick's career was at an end. He retired to Southern Italy, a broken man, and died near Lucera, an old Samnite town, Dec. 13, 1250. His tomb is at the side of the tomb of his parents in the cathedral of Palermo. He died absolved by the archbishop of Palermo and clothed in the garb of the Cistercians. This, incidentally, is the more credible narrative. Villani tells the story that Manfred bribed Frederick's chamberlain and stifled the dying man with a wet cloth.

Stupor mundi, the Wonder of the World — this is the title which Matthew Paris applies to Frederick II. Europe had not seen his equal as a ruler since the days of Charlemagne. For his wide outlook, the diversity of his gifts, and the vigor and versatility of his statecraft he is justly compared to the great rulers. Morally the inferior of his grandfather, Barbarossa, Frederick surpassed him in intellectual breadth and culture. He is the most conspicuous political figure of his own age and the most cosmopolitan of the Middle Ages. He was warrior, legislator, statesman, man of letters. He won concessions in the East and was the last Christian king of Jerusalem to enter his realm. He brought order out of confusion in Sicily and Southern Italy and substituted the uniform legislation of the Sicilian Constitutions for the irresponsible jurisdiction of ecclesiastical court and baron. It has been said he founded the system of centralized government and prepared the way for the monarchies of later times. He struck out a new path by appealing to the judgment of Chris-

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The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 4 (continued)

The meaning of the Arminian doctrine that is here opposed is in itself quite clear, and is in need of little exposition. It is a plain and simple contradiction of the Scriptural and Reformed truth concerning man's total depravity: "The unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good." This is the main proposition here, the key to the Arminian thought. He must maintain this in order to maintain what he is really after, namely, that the unregenerate man can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit, which is pleasing to God. In this respect we must at least give the Arminian credit for consistency, if indeed it may be called credit. His reasoning is quite correct by itself. This will be plain if we cast his doctrine in the form of a syllogism, as follows:

1. The unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin.
2. The unregenerate man is, accordingly, not destitute of all powers unto spiritual good.
3. Therefore, the unregenerate man can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and can do that which is pleasing to God, namely, offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit.

The consistency of the Arminian lies herein, that he recognizes the fact that a man who is really dead in sin could neither hunger and thirst after righteousness nor offer a sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit. And by the same token, the error of the Arminian lies herein, that he denies that the unregenerate man is really and utterly dead in sin. Hence, our fathers, as we shall see presently, were quite correct in concentrating all their effort upon this one error of denying man's utter death in sin.

And indeed, just as in the natural sense, so also in the spiritual sense of the word, hunger and thirst is possible only where there is life. The dead do not hunger and thirst. In the physical sense of the word, when once a man has breathed his last and his body is placed in the coffin and laid away in the grave, he knows the need for bread and water no more. And so also in the spiritual sense. To hunger and thirst after righteousness implies, in the first

place, the acute awareness of a lack, the consciousness of need. That awareness of a lack is the consciousness of sin. It is the consciousness of guilt and condemnation, the awareness of one's corruption and perversity, the knowledge of his transgression and iniquity. He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is spiritually aware of the fact that he lacks righteousness as to his state, as to the condition of his nature, and as to his actual walk. And if you would see this consciousness of sin in its real nature, then you must notice that the Lord Jesus calls him blessed precisely, not **who is righteous** in himself, but **who merely hungers and thirsts for righteousness**. In the second place, to hunger and thirst after righteousness implies a deep-seated spiritual yearning for justification, a longing for the forgiveness of sins and for the state of one who is declared **righteous by the only Judge** of heaven and earth. It includes, moreover, a longing to be free from the corruption of our nature and from the bondage of sin, and to be set spiritually free. And it implies the earnest desire for actual righteousness of walk, for a walk according to all the commandments of God. That is the life's need of him who hungers and thirsts after righteousness and eternal life. His want of righteousness is a matter of need, a matter of life and death. He lacks righteousness, is destitute of it. His want is a matter of suffering, of misery, of sorrow. He must have righteousness or perish. And certainly, this is possible only for one who is alive. The dead hunger not, neither do they thirst. He who is spiritually alive, though still in his sinful flesh, he who has the beginning of this righteousness in him, — he alone can know the spiritual reality of a hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And from this point of view, it must certainly be granted that if all men are hungry and thirsty, if all men have the capability of offering the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit, if all men belong to those who labor and are heavy laden, — as is proclaimed either expressly or by implication from so many pulpits, also Reformed pulpits, today, — then all men are not really nor utterly dead in sin. And yet, as we have said, this is exactly the message, literally expressed or implied, that is heard from many a pulpit. Some dare not, it seems, express this forthrightly. But they imply as much when they make of the gospel a general, well-meant offer of salvation. For what, pray, is the sense of offering grace to a man who has not even the capability to know his need of it, to desire it, to yearn after it? The very idea of a general offer of grace pre-supposes that those to whom the offer is made are capable of accepting it. Others are more bold, and will openly declare that all men belong to this class of the spiritually hungry and thirsty, or at least, that they have the capability to hunger and thirst if only they will. The sad part of it is that this is even done in the name of the Reformed faith, the faith that maintains the truth of man's total depravity. And then either one of two things must be true. Either the teaching that the unregenerate is capable of hungering and thirsting after righteousness and life must utterly vitiate the doctrine of total depravity, so that it is neglected

and left unproclaimed and finally is officially denied; or the preaching of these two contradictory doctrines becomes a piece of terribly absurd folly. Absurd because they are obviously contradictory, and terrible because he who so preaches must needs become guilty of tantalizing the totally depraved sinner (who at the same time hungers and thirsts for righteousness) with a delicious meal of grace of which he can never partake. No, in this respect I would far prefer to be a consistent Arminian. For the Arminian, though he is wrong, is at least consistently wrong. He at least maintains that a man who is really dead cannot hunger and thirst, and then maintains that the natural, unregenerate man is not really and utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good.

But, of course, the Arminian, though consistent, is *wrong*! And his error is that he denies that man is dead in sin. Notice that now I have left out the words "really" and "utterly." And this omission serves to clarify the issue. We say: the unregenerate man is dead in sin. The Arminian really says: the unregenerate man is not dead in sin. We say: the unregenerate man is destitute of all powers unto spiritual good. The Arminian says: the unregenerate man is not destitute of all powers unto spiritual good. For, after all, death is not something relative. A man is either dead or he is not dead. When he is dead, you do not have to add the words "really" and "utterly." When he is merely sick, you do not call him dead: for then he is still alive. When he is only dying, you do not call him dead: for then too, though he may be dying, he is still alive. The folly of the Arminian doctrine is that its words are deprived of their real meaning. The Arminian says that the natural man is dead in sin (because Scripture uses this language), and then he interprets this as meaning: unregenerate man is not really dead, but only apparently dead, only make-believe dead, that is, actually alive, — so alive that he can still experience the pangs of spiritual hunger and thirst after righteousness and life.

Now our fathers see through this camouflage of the Remonstrants, and they perceive that for the Arminians words do not have their true meaning, and therefore they take the most direct and simple means of exposing the Arminian error. They might very well have engaged in the argument which we used above, and pointed out that death is in its very nature an absolute idea, and that if one is not really dead, then he is alive. And, in fact, this thought is presupposed in the argument from Scripture which the fathers use. But their argument as such is very simple, and for that reason very powerful. They employ the weapon of the Word of God directly, without any argumentation. "These are contrary to the express testimony of Scripture." What is the testimony of Scripture? This: "Ye were dead through trespasses and sins." Where is that testimony found? It is found in Ephesians 2:1 and 5, and found in a connection, by the way, which makes it plain beyond a shadow of a doubt what Scripture means by "dead in trespasses and sins." For "death" in this passage is the very opposite of "quickened,

made alive." In Ephesians 2:1 we read: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And again, in Ephesians 2:5 we read: "God (vs. 4), even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Now place, if you will, the Arminian doctrine over against this direct testimony of Holy Writ: "The unregenerate man (the man who is not yet 'quickened') is not really nor utterly dead in sin." No more direct contradiction of the testimony of Holy Writ could be imagined. And we cannot refrain from remarking in this connection, as we have before, that it is also quite obvious which, the Reformed or the Arminian, is the simple and lucid doctrine. How Arminians love to charge that the Reformed doctrine is involved and beyond the understanding of the ordinary child of God! But how totally beyond the comprehension of any mother's son is the doctrine that the unregenerate man is dead in sin, but is not really nor utterly dead in sin! Let the Arminian try to explain this conundrum in the light of Holy Scripture's language. To the simple question whether the natural man is dead in sin the Reformed man gives a simple and unequivocal "Yes, that is the testimony of Scripture." But to that same simple question all Arminians and their ilk must needs answer: "Yes, but" And this, by the way, regardless now of the Arminian conception of the gospel that is taught by the First Point of 1924, is also one of the most serious objections to the teaching of the Second and Third Points. It vitiates the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. It makes it impossible to give an unqualified and unequivocal *yes* to the question whether the unregenerate is dead in sin. The tendency of the Second and Third Points is Pelagian and Arminian. They too say that the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, though they arrive at this conclusion along another, and probably more devious, path.

To the statement that the unregenerate man is not destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, the fathers also have a direct-Scriptural answer. It is the answer of Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It is the answer of Genesis 8:21: ". . . . for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth . . ." Again, the truth is very simple. How is it possible in the light of such a Scriptural declaration to maintain that the unregenerate man is not destitute of all powers unto spiritual good?

And finally, — because this matter is indeed important with respect to the very preaching of the gospel, — the fathers point out the positive truth, namely, that to hunger and thirst after deliverance from misery, and after life, and to offer unto God the sacrifice of a broken spirit, is peculiar to the regenerate. This is plain, first of all, from Psalm 51:19, taken in connection with verse 10 of the same psalm. For there the psalmist confesses that it is only when the Lord creates in

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CHURCH OR SECT

When I was attending a class in Sociology in Calvin College, the professor there gave the following definition of a sect: "Any group of people organized for a religious purpose which is separated from another religious group and which tends to emphasize almost exclusively the doctrinal tenet which caused the separation." The important part of this definition is the last part of it: "... which tends almost exclusively to emphasize the doctrinal tenet which caused the separation." At the time when this definition was given, it seemed quite obvious to me and to others that he had in mind particularly the Protestant Reformed Churches, who had, according to him, separated themselves from the Christian Reformed Church, and who had in their past history emphasized very strongly the errors of "common grace." The more, according to this man, that we forgot about the issue of common grace, and turned our attention to other doctrinal elements, the more we lost the characteristics of a sect and became like a church.

It has been said by others in our history, and probably most often in the past, that we had no right to call ourselves by the name of church, but rather we should be considered as nothing more than a sect, a splinter group from the true church of Christ. Now, this all has changed in recent years. Apart from the sad history of 1953, there were very few reformed churches in the whole world who did not recognize the fact that we were one of this fellowship. This was evident from the recognition we received, and from the contact which our churches have had both with churches in the Netherlands and in this country.

Yet this all gives some practical significance to the question of "Church Or Sect."

The word "sect" is found in a few places in the New Testament. It comes from the Greek word "hairesis" which means literally, "an act of taking, choosing;" or, "that which is chosen, one's chosen opinion;" or "one who holds to such an opinion." It is sometimes translated by the word "heresy" in our King James Version. So it is in II Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." The same is true of I Corinthians 10:19: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." And in Galatians 5:20 this word is mentioned as being among the works of the flesh. Now it is possible that in some instances it would be better to translate the word as "sect" rather than "heresy." But the interesting fact which is brought out is that heresy and sect are closely related. Our King James Version also translates this same word "sect" in some instances. Thus, we have in Acts 5:17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,)

and were filled with indignation." The Pharisees are also called a sect in Acts 15:5 and again in Acts 26:5. The term is applied to the Christians almost with reproach in Acts 24:5, 14, although in the latter verse, it is again translated by "heresy." And again we find this word applied to the Christians by the Jews of Rome in Acts 28:22; and here the Jews evidently considered Paul to be the leader of this sect, although they had no direct contact with the church, but had received reports only through hearsay.

Now, in connection with all these texts, it is rather striking that we find the term used whether it be translated as "sect" or "heresy" only in connection with the established church of the New Dispensation. Scripture leaves the very strong impression that only when there was an established church, in the New Testament times that there could also be sects. And this is undoubtedly true. It is only when the Spirit of Christ dwells in the church, and when that Spirit guides the church into the truth, that it is possible also to have sects.

As a matter of historical fact, since the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church has taken the position that all Protestant churches are in reality sects. They had always maintained that they were the only true church. And this position was not altered by the Reformation. It did not take much imagination to brand all deviations from the Romish Church with the name "sect." In order to substantiate their position, they have pointed to the fact that the Protestant Reformation has resulted in many denominations of every conceivable confession. The ones who have left the fellowship of the mother church have become hopelessly divided and splintered so that they alone retain the confession "one holy catholic church." And such seems to be, at least outwardly, the case. It appears as if the confession of the Reformation churches, that they believe in one holy catholic church, is certainly out of harmony with the facts of church existence. And it would appear that at the least this confession is a rather abstract doctrine which has no concrete meaning in the everyday experience of the saints.

The question is therefore, What is the true church? And in close connection with this, What is a sect? In our answers to these questions we may also well ask, Is it possible to point to any existing church denominations and call them either definitely a church or a sect?

It would seem that the definition which we give to the church will also determine the definition which we give to a sect. This is the significance also of the use of the word in the New Testament. It was only when the church was established by the Spirit of Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost and through the instrumentality of the apostles, that other religious groups could be called sects. There was no such possibility of other religious groups in the Old Dispensation. For the light of revelation shown only in the land of the Jews. And although the church often apostatized, nevertheless, the true church could never withdraw from the

apostate element, but had to stay in close ecclesiastical relation to it.

But because of this, we may dismiss as nonsense the definition advanced for a sect by the department of Sociology in Calvin College. Certain it is that if that definition is true, the whole Protestant Reformation would have to be called a sectarian movement, and the Romish Church is right after all. Besides, it is the calling of the church, beyond a shadow of doubt to emphasize the truth over against the lie. And if this takes concrete form in a church controversy where a particular denomination or a part of it departs from the truth, that by no means brands those who remain faithful as a sect. It simply is necessary at times in the history of the church, and this has been the case from the very beginning of church history, for the church to emphasize the truth over against a particular lie. This happened in the important and fundamental trinitarian and Christological controversies of the first five centuries A.D.; this was the case at Dordrecht; this is true of the church at any time during its history. And if the church is preoccupied at a certain time with exposing a certain heresy, so that it does not emphasize in its teachings and writings other truths of Scripture, this does not mean that this is true of the whole life of the church, but only emphasizes that the truth is one, and that to attack one part of it endangers all of it. It was not true that in 1924 our church was given over exclusively to a study of "common grace." Our theological school, our pulpits, our papers, our societies were busy with the whole Word of God. But error always has the beneficial result for the church that the saints are led to a clearer understanding of God's Word. The truth is developed over against the lie!—this is the grand theme of church history from the beginning of its existence.

The church of the New Dispensation is one. It is one throughout all the ages of time. Christ is present in that church by His Word and His Spirit. He dwells in that church in such a way that the Spirit leads the church into the truth of the Word of God. Christ is not here physically. He is in heaven and we are on earth. But nevertheless Christ is the constant companion of His people, His own elect body. His Spirit unites that church into an organic whole and welds it together by His Spirit. Their confession, their hope, their battle, their calling is all the same. They have a deep unity in the truth. And as the glorious truths of Christ's Word are unfolded through the Spirit, the church incorporates that truth into her confessions and hands them to the next generation so that they can in turn build upon that foundation. Those who stand in the spiritual line of the truth of the apostles and prophets as it has been developed by the church in the past may claim a right to the name "Church." And it is well to emphasize that that truth is developed only in connection with the preaching of the Word. For when and where that Word is preached, Christ's voice is heard talking to His people, and His Spirit is in their hearts leading them

to an ever clearer grasp of the profound truths of salvation by grace.

Now it is over against all this that we must define a sect. A sect is a group of people who deviate from this line of the truth of the Confessions. Men arise who refuse to be bound by what the Spirit has said to the church in the past. They introduce into the church and into the preaching their own word. They are not guided by the Spirit or by the church of ages gone by. And these men always have their followers. Thus they gain adherents to heresies which are contrary to the confessions of saints of ages past and therefore contrary to the Word of Christ. By this means, divisions are created in the church and a sectarian spirit arises. The church is splintered as an institution. All this comes about because there are people born in the line of believers who are apostate seed and who soon show disregard for the truth and contempt for the Word of Christ. When they introduce the words of men and gain followers, when they refuse to be bound by confessions, sects are created who become groups of people organized to oppose the church of Jesus Christ.

These sects are many and varied. Every thought of man goes under the cover of religious teachings. In the United States, with its principle of "freedom of worship," there is fertile soil for the development of every conceivable deviation from the truth. One need only pick up any book on sects to see that this is true. And in almost any part of the country any passing acquaintance will reveal to you another sect. And yet we ought to notice, that although these sects may be very far from the truth, any deviation from the confessional standards of the church is a manifestation of a sectarian spirit and an attempt to create division in the church of Jesus Christ. We may certainly call all doctrinal aberrations sectarian.

The question arises whether it is possible for us to say with surety that any denomination is a church, while any other is a sect. Is there a denomination on earth which can be called the church? Are there other denominations which can be called sects? It seems to me that we can answer "Yes" to both of these questions. There are pure manifestations in this world of the body of Christ, churches that remain faithful to the confessions of the church of the past. It is undoubtedly true that even these denominations contain in them the carnal seed, for this seed is born in the generations of believers. And it is also true undoubtedly that a denomination is not altogether doctrinally sound in all its preaching by all its ministers in every sermon. But this is not the question. The Spirit of Jesus Christ leads the church into the truth. This truth is kept and preserved in confessions. The church that adopts these confessions and keeps them as its precious heritage is also that which may be rightly called "Church." This Church seeks ever to be more faithful to Christ's Word as it daily searches the Scriptures. This Church asks for the Spirit always to guide it that it may build upon the body of truth which has been handed to it from the past. This

church is one with the church of all ages in confession and hope and calling by the Spirit of Christ.

In the same way there are undoubtedly denominations who manifest that they are sects. They have completely discarded the heritage of our fathers and silenced the voice of Christ with the shouts of men. They are certainly sects. There are other denominations who have left the confessions principally and started on the road to denial of them altogether. We must nevertheless say that in as much as they still retain the confessions of the past, and in as much as the voice of Christ is still heard in their fellowship they can certainly be called "Church." But on the same basis, in as much as they have corrupted the confessions and caused division by heresy in the church institution, they have revealed a sectarian spirit and taken upon themselves the beginnings of the characteristics of sects.

Yet, let us remember that the church is one. The unity of the church is not ultimately dependent upon external unity, but is a unity by the Spirit which dwells in the body of Christ. God knows the heart of men and recognizes His people wherever they may be. It is for us to be faithful to the truth of God's Word also as it is given to us by the Spirit of Christ through our church fathers, and to go on to develop it in purity on the basis of God's Word. Let us seek the unity of the church by keeping it pure, not by compromising our heritage. I have no doubt but that our churches, by the grace of their covenant God, do exactly this.

H. Hanko

CONTRIBUTIONS

IMPROPER DISCERNMENT

Such, we believe, explains the way of reasoning of those who hold that all churches outside of our own are necessarily a manifestation and segment of the false church.

Some time ago we wrote on this matter (cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 34, page 71) and, to briefly recapitulate, stated it as our conviction that, altho the mystical body of Christ, THE church of all ages, the elect, is one, the manifestations of that Church thru different denominations vary as to purity and therefore we are able to and must speak of the purest and less pure manifestations of the church in the midst of the world. From the article referred to it is also plain that in speaking of the true and false church we cannot identify those descriptions to one denomination on the one hand and to all others on the other.

It now appears that brother K. Feenstra, who may express the view of others thruout our denomination, does not agree with us. (Cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 34, page 192.) Moreover, by implication, thru the quotation from Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, he maintains that our fathers held the same view he does.

In this essay it is our purpose to examine the validity of that last assertion. Let it be said, before proceeding, that this is not a personal debate with brother Feenstra, nor was the original article by undersigned aimed at the correction of a purely local situation. Our conviction is that there are more thruout our denomination addicted to the same view as that held by the brother mentioned and only therefore did we express our thoughts on this matter before the reading public of *The Standard Bearer*.

Now let us ask exactly what our Confessions do teach regarding the true and false church. And then we find the following plain teachings in the articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession:

1. Article 27 speaks of the church universal, according to her spiritual being, that is, the mystical body of Christ and therefore as such is not the object of our sight but faith. That body of Christ, chosen in Him from all eternity, is gathered by the Son of God Himself from all nations thruout the history of the world. This church is conceived of as visible and invisible, designations, by the way, not of two different scopes but aspects of the church. The church invisible is that body of Christ from the point of view of her spiritual life: her union with and life in Christ. The church visible is that same church from the aspect of her manifestation in the midst of the world in the administration of the Word and the sacraments, her public gatherings in worship, her confession and walk. This church is one, universal (catholic), holy and Christian as to her essence or organism. Her unity is in her Head, Christ. Tho differences exist of creed and confession, language and nationality as well as of geographical location, she is one, feeds from the One Word, is guided by one and the same Spirit. Eph. 4:4-6. Catholic, universal, is she both as to time and place, so that she extends from the beginning to the end of this present time; and she is found among all nations, tongues and climes. And her holiness (Eph. 1:1; I Pet. 2:9) is due to her being one with Christ and the mighty sanctifying work of the Spirit of Christ in her. And wher-and whenever that church becomes manifest you have the institution of the church of Christ.

2. Article 28 speaks of our duty to join this church as she manifests herself historically. That this admonition refers to joining the church as institute is plain from the fact that it is impossible for man to join her as organism. That is the work of Christ thru His Spirit . . . and His exclusively. But we become member of the institute and so strive to obey Christ's mandate to manifest our oneness in Him. And this is solemn duty as well as spiritually requisite for all the believers. Apart from that institute there is no life, for life is thru the Word and Spirit of Christ, both of which He gave to the church.

3. Upon the foregoing article 29 naturally follows. If it be so our solemn duty to join the institute of the true church and, antithetically to reject all that is false, we must learn to distinguish clearly between the two. And those aids

whereby we may distinguish, and quite readily, the true from the false manifestations of the church, are in this article referred to as "marks." These marks are really one. We might, perhaps, better speak of a three-fold mark because really all fall under one and receive their authority in the one norm: the Word of God. Surely, for a full and beautiful explanation of that the content of the thirty-first Lord's Day of the Heidelberg Catechism can stand without further comment. That Word tells what the preaching of the pure gospel is; what is meant by the keeping of the sacraments according to the institution of Christ; what constitutes the proper exercise of discipline. Where these are lacking and usurped by their opposites you have, tho they may be called church, nothing but sects, as our fathers spoke of them, or a manifestation of the false church. Where these are present, you have the manifestation of the true church.

What is highly important now, is to remember that there are varying degrees of purity in the church institute. In other words "true" and "purity" are not synonymous as to application in scope. We must remember that a church becomes false only by stages of a process. This does not in the least minimize the sinfulness of the first departure from the truth, however insignificant it may appear. And especially for us upon whom are the end of the ages, deformation is accentuated greatly. But in any event becoming a false church is a process. Gradually the Holy Spirit withdraws from the erring church, taking with Him all the benefits and blessings of the true church, so that in the end all the cardinal truths are gone and in their stead are found all the marks of the false church, which means that all that is left is a sect or a manifestation of the false church under the direction of anti-christ.

In light of the above we assert that all erroneous views stem from improper discernment. The point of departure lies herein that virtues of the true church (organism) are applied to the church institute. However, then to join the church institute would be forever impossible because institutionally the church in this world is never perfect. Her purity is always relative. And the conclusion is that we must join the purest institute, according to the rule of the Word of God.

To show that such has always been the proper view of the matter, we shall let the "fathers" speak as follows:

1. In the evaluation of the various churches of their own time. In the articles referred to above it is plain that they distinguished between the true church (institutionally) and sects. The latter were certainly so many manifestations of the false church, tho still calling themselves church. However not once is this verdict applied to other churches, existent also at that time, as e.g. the Lutheran. Moreover, without a doubt, our fathers of Dordt would have refused the hand of fellowship to representatives of the false church. Yet we find them synodically gathered with those of many other churches of that day. And even tho the language in the articles of faith indicates a strong aversion to the Roman Catholic

church, that ever loomed before them as a terrible ogre, it is significant that the baptism by that church has been and still is recognized, implying that at least that sacrament is validly administered. Be that as it may, with our fathers of that time the line of demarcation fell between those churches that in varying degrees of purity manifested the true church on the one hand and the false, wholly corrupted gatherings, called churches but actually sects, on the other.

2. This view is further evident to be the right one from quotations of Reformed theologians since that time. Briefly we quote:

a. Calvin, speaking of the Roman Catholics under the Pope says: "Hence it appears that we by no means deny that Churches may exist, even under his tyranny; but he has profaned them by sacrilegious impiety, afflicted them by cruel despotism, corrupted and almost terminated their existence by false and pernicious doctrines, like poisonous potions; in such Churches, Christ lies half buried, the gospel is suppressed, piety exterminated, and the worship of God almost abolished; in a word, they are altogether in such a state of confusion, that they exhibit a picture of Babylon, rather than of the holy city of God. To conclude, I affirm that they are Churches, inasmuch as God has wonderfully preserved among them a remnant of his people, though miserably dispersed and dejected, and as there still remain some marks of the Church, especially those, the efficacy of which neither the craft of the devil nor the malice of men can ever destroy." *Institutes* IV, 2, 314, 315.

b. Dr. H. Bavinck in his *Dogmatics* Vol. IV, Ch. 9 pages 299 and 300 writes: (my translation, H.H.K.) "Although there be some lack in the purity of doctrine or of the sacraments, although the sanctity of life and faithfulness of the servants (officebearers?) leave much to be desired, one may not therefore immediately leave the church . . . All saw themselves forced to acknowledge with Calvin, that in the true church much impurity in doctrine and life can appear, without this giving right to separation, and that often much good is found in separated churches. So the concept true and false church underwent a significant change. On the one hand one had to admit, that a true church in the absolute sense is impossible here upon earth; there is not a single church that perfectly and in all parts, in doctrine and life, in the administration of Word and Sacraments, answers to the demand of God. And on the other hand it became evident that also a false church cannot exist in the absolute sense, because she would then no longer be a church; though Rome was a false church inasfar as she was papal, there remained yet many remnants of the true church. There was therefore difference between true and pure church (*vera* and *pura ecclesia*). True church became the name, not of one church with exclusion of all others, but of many sorts (*velerlei*) churches, that still held to the cardinal truths of Christendom, the fundamental articles, but for the rest departed far from each other in grades of purity; and false church became the name of the

hierarchical power of superstition and unbelief (bijgeloof en ongelooft) which raised itself in local churches and ascribed to itself and her ordinances more power and authority than to the Word of God."

c. Finally, a few excerpts from Gravemeijer are pertinent, the more because of his historical proximity to the fathers of Dordrecht, having written circa 1860. These excerpts (translation mine, H.H.K.) are from his *Gereformeerde Geloofsleer*, Vol. 3, ch. 19, and read: "That there should be an outward affiliation that would exclusively and only be the true church, is unthinkable." Upon the question to which church we must join ourselves he answers: "We cannot answer otherwise nor with more certainty than: that church of which the acknowledged confession upon which she is grounded, conforms most nearly to the Word of God . . . Each (Lutheran, Reformed, etc., HHK.) has her own banner, that is, her confession, the expression characterizing her doctrine and life. The pure Scriptural light did not penetrate everywhere on all points with equal clarity" . . . "No Reformed man, no true Protestant expects, within this dispensation, a wholly pure church formation."

Let it be understood that the above quoted views have been underwritten by us as Protestant Reformed Churches. To that the teaching of the leadership among us testifies. With this I refer not only to privately expressed opinions and the general tenor of the teaching at our school, but to the written word as, e.g., in Vol. 27 of *The Standard Bearer*, page 107, Rev. H. Hoeksema has this very significant thing to say: "The third item to which I want to call attention in this connection is the letter of brother Van Spronsen in the same Concordia as above. He wants us to adopt the wholly untenable position that, in a certain place, there is but one true church, and that by excluding anyone from that church you consign him to hell. Hence, he argues, we must bind no one by such a Declaration of Principles as we propose. Now, it is not true that we believe in the Kuyperian conception of the pluriformity of the church, as the brother supposes. But neither do we accept the absolute distinction between true and false church which he wants us to adopt. That would be impossible even from a geographical viewpoint. But we do confess that as Protestant Reformed Churches we are the purest manifestation of the body of Christ. Nor do we exclude anyone from the kingdom of heaven when he does not agree with the truth as we confess it."

Let us remember, too, that this view is the testimony of our history. In 1924 the Christian Reformed Churches attested to the fact that we were fundamentally reformed and advised that the question of common grace be taken in serious study and so, were it not for the action of their synod of 1926 in upholding church politically unauthorized actions of two of their Classes, we could have remained in that denomination and doing so would have admitted that it was still a manifestation of the true church. That we did not remain in

their midst was due to the fact that we were expelled, not because they had become thru the adoption of the Three Points, a false church, in which it certainly would have become our duty to leave. Incidentally, that must have also been the thrust of the note of the Editor of *The Standard Bearer* under the article of brother Feenstra. I know and, I am sure that also the editor, Rev. H. Hoeksema, knows that brother Feenstra is very well read in regard to all of our history. Personally I know that he has every issue of *The Standard Bearer* to date. He also reads them. And so I am sure he knew very well that we did not LEAVE the Christian Reformed Church, but that we were expelled. Nor, if I may presume to exegete the note a bit, was the intention of its writer to correct merely an error from the historical point of view. That is important, beyond any doubt and we must never let anyone say that differently. But I see in this note a corrective as to the main argument of brother Feenstra's article, and that is this: Had the Christian Reformed Church become a false church, we should surely have HAD to leave and would still be there today, were it not for our expulsion. If I am wrong in this explanation, the editor can append a note to this article too.

Therefore it all comes down to this: a church institute may apostatize in respect to one or more of the "marks," may be an erring church and still not have as yet become a false church. This is plain from many examples in the Scriptures. How the Galatians had defaulted! But Paul, thru the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, knows them as Church of Christ. What horrible sins in doctrine and walk were prevalent in Corinth . . . but manifestation of the body of Christ nonetheless! How departing from the mandate of the Word in many respects, in varied degrees, the churches mentioned in Revelation! Yet Christ Himself attests to the fact that they are manifestations of His body, for each is still by Him named: Church. And if it be argued that at that time neither Paul nor even Christ could very well advise to leave them (assumed false churches) because there was no other church at the time, our answer is that Christ is certainly not bound to circumstances like that and would have CAUSED another church . . . but fact is He DID NOT.

Finally a few questions:

1. What, with a view to all this, is our calling? Taking the teaching of our confessions to heart, first of all, to join that church which is the purest manifestation of the body of Christ, which proclaims the truth in the purest form. And let none say that this is not important, that it is only a degree of difference anyway. We have said before and say it again here, to depart from the truth in any degree is a sin that will surely be sought out and visited by punishment, unless repented of; and that this punishment is the gradual withdrawal of the Spirit and it is not long before such departure ends in false church or, really NO church. That is the reason that those still remaining within the pale of apostatizing churches, all testimony notwithstanding, commit sin. How

great then the sin of those that were once free from those errors, who once walked in the fellowship of the purer manifestation, now return willingly, either doctrinally already, or actually denominationally in the near future if tendencies materialize!

2. What the calling is of others? Naturally, to leave the churches that have defected and join the purest. That is calling with a view to themselves and to their children. That is so plain, it needs no further explanation.

3. What of the future? As to our attitude: let us walk in all humble gratitude. That means, let us refrain from all judging. That is in good hands, let's leave it there. God is righteous. Here let it be said that even to those that are opposed to what we here write and maintain, disclaim that they judge individuals and even grant that there are people of God in other denominations, logically, inevitably their viewpoint MUST lead to judging of people. Let us explain that. If a church is false, it means it no longer has the gospel, Christ is not its Head, His Spirit no longer operates beneficently there. Yet how then could elect in such a church ever be fed? Surely spiritual life does not thrive, cannot exist on the lie. It must have the truth, even if it be presented in well-nigh starvation rations. But then the Spirit is there! And then Christ is present . . . and you still have a manifestation of the true church tho in crumbling and speedily deteriorating form. Let's hold to that and so testify unitedly and we have a sure future, let come what may thru God's providence. With this I conclude and deem objections answered.

H. H. Kuiper

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 256)

him a clean heart, and renews in him a right spirit, that he can offer the pleasing sacrifice of a broken spirit: "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." And this is proved, in the second place, from Matthew 5:6. For there the Lord calls those that hunger and thirst after righteousness blessed, that is, saved. For when a man hungers and thirsts after righteousness, he is blessed already. It is only the saved already, that is, the regenerated, who are able to hunger and thirst after righteousness. That is the blessed gospel. Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? O, to be sure, then the promise is that you shall be satisfied, — in the future. But don't you understand? Then the truth is that God has already wrought in you the new life! You are blessed! By grace only! Sovereign grace!

H.C.H.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

(Continued from page 258)

tendom. With an enlightenment above his age, he gave toleration to Jew and Mohammedan.

In his conflict with the pope, he was governed, not by animosity to the spiritual power, but by the determination to keep it within its own realm. In genuine ideal opposition to the hierarchy he went further than any of his predecessors. Dollinger pronounced him the greatest and most dangerous foe the papacy ever had. Gregory and Innocent IV called him "the great dragon" and declared he deserved the fate of Absalom. And yet he did not resort to his grandfather's measures and set up an anti-pope. Perhaps he refrained from so doing in sheer disdain.

H.V.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 250)

God through the risen Christ and with one another. And they are no longer offended because of Him but in His cross alone they now glory.

They are called the "little ones" and with reason. The pride of their hearts has been thawed out by His grace. In Christ's God alone, therefore, do they put all their confidence and from Him alone do they expect all their salvation.

But also this prophecy will not be finally fulfilled until the church appears with Christ in glory.

G.M.O.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby expresses its heartfelt sympathy with our brother consistory member, Deacon H. Sawyer, in the loss of his father-in-law,

JAKE MERKUS

who passed away February 1. May our God abundantly comfort the bereaved by His Word and Spirit, and strengthen them in the hope of the saints.

The Consistory.

President, Rev. H. H. Kuiper
Clerk, A. Karsemeyer.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Jake Merkus, in the loss of her husband, and to Mrs. Harvey Sawyer, in the loss of her father,

JAKE MERKUS

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

In the name of the Society,

Rev. H. H. Kuiper, President
Mrs. Shirley Feenstra, Vice All.