

# THE STANDARD

*Bearers*

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## MEDITATION

### JESUS OR BAR-ABBAS

"Whom will ye that I release unto you? Bar-abbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Bar-abbas, and destroy Jesus."

"They said, Bar-abbas."

Matt. 27:17b, 20, 21b

It is a well established custom among us that we present duos or trios to our people. We do so when new office bearers are to be chosen, and also when a new minister is to be called.

However, when we do so, the two or three brethren are very much alike. The very fact that we present our duos or trios to the electorate says, It is immaterial which of the two or three is chosen! Any one of them is acceptable to us.

How different in this judgment hall of Pilate.

There we also see a duo: it's the strangest duo of all the ages.

Let's look at them, study them. We will see amazing things.

\* \* \* \*

I would like to present to you this duo, and come to the conclusion that Jesus is above Bar-abbas; then I would point out that they are on a par; and finally that Jesus is below Bar-abbas.

Jesus is, of course, above Bar-abbas!

Why, even Pilate thought so.

Incidentally, it was Pilate who thought of the idea to put this strange duo before the Jews. It was some kind of a ruse. He had a plan with this duo. He thought by himself: if I place Jesus on a duo with this Bar-abbas, I will rid myself of a bad case. I am afraid of this Jesus; I see a strange majesty in this man; I am sure he is innocent; I hate to

proclaim him guilty. And so, if I put him on a duo with this despicable murderer and rebel, they must, of course, choose for Jesus, and I am rid of this unsavory case.

And Jesus is placed before the mob, together with the murderer.

I tremble of that which I am going to say next, and yet, we are forced by God to do so: let's compare these two.

Bar-abbas is a mere man.

But he has an unsavory character, history and name.

He is a rebel. He does not belong to the anti-revolutionary party. He believes in improvement through force, pillage, sword, blood and tears.

And, as is natural, in the course of this urge he became a murderer.

At this juncture I would advise you not to purse your lips, tilt the point of your nose upward, draw down the corners of your mouth, and assume the "holier than thou" attitude.

This "bum" is not so far removed from you and me, the onlookers at this spectacle. Why, do you think, did God place this duo in the world's bulletin of anno Domini 34? I will tell you: He did this in order that you and the world may take a good look at both; come to some definite recognition and acknowledgments, and be saved, or be damned in the process.

Do you think that the making and displaying of this duo is so much "window-dressing" of Jesus' trial. Oh, no, my brother. But God in His infinite wisdom planned all this. And for you and the whole world.

This "bum," this rebel, this murderer is the representative of the whole human race. Oh, the depth!

Everyone in the whole wide world is in this Bar-abbas. The man born of a human father. That's the meaning of Bar-abbas. Literally: *son of a father*. I think God was thinking of Adam, the first father. He is Adam's son, there, standing next to Jesus!

And he represents us correctly.

We, you and I, all of us are both rebels and murderers all through the weary years since the fall in Paradise.

I think that none of my readers will deny this.

Well, for that reason God placed this man on the duo. The whole God-forsaken world is wrapped up in this "bum."

All that Bar-abbas was waiting for was death as a just punishment, its beauteous justice agreed upon by both sinner and "saint," the world and the church.

And, after all, that's what the world is waiting for at this very moment. And also we would be waiting for death, everlasting and horrible, if it were not for the wondrous depths of God's mercy.

I tremble again, when I think of the judgment day: then we all will see this strange duo again: Jesus and Bar-abbas!

\* \* \* \*

Now look at the other member of the duo: Jesus!

Yes, He is a Man too, but I will write here with capital letters.

He is Man, but He is at the same time the living God, though in human garb.

Now do you understand why I hesitated a while ago to talk about comparing these two?

Yes, you may call this Jesus Bar-Abbas too, for He is also the Son of the Father, or better put: The Father's Son!

Could anyone ever think that this is coincidental?

We see two fathers' sons. And on a duo.

But what a difference.

The one, poisoned by the devil, ready for hell.

The other the song of angels: God, blessed forever! Hal-lujah!

Even as man He is good, wholly good.

God, man, angel and devil testified to His goodness.

Are we ready for our first recognition? Our first acknowledgment?

It is this; it must be this: Jesus is way above this terrible man. It is really sinful to compare the two. Listen to a beautiful strain of music: "To whom then will you liken Me?" And the whole world should shout: To none! O God!

\* \* \* \*

But now comes the shame of Pilate, of the world.

For a little moment of time Jesus is placed on a par with Bar-abbas.

When Pilate spends eternity in the place of everlasting torment he will often see his last endeavour to rid himself

of this difficult case by the stratagem of placing Jesus on a par with Bar-abbas.

What a sight!

God next to the devil, on a line with the devil.

Oh how we stammer when speaking about Christ's humiliation. Who is able to fathom the depths here.

And, remember that with one word Jesus could have destroyed the whole universe!

His standing there on that platform before the face of the motley crowd *is an act! It is a deed!* It is not an accident. Oh, no. When the Person of the Son conferred in all eternity, He coincided with both Father and Spirit: That duo must be made: it will present the exact truth and relationships.

Pilate drags Jesus from the dizzying heights of glory, and places Him next to the murderer and rebel.

Remember? I said in the introduction that we assume that those put on duos are about alike in capacity and virtue?

What must we say here? Shall we not hide our faces in shame?

To such depths the Lord would bow in order to save you!

\* \* \* \*

But there is more.

You have not sounded the nethermost depths as yet.

The "motley" crowd has taken a good look.

And unconsciously they have recognized themselves in this murderer.

And they are not going back on their race. Have you ever heard the adage: "Like seeks like"? Or this one: "Birds of a feather fly together"?

There is a twofold motive.

The one is: love of self, of sin, of corruption. And that motive is universal. It rules the entire life of every man, woman and child of the reprobate world, whether they are the so-called "noble" souls or the gangster.

The second motive for choosing Bar-abbas is hatred against God and real goodness. Oh yes, you are right: they have tasted the heavenly gift. And they must have nothing of it. Who wants Jesus in his company every blessed hour of the day and night. He is terribly in the way. Let's get rid of Him!

That, my friend, is the judgment of the flesh, also of your and my flesh. Wherever our flesh smells the Godhead, spiritual virtues, there you experience repugnance, deep-seated hatred.

And so Jesus must take a place below Bar-abbas.

Attend to one of my texts, written above this meditation: "that they should ask Bar-abbas and destroy Jesus"!

In these horrible words you have the pre-advice of the chief priests and the elders. They scurried through the multitude, and whispered, later shouted this devilish advice in the ears of their charges: the church of Jehovah. Yes, He came to His own, and His own received Him not. And that is merely negative speech. Positively they took Him and cast Him off. They judged Him worthy of death.

And the whole multitude cried: Give us Bar-abbas!

And that is tantamount to saying: Give us a murderer, rather than the melody of heaven, the sweetness of God's heart!

\* \* \* \*

That cry, dear reader, has sounded through all the ages, and in all climes. And that cry shall sound among men until the very last moment. Man will always maintain himself in all his filth and corruption. And at the same time he will spit upon the living God, even as they spit upon Jesus when it was in their power to do so. Sinful man delights especially in trampling upon the blood of the Son of God and bringing Him to an open shame.

Well, they have had their day in the most literal sense of the word.

There He stands: below a murderer and a rebel.

And Jesus had not one vote.

And here is a depth: try to measure the abyss: God did not vote for Jesus either.

\* \* \* \*

Why?

I will ask you one final question: Look again at Jesus, *below Bar-abbas*.

If your look is sharp enough and penetrating enough, you will see yourself with all God's elect there. But then in your sin, guilt, corruption and death.

In the deepest sense of the word: God has set Jesus on this duo. And God has abased Him, for your sake and on your account.

I can but worship such wondrous wisdom!

G.V.

### Men's League Meeting

The Men's League meeting will be held Thursday evening, March 27, at 8 o'clock at the Hope Prot. Ref. Church. Rev. B. Woudenberg will be the speaker.

The Board

### IN MEMORIAM

The Young People's Society of Oak Lawn, Illinois, wishes to express its sympathy to one of its members, Emma Rutgers, and family in the loss of her sister

MRS. J. FISCHER

May our covenant God give abundant grace to the bereaved family is our prayer.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, President  
Anne Buitter, Secretary

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## EDITORIALS

### Reunion? Only In The Right Way

From a friend and brother I received a copy of a pamphlet entitled "Upon This Rock." It is a copy of a pageant which was enacted on the occasion of the centennial celebration of the Christian Reformed Church. It contains in pageant form a brief history of that church from its beginning till the present time. Naturally, I was mostly interested in what it would relate of the history of 1924. I found this on pp. 16, 17, and we will quote here:

"Narrator:

Not all our conflicts were resolved  
So painlessly as the long-standing language question;  
Sometimes the harmony of brotherly relations  
Was broken by the harsh notes of dissonance;  
Sometimes the surface of our unity  
Was damaged by the blight of discontent.  
As manly strength is broken by disease,  
And yet, the victim rallies and recovers;  
So has the Church been broken down by sin;  
So has the Church been built again by faith."

"Voices:

1st. The Reformed confessional standards have always adopted the infralapsarian position . . . . It is the more historical view.

2nd. It seems to me consistent with our emphasis on the sovereignty of God to adopt the supralapsarian view.

3rd. It would seem that we cannot regard Supra and Infralapsarianism as absolutely antithetical. They look at the same mystery from different points of view . . . . Each emphasizes an element of truth.

4th. (Rev. Van Dellen, Pres. of 1924 Synod)

The Synod on the basis of Scripture and the Creeds, in support of its formulation of the doctrine of Common Grace as opposed by a protesting minority, reaffirms the adoption of the following articles in reference to the present dispute:

1. There is a Common Grace, a favorable disposition of God toward all men and not alone toward the elect.
2. God restrains sin in the life of the individual and in the life of society.
3. The unregenerate are capable of doing civic good."

"Narrator:

The doctrine was aggressively contested,  
Tension and disagreement reached a climax  
In sudden and disturbing separation.  
The wound that was inflicted by the schism  
Remains a scar refusing to be healed.

The music of the gospel of salvation  
Flows on through channels that run parallel  
But, tragically, have never reunited.  
This is our record, this has been our past;  
The future with its challenge lies ahead.  
Undaunted by what *has* been or *will* be,  
Our church today goes forward in the faith."

Thus far the quotation.

In as far as this was possible in a brief pageant, the history is quite correctly recorded.

Yet one element which was to us, the late Rev. H. Danhof and myself, and later also the Rev. G. M. Ophoff, very important, is not mentioned here. It is this that in 1924 we were deposed from office in the Christian Reformed Church because we refused to sign the "Three Points" to which reference is made above or, at least, keep still about them. This was decided by the two Grand Rapids classes, East and West, in spite of the fact that the Synod of 1924 had deliberately eliminated from the report of the committee any suggestion of discipline and, besides, had declared us "Fundamentally Reformed."

We could never comply with the request of the classes either to sign the "Three Points" or to keep still about them. For we were convinced in our hearts that they were not Reformed and that they led the church in the wrong direction as they actually did.

But we did not leave the Christian Reformed Church, nor did we intend to leave it even though the Synod had adopted the "Three Points." On the contrary, within the church we wanted to discuss the "Three Points" and reveal their error.

*We were cast out!*

This is the truth and nothing but the truth. And this fact was omitted in the pageant.

But we wish to call attention to the last few lines of the above quotation.

First of all, it speaks of a scar that still refuses to be healed. Of this I can be glad. A scar that refuses to be healed must by this time, after thirty-four years, be a running sore. Once more, I say: of this I am glad, not because I rejoice in any sore spot in the body of the Christian Reformed Church, for I do not. I would like nothing better than to see my old church, in which I made my confession of faith, in whose theological school I was prepared for the ministry, and which I actually served for over four years in the ministry of the Word, walking in and confessing the Reformed truth. And it is a life-long grief to me that they cast me out and that, ever since, they have departed farther from the faith of our fathers. But when I read of that scar that refuses to be healed, there is, it seems to me, still a glimmer of hope. And I would like to ask the question: why don't

you go to the doctor to have it healed, if at all possible? You ask: what doctor? My answer is: the truth.

Secondly, I must call attention to those other lines in the pageant that speak of the music of the gospel of salvation flowing through parallel channels that "tragically, have never been reunited." Also this refers, of course, to the history of 1924 and to the separation between the Christian Reformed Church and our churches. The pageant here strikes a note of sadness and of longing to be reunited.

Now, it may be rather difficult to reunite as churches after a period of more than thirty years of separation. But suppose the attempt were made, at least, to establish a more fraternal relationship between the two churches than exists at present. What would be involved in such an attempt? It certainly would mean that we open a discussion about the causes that separated us in 1924. The Christian Reformed Church and our churches could appoint a committee that would meet together and discuss those causes and make the result of their discussions public in the papers.

It stands to reason that the chief subject of our discussion would be whether, in 1924, it was right to adopt the "Three Points" as official church doctrine, and to make them binding on every office-bearer and member in the Christian Reformed Church. In close connection with this is the question whether it was right for the Christian Reformed Church, in 1924, to cast out ministers of the gospel who, according to their own testimony, were fundamentally Reformed.

These subjects must be thoroughly discussed and must be decided to the satisfaction of both sides before any reunion can possibly be accomplished.

Our position on these matters is well known and was well known at and ever since the Synod of 1924. For even at that Synod we openly declared that we could not accept the "Three Points" and ever since we have furnished ample reasons for this position. Our position is, too, that the Christian Reformed Church, in 1925, sinned grievously when they cast us out.

Nevertheless, we are willing to discuss these matters and have the results of the discussion published.

This would be the only possible *attempt* at reunion.

Personally, I do not believe that, unless the sins of 1924 are confessed and removed, the Christian Reformed Church can expect God's blessing and develop in the faith of the Word of God. Already there are many signs that point in the opposite direction. And these signs will increase as time goes on.

It is nothing but false optimism when the narrator in the pageant declares:

"As manly strength is broken by disease,  
And yet the victim rallies and recovers;  
So has the Church been broken down by sin;

So has the Church been built again by faith."

Or again, at the very end of the passage I quoted above:

"This is our record; this has been our past;  
The future with its challenge lies ahead.  
Undaunted by what *has* been or what *will* be,  
Our church today goes forward in the faith."

I hope this may be true. But God is not mocked.

H.H.

---

## Confusion

From the bulletin of the schismatics that call themselves the "Orthodox Protestant Reformed Church" we learn that they decided to begin legal action to obtain the property of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

They do this on the basis of the decree of the Second Church of Grand Rapids, rendered by the Supreme Court of Michigan and in spite of the fact that the same Supreme Court, before the case of the Second Church came before it, rendered a decree in regard to the property of the First Church that was in our favor.

That such action on the part of the schismatics is even possible is due, of course, to the confusion of the two decrees of the Supreme Court.

I understand that the schismatics have also already demanded the records of Classis East. Also this demand is based on the same decree of the Supreme Court in the case of the Second Church.

This, to my mind is more confusion. First Church, which was justified by the Supreme Court, certainly has the right to demand that these records will never be surrendered.

All this, and other matters as well, points to the necessity of synodical action before any further action on the part of individual churches is taken.

But we will commit our way unto the Lord.

H.H.

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## Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, Wednesday, March 26, 1958, at 9:00 A. M. in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Consistories of Classis East will please take note!

M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### CHAPTER I

#### *The Sealing of the One Hundred Forty-four Thousand*

#### Revelation 7:1-8

This rather intricate interpretation was necessary, first of all, in order to understand the portion which we are now discussing correctly. For now we can ask the second question: what is implied in the sealing of these one hundred forty-four thousand? The symbol of the seal is very often used in Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Its general significance is clear to us all. It is a mark impressed upon something. And its most general idea seems to have been that of security and safe-guarding. A proprietor would seal a certain part of his property, for instance, to mark his ownership and safe-guard it against robbery. A book was sealed when its contents had to be kept secret, to safe-guard it against being opened by improper parties. And so we read also in the New Testament more than once of the sealing of the saints. In II Corinthians 1:21, 22 we read: "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Again, in Ephesians 1:13 the apostle writes: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." And once more, in 4:30 of the same epistle we read: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." In all these portions of Scripture we read that the saints are sealed, and that they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore a mark that is placed upon them, which safe-guards them against attack, which makes them invulnerable. It is a seal that will remain upon them till the day of redemption, a seal that makes them immune from a certain point of view. We cannot go into detail with this idea at this point, but certain it seems that the Holy Spirit is represented as placing a mark upon them which immediately characterizes them as belonging to the Lord, as being sheep of His flock, as being subjects of His kingdom, and members of His church. And it is undoubtedly safest that in our interpretation of this part of Scripture we closely adhere to the Word of God in general. The Holy Spirit changes the subjects of Satan into subjects of Christ. He it is that brings them to regeneration, to faith, to justification, and to sanctification. He it is that works within them, so that they also confess the truth. They bear the stamp, the mark, of the Holy Spirit. When the Word of God calls this change of the people of God, this impress made upon them by the Holy Spirit, a sealing of the saints, the idea simply is that their ownership can never be changed again. This mark placed upon them by the Holy Spirit is not to be obliterated.

These people that are thus sealed by the Holy Spirit can never be changed again into subjects of Satan. In short, the idea of this sealing is the same as that of perseverance of the saints. And so it is also in the words of our text. When we read that these people of God, these one hundred forty-four thousand of God's elect, are sealed, all that is indicated is that they belong to God, that they are the possession of Jesus Christ, bought by His precious blood, that this same Jesus Christ also in this present dispensation places His own seal upon them, makes His impress upon them through His Holy Spirit, and that by all the work through which they are changed from subjects of Satan into subjects of Christ, and finally, that this work cannot be changed again, but that these saints will remain His, that they are as subjects of His kingdom immune from any attack from without. There is no power on earth or in heaven or in hell, there is no tribulation or affliction, that can possibly erase this seal, that can make the work of the Holy Spirit undone. Once regenerated is always regenerated. Once having come to the faith, one remains a believer. Once being justified is always to stand in the conviction that God forgives us our sins and calls us perfectly righteous. Once having surrendered ourselves to the Savior implies that we shall always belong to Him. He is ours, and we are His, not because we are so faithful and because we are so strong in ourselves, but because the work He has for us and within us, in our hearts, begun partakes of the nature of a seal that can never be erased.

If we understand this clearly, then we will also understand the significance of this portion. For this seal of the living God, which is placed on the foreheads of the people of God, is impressed under peculiar conditions. It is a time of tribulation in which these people must bear that seal. The representation of our text is that it is on the eve of tribulation and great affliction that this seal is impressed upon their foreheads. Four angels stand on the four corners of the earth, and they hold the four winds of the earth. And another angel ascends from the east, and warns these four angels not to let the winds go until the servants of God shall have received the seal of the living God on their foreheads. The meaning of all this is plain. The angels are here the servants of God that must execute the judgment of Christ. And the winds which they hold are the evil powers that will presently be let loose upon all the earth. That they are four, standing on the four corners of the earth and holding the four winds of heaven, shows plainly that these evil forces will affect all the universe ultimately. It is on the eve of tribulation and affliction. The earth and the sea, that is, all that is level upon earth, but also the trees, that is, all that stands upright, will be hurt by these evil winds. And now the angel ascending from the sun-rising comes, — perhaps the angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Sun of righteousness; at any rate, another angel comes, — and warns them that they may not let those winds go till the one hundred forty-four thousand shall have been sealed,

that is, till they have been made immune against the evils that shall come upon the earth. Hence, the general idea of this portion of the Book of Revelation is that the people of God in the midst of tribulation and affliction are safe, and that the upheavals of the world shall not touch them, because the Lord their God has sealed them as His own possession.

One more question must be answered, namely, this: how must we understand this being safe, this security of the people of God on earth, in the midst of trouble and affliction, in the midst of persecution and plagues? Must we take it in the sense that these plagues shall not touch them in the natural sense of the word? Must we understand this sealing in the sense that the people of God shall be exempted when the storms of trouble lower over the world, even as the people of Israel in the midst of Egypt were exempt from plagues that struck that country? Evidently this cannot be the meaning. Also the people of God are subject to these plagues that shall come upon the whole earth. With a view to the six seals we have discussed so far, this has become perfectly plain. Surely, the people of God are touched when the ravages of war devastate the whole world. Surely, the people of God partake of the suffering from a natural point of view that follows from the social contrast. Also the people of God fight the awful battle against death. They also partake of the evil forces that shall be on the earth when the seventh seal is opened. They shall be on earth when the plagues connected with that seal shall be inflicted upon the world. Still more, they shall be subjected to a suffering which the world shall not know, the suffering for Christ's sake. They shall be persecuted. The world shall more and more oppose them, shall kill them, because of the Word of God and the testimony which they hold. And therefore, it may be said indeed that the people of God shall suffer more than the children of the world before the time of the end shall come. In this sense they are not immune, and the sealing of the one hundred forty-four thousand does not at all mean that the people of God shall not suffer. No, but they are immune as children of the kingdom. From a spiritual point of view they are immune indeed. Spiritually they are sealed. Spiritually they are the subjects of Christ Jesus. And spiritually they shall not be touched or hurt by the plagues and persecutions that shall come upon the earth.

This, then, is the meaning and also the comfort of this particular portion of Revelation. Six seals have already been opened. Those six seals implied the suffering of the people of God in the world. The seventh seal, that is still to be opened, will reveal still greater suffering and more terrible times. Hence, the question may arise: shall we be able to stand? The answer is in this part of the Book of Revelation in the sealing of the one hundred forty-four thousand by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. It means that you are sealed in the book of God's decree, that you are elect. It means that you are marked as one of the flock of our Lord, that you are His possession, His peculiar people. It means that you are sealed unto the day of redemption, and that you shall

never fall away. Be not afraid of all that is still to come! The Lord is our possessor, and He has sealed us also against the evil day.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Numberless Throng*

#### Revelation 7:9, 13-17

9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

In this chapter we wish to consider for a few moments the numberless throng as it is indicated in Revelation 7. We will leave the song of the redeemed and of the angels, that is found in verses 10 to 12, for a separate chapter.

Who are these people that are pictured to John and to the church in this second vision? What is their relation to the one hundred forty-four thousand that are mentioned in the first part of this chapter? In order to answer these questions, we must, of course, first of all, study our text, and discover what it tells us about them. And then we find, in the first place, that it is a throng without number: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number." In these words it is indicated at the same time that the apostle now beholds a different vision. It is not a mere continuation of the vision in the first part of the chapter; but it is something new. And when he says that he beheld a multitude which no man could number, he does not mean to say that in actual fact there was not a definite number, or that the multitude was actually infinite. That, of course, would be impossible. But he means to impress upon us that the throng he beheld was so immense that the very attempt to count them seemed folly and impossible. There is an end to man's capacity of expressing things in number and of counting a certain number of objects. Thus it is, of course, with the stars of heaven. Who would deny that there are a definite number of stars in the sky, so that they surely can be counted, and the number of which is also known, — yea, the names of

all of which are known to God Almighty. But the number of the stars is so immense that it is folly for man even to attempt to count them. This is also true with the sand that is on the seashore. There is a definite number of grains of sand on the shore; but to count these grains is beyond our human capacity. This, then, is also the case with this great multitude which John beheld. It is numberless, that is, the creature cannot count them. It is so immense that the very attempt to number them and to express their number is foolishness. And immediately we are reminded of the promise to Abraham in regard to his seed. To Abraham a seed is promised as multitudinous as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. This promise certainly is not completely fulfilled in the children of Israel: they always could be numbered. Nor is it completely fulfilled in the spiritual Israel of the new dispensation: for also their number is within our reach, and they may be expressed in the definite number *one hundred forty-four thousand*. But here, in this particular vision, we see for the first time the fulfillment of that glorious promise to Abraham. For John here beholds a numberless throng.

Secondly, we must also note that this throng is universal in character. It is a multitude "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." This implies, in the first place, that the Lord has His people among all nations. For there is no reason not to take these words in their full and literal meaning. There is no nation whatsoever that is excluded from this throng. The chosen people of God's grace are in this dispensation hid among all the nations of the earth. Hence, we have the suggestion here that it is incumbent upon the church to preach the gospel to all nations and tongues. Fully in harmony with the great commission which the Lord left to His church before He ascended to heaven, "Go ye therefore, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," or "Make disciples of all nations," is the presentation in the words of our text. Among all the nations of the earth are the people of God that shall once be gathered in glory. And therefore, since these must be called by the Word of the gospel, that Word must be preached to all without distinction. Secondly, it seems to me we have an indication here that even in the new economy of things there shall not be an endless monotony of men, all the same, the one the exact picture of the other, but that national and tribal characteristics shall be plainly visible and represented in the numberless throng. It is the Lord's will that the human race should develop into many nations. Not one nation forms the organism of the human race all by itself, but all together they compose that organism. Not one nation can be missed. And therefore, the beauty of that organism shines forth in the combination of all the characteristics of each and every nation combined. This is implied in this present vision. Hence, there is a throng from all nations; and in the vision John immediately recognizes that every nation of the globe is represented. In the third place, we may remark in passing that also the Jews are included in this very throng. They

do not live separately from it, but they are included in this multitude: for it is a throng of all nations. Besides, of a separate Jewish multitude we read nowhere in the Word of God. It is therefore a universal throng, a glorious harmony of all nations, each with its peculiar characteristics, but each also with one great characteristic in common: they are all of Christ, and they are all in glory everlasting.

That this is true, namely, that this multitude is conceived as being in glory, is evident from the entire text. The text describes these people as being arrayed in white robes, and as having palm branches in their hands, and standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Now, that they are arrayed in white robes indicates that they are purified of sin and of all the effects of sin, as is also indicated in the latter part of the verse. This undoubtedly is their chief characteristic at this moment. That this is actually true is also evident from the latter part of this portion. John stands amazed at the sight of this multitude, and is wondering as to their identity. And one of the elders that stands around the throne, seeing that he is wondering, places him before the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And John, acknowledging his ignorance in regard to them, answers, "Sir, thou knowest." And the elder explains that they come out of great tribulation. So much regarding their origin. But as to their chief characteristic, the elder says that they are those that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Very strikingly, we read here that they have done so themselves. They themselves washed their robes in the blood of Christ. You understand, of course, from all Scripture that this must not be understood as if they had saved themselves: for this certainly is not the case, and the throng do not conceive of it in that light themselves, as is plain from the song they sing. The people of God certainly do not save themselves, and they do not obtain the forgiveness of sin and deliverance from corruption through their own efforts. For salvation belongs unto the Lord. He washed them in His own redeeming blood. Yet we must not imagine that this is a mere form, and that this indicates identically the same thing as if the text had read, "They are those whose robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb." There certainly is a point of view from which we may say that the saints wash their robes in the blood of Christ. For, do not forget, through the Holy Spirit they receive the power of faith; and through that power of faith they consciously cling to Christ, are rooted in Him, draw from Him all they need, all the blessings of salvation. Through faith the Christian becomes active in his own salvation. Through faith he appropriates Christ and all His benefits. Through faith he consciously goes to the blood of Christ to wash his robes. And this throng consists of those that have thus washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They are now delivered. Every spot of sin has been washed away. They are pure and holy, and they have gained the victory in the battle of faith. They stand here as having overcome already, as being the victors in the battle. H.H.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Zechariah

*The Purification of the remnant.*

Chapter 13:7b-9

*Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. 8. And it will be in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein will be cut off, will die; but the third will be left therein. 9. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; and he will call upon my name and I will answer him; I will say, He is my people. And he will say, Jehovah is my God.*

The mandate of 7b must be more fully explored than has been done, if the thrust of the succeeding two verses is to be properly apprehended. There can be no doubt, as was shown, that the shepherd is Jesus. For the sins of His people God smote Him through the agency of men. And the shepherd willed to be smitten. When His enemies came to bind Him, He voluntarily gave Himself into their hands. But His disciples were offended because of Him as He had foretold. We have it from Jesus Himself, as was shown, that this their reaction — their being offended because of Him and their forsaking Him and fleeing — was the fulfilment of the prophecy, “And the sheep shall be scattered.” Herein their being scattered consisted. Jesus, so to speak, had literally thrown Himself into the hands of His enemies. And they were offended, that is amazed, confused, confounded, indignant and grieved.

As was pointed out, the root of all their troubles was their misconception of His calling. They had imagined that Jesus was come to restore Israel’s earthly kingdom with its headquarters in the earthly Jerusalem, where, so they had imagined, He would reign as Israel’s king with them at His side as his chief ministers. To sit at His right hand, when He was come into His kingdom was the ambition of each of them. It seems to have been customary for them to debate among themselves who of them was qualified to occupy that coveted place. The mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, thought to settle the matter once and for all in favor of her sons. On a day she came to Jesus and said to Him, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one at thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom” (Matt. 20:21). The disciples of Jesus understood not that the kingdom of Israel of the old dispensation — a kingdom that had so wonderfully flourished during the reign of Solomon — was but type and shadow and in this sense earthly, and that, therefore, seeing that Christ was now come, it was on the verge of vanishing away, never to be restored. Yet to the mind of the disciples it was to restore that kingdom that

Christ had been born into the world. For they had come to see in Jesus the Messiah, Israel’s promised deliverer. And on Jesus they had concentrated all their hopes. And now He was about to be cut off in the midst of His day with the people of Israel still under the dominion of the world powers and thus with Israel’s kingdom still waiting to be restored. And to think that His enemies had Him in their power because, as forbidding His followers to fight for Him, and as refusing to call in the help of His Father in heaven, He had voluntarily given Himself over into His enemies’ hands! Oh, why had He done that? The disciples were offended, that is, indignant, provoked, resentful because of Him, because of what He had done. He had literally thrown Himself into the hands of His enemies. How terribly wrong! So they imagined. All things considered, how terribly wrong! With what vehemence they must have denounced the doing of Jesus, with a vehemence as strong as that exhibited by Peter at the time when Christ began to speak to them of His determination to suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, to be killed. Hearing, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him saying, “Pity thyself, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.” For Peter, and this was true of all of them, did not savour the things of God. That Christ had to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory was not in all their thoughts. It explains in part their indignation because of Jesus. They thought that He had done wrong in giving Himself over, dreadfully wrong. It was to this imagining of theirs that Jesus had reference, when He said to them, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night.” Let us take notice, “This night,” thus even before He was given over to be crucified. And they must have been just as indignant when they saw Him hanging from a cross. For to their mind, it should not have been and could have been avoided. And so they all forsook Him and fled in that night. For what purpose should they remain at His side. He had forbidden them to fight for Him. And so they left Him there and fled, thinking, it must be, that they had seen the last of Him on this earth. Surely they were not expecting that, should He be killed, He would rise from the dead bodily and soon, even after three days.

But if they were offended because of Him, they were also sorrowful, unspeakably so — sorrowful with the sorrow of love of Jesus, love of Israel, oppressed by the world-powers. And that love the dreadful trials of those dark hours were unable to quench, for Jesus was praying for them. It was because they loved, that they had so trusted that it was He who should redeem Israel. It was because they loved, that they kept on cleaving to Jesus. They could not forsake Him in their hearts; for they were men reborn. It was because they loved and believed — love is the essence of faith — that they kept on saying, Jehovah is our God; from Him is all our salvation.

Yes, they were offended because of Him, indignant. And at the bottom of their indignation lay unbelief and carnal ambition, yes, but also love — love of Christ, love of Israel,

love of the things of God's Spirit. Only it was a love sorely in need of the illumination of Christ's Spirit. Was not the reason that they had continued to walk with Him, when many of the disciples went back and walked with Him no more, that He has the words of eternal life, and that they believed and were sure that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God? Such had been their testimony through Peter their spokesman. The verse states that, when the shepherd is smitten, and the sheep scattered, Jehovah will stretch out His hand over the little ones. They were the little ones in the first instance — they, the eleven disciples of the Lord. Christ, the hand of Jehovah, would gather them when He was risen, and exalted and had received the promise of the Spirit and poured Him on all flesh. Then He would gather them by His Gospel and Spirit, and not only them but all the elect of all the ages to come. For they, too, are the "little ones." In the final instance, then, the "little ones" are the church that Christ from the beginning of the world to the end thereof gathers to Himself out of the whole human race by His Spirit and His Word.

But besides these "little ones," the eleven disciples in the first instance, there was also Judas, the betrayer of Jesus. Said Jesus to His disciples on an occasion, when He was still walking with them, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas was that devil. He had attached himself to Jesus, and kept on walking with Him to the last, for what He imagined there would be in it solely for himself — honour, fame and riches — when Jesus would come into His kingdom of which, of course, also Judas had an earthly conception. And, therefore, he, too, and especially he, was offended because of Jesus as often as he would hear Him say that He must suffer many things and be killed. How it would provoke Judas to hear Jesus talking that way. How indignant he would become. But at the bottom of Judas' indignation lay only love of Judas and hatred of Jesus. For Judas was a godless man, who was following Jesus only for the bread that perishes. And that hatred of Judas, if at first more or less dormant, became more and more a conscious hatred increasing in power according as Judas became more and more convinced that Jesus meant what He said and that, therefore, He could have no intention of establishing Himself as king in the earthly Jerusalem. Finally, when his heart had become a playground for the devil, he betrayed Jesus.

There were many more like Judas in the land, Jews reprobated, following Jesus for the bread that perishes. Marvelling at Jesus' ability to feed the five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and concluding that He was "that prophet that should be sent," they resolved to make Him king. But He earnestly admonished them to seek the meat that endures unto everlasting life. He told them that He was the living bread that came down from heaven, and that, except they ate His flesh and drank His blood, they had no life in themselves. And so He gave them clearly to

understand that He had no intention of placing Himself in the service of their carnal lusts and ambitions by allowing them to make Him king. And, like Judas, they were deeply offended because of Him. They went back and followed Him no more. They were the same people that later stood there crying, "Crucify Him," when He stood before Pilate. Such was the reaction of the carnal, reprobated Israel to the self-disclosures of Jesus. Also this Israel was offended because of the shepherd, scattered. The shepherd offended, provoked, grieved, disappointed also this Israel by His disclosures of His determination to be smitten. But though they were scattered of Him, He will not gather them. He will gather only His sheep, the little ones. And the others were not of His sheep. They were the goats among the sheep, the wolves, many of them in sheep's clothing. True, in a certain point of view they did form together with the sheep the one flock of God, namely, in the point of view that they were in relation to the sheep by ties of blood. But only the sheep were in relation to Christ. Them only did the shepherd love. For them only did He lay down His life. They only, therefore, were in Him by a redeeming and living faith. The goats had no part in Christ. They were enemies of Christ and His sheep, the wolves in the flock of God. Principally, therefore, the flock was only the sheep. This was the fact of the matter then and now, too, just as well. It is always the case. Always the flock of God on this earth is a mixture of scattered wolves and scattered sheep — but a flock the scattered sheep of which are always being gathered, but the goats never, gathered by Christ. What now was Christ to do with the goats in the flock, the carnal seed, scattered but never to be gathered? And what was His dealing to be with the sheep, also scattered but again to be gathered — gathered from then on through the ages to the end of time? The answers to these questions are contained in the following two verses. This brings us to these verses, 8, 9. The two thirds in all the land, that is, the earth, of which verse 8 makes mention are the goats in the flock — the goats scattered but not to be gathered. On the other hand, the third part are the sheep, also scattered but again to be gathered. What will be done with the two parts, the goats? The answer here given is, that they will be cut off, die, that is, cut off through death from the land and from the sheep. And the sheep, the remaining third part, are still not yet pure gold. For they will be cast in the fires of affliction that they may be further refined as silver is refined and tried as gold is tried. Isaiah's prophecy contains an identical doleful tidings, only here the number to be cut off is set at nine tenths. The prophet, so it is stated, must make the heart of "this people" fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and convert, and be healed. The prophet asks, "How long?" The Lord replies, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it," so the Lord con-

tinues, "shall be a tenth, and it shall return . . ." (Isa. 6:10ff). The reference here is to the decimation of the church through the Babylonian captivity of the tribe of Judah. After the seventy years only a tenth returned. The rest — the nine tenths — died in Babylon as voluntary exiles, cut off through death from the Holy City. And this is but an example of what the church is made to experience through all the ages, periodically. At the time of the exile of Judah, the church had already over and over been visited by such a cutting off of the two thirds, the nine tenths of Isaiah. To be mentioned are the following: First, the destruction of the antediluvian humanity through the waters of the flood. Second, the Lord's taking away His covenant and His altars from the new humanity unto all their generations of the old dispensation and giving His covenant exclusively to Abraham, whom He had called, and to his seed. Third, the falling away in the wilderness of the carcasses of that wicked generation that did always err in their heart. Fourth, the scattering of the ten tribes of Israel among the nations. Fifth, the exile of the tribe of Judah already mentioned. Sixth, the final destruction of Jerusalem and the permanent vanishing away of Israel's kingdom as a type of the heavenly. It is to this cutting away of the two thirds that the prediction of Zechariah has reference in the first instance, — his prophecy of the cutting off of the two thirds. It was by this working of God that the remnant, the one third, the true church, was made to pass over into the New Testament church as freed from the typical symbolical apparatus of the first covenant. The final cutting off of the two thirds will be by a working of Christ that is to consist in His cleansing this earth from the race of men that now corrupt it at His second coming. Then the whole church of the elect, the one third, the remnant, will appear with Christ in glory and be given the kingdom. Then there will be new heavens and a new earth on which righteousness shall dwell.

From what is presented above, it appears that through the ages the cutting off of the two thirds takes place as many as seven times. But this need not be taken to mean that the one third that remains after each cutting off is cut down to one third of its size. Would not the body of true believers sooner or later disappear from the face of the earth, were this the meaning? It would seem so. But the necessary implication of the prophecy involved is not that, periodically, through the ages, the church is thus being decimated. What is foretold is simply that two thirds (Isa., nine tenths) will be cut off, and that the remnant, the one third, will be cast in the fires of affliction. The implication can just as well be that after each cutting off of the two thirds the carnal seed in the church again multiplies to such an extent as to call for another cutting off of the two thirds. What is cut off, dies, is the carnal seed. They die, that is, they perish in their sins, are cast into eternal perdition. But, of course, the question is whether in each of the seven intervals the number of true believers becomes smaller and smaller, not precisely by two thirds or nine tenths, but nevertheless smaller. This

is not implied in the prophecy. It is a question that it leaves unanswered. But let us face the question anyhow and then in this form: Is through the ages the number of true believers gradually diminishing? This must surely be said of the church in the age that ended with the flood. For in the ark the church numbered at the most but eight souls. Before the amalgamation of the sons of God and the children of men the number must have been considerably larger. But whether through the ages the church is always becoming smaller and smaller is a question that the Scriptures nowhere definitely answer. Christ does say that many are called but that few are chosen. He also asks whether, when He comes, He shall find faith on the earth, meaning to say, doubtless, that He will find very little. To Elijah it at one time seemed that the true church had virtually disappeared from the face of the earth. And in Isaiah's day the daughter of Zion was left as a cottage in a vineyard. On the other hand the Lord's promise to Abraham was that He would make his seed as the dust of the earth. And the apostle John in his vision beholds the church a great multitude. But herewith has not yet been answered the question just posed. What is clear from the Scriptures is, that the carnal seed is always far in the majority. But the saints have the victory.

But we have yet to attend to the Lord's dealing with the remnant, the third part that was left in the land, that particular one third with which our prophet in his predictions of these verses is directly occupied, namely, the flock of God, the remnant that passed over into the church of the New Testament as freed from the symbolical-typical things of the law through the destruction of Israel's typical kingdom. It, too, is in the fire of tribulation in fulfilment of the word of our prophet, "And I will bring the third part into the fire." Here the church of this last day finds itself — in God's fire, in the fire of persecution and in the fire of the sufferings of this present time common to all mankind and in the fire of all manner of trial. Here, in the fire, God wants also this one part. For the church is still far from being pure silver and pure gold. Doubtless, there is as much dross in her in this last day as there ever was. For, surely, it is still true that not all is Israel that is of Israel. As always, there is the carnal seed perpetuating itself. And this seed, the dross, must be revealed and likewise the gold, Abraham's spiritual seed, the sheep. It must become evident who is dross and who is gold. And therefore, "I will bring the third part in the fire." For the silver must be refined, and the gold tried. And so it is. For in the fire the thoughts of the carnal seed become revealed indeed. It blasphemes God and despises the Christ whom He has sent. It tramples the truth. It kills the sheep. And as Cain of old, it eventually goes forth from the presence of God and His people, that it may serve in Baal's temple. So is the dross made to separate itself.

And the thoughts of the spiritual seed are also revealed in this fire. They humble themselves under God's mighty hand as confessing that they deserve His strokes. And as

*(Continued on page 285)*

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 7

#### VII.

(I Corinthians 7:25-35)

Paul began this Chapter by pointing out to the Corinthians the honorableness of one who does not enter into the marriage state. We noticed that he does not present celibacy as a higher and more holy form of life than the state of marriage. Marriage is a calling for some who have not the "gift" of continency! Hence widows and widowers do "well" when they do not remarry. However, it is better to marry than to burn. In such cases, for the weakness of the flesh's sake, it is better for them to make use of the remedy of God. Let each work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

However, when one is in the marriage state he must remember that "what God has joined together let not man put asunder"!

God did not set this ordinance of marriage aside when he called one of the partners in the marriage state to faith and not the other. Each is to abide in the state he was when called. Should the unbeliever depart this does not put the believer under "bondage" in such cases, but he is to walk in peace. The fact that he may be instrumental, under God, to save the unbelieving wife or husband is an added reason for not breaking the marriage-tie, but to remain in it! The natural is first and then the spiritual. Thus Paul ordained in all the churches and not merely in Corinth.

Now Paul will also give his "judgment" in the matter of "virgins," that is, in the matter of those who choose not to enter into the marriage state. This is not some worldly wisdom, some advice of a social worker, but the advice he gives here is given in full and total agreement with the foundation laid down as a wise master builder, besides which no one can lay any other foundation. And what he gives here as his "judgment" certainly will not prove to be so much hay and stubble which shall be burned in that day!

Here too Paul knows nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, and the walk of newness of life which is ours through the power of His death and resurrection!

The passage which will engage our attention in this essay concerning the peculiar psychological advantages of virgins, because of the present pressing circumstances, reads as follows: "*Now concerning virgins . . . I suppose therefore that it is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be . . . And this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*" (Read this entire section from your own Bible.)

Rather than give a detailed exposition of this passage, attending to every particular, we will call attention to the more salient points of this passage in this essay.

In the first place, it should be noticed that Paul states very succinctly that what he writes "concerning virgins" is not by "commandment" of the Lord. Fact is, that he writes literally: Now concerning virgins I *have no commandment* of the Lord! Hence, what Paul writes in these verses is not an ordinance in the church. It is not a rule to be rigidly adhered to. It is rather of the nature of a good "judgment," that is, it is sound advice, wholly consonant with the rest of Scripture as this pertains to a godly and undistracted walk in the world in relationship to Christ, our Lord.

The motivation given by Paul, why this advice should not be lightly discarded or disapproved of, is that it is given by "one who has received mercy from the Lord to be faithful." This is not a mere subjective reason, pure sentimentality. It has in it the fact that he is qualified to give a sound "judgment"! The German translates the Greek "gnoomeen" by "Meinung." Anyone who has received mercy has evidently had need of such "mercy" in the battle of faith. Such a person has conquered in the strength of such mercy over against the greatest odds. He too has been tempted to not live entirely in the service of the Lord. Often he had to choose in life between the things that differ. It was only the mercy of the Lord Christ which made him persevere in this way and to be faithful to his calling as apostle, to keep his eye upon the upward calling in Christ Jesus. By the mercies of the Lord Paul had learned to be content in whatsoever state he found himself.

Such is Paul's motivation.

And these credentials should be not lightly esteemed by the Corinthians.

Besides, Paul also can state with the greatest confidence that he, too, thinks to have the Holy Spirit. He is no mere natural man, but understands the mind of Christ. See verse 40. He can put spiritual things with spiritual. He walks and lives by the Spirit! Through this Spirit he crucifies and mortifies the deeds of the flesh in his own person and, therefore, is spiritually equipped to give a good "judgment"!

Well may we then, too, pay close attention to this advice, which is far exalted above the plane of advice to the "love-lorn," a certain Dorothy Dix advice!

Secondly, we should also take special notice of the "categories" in which Paul places the "virgins" and those "married."

It would show an utter lack of the proper understanding of the viewpoint of Paul to present him as speaking simply of "virgins" and "those married" without reference to their *both being ingrafted into Christ by a true and living faith*, and, thus, such as receive all of His benefits. For, mark you well, Paul is here addressing the "virgins" in the church of

God. He is speaking to godly men and women, whether married or not married. He speaks to the "saints in Christ Jesus, called saints" (I Cor. 1:1-3). Even the children in this congregation are "saints." The family is sanctified. They all live in their new relation to Christ. They have been bought with a price. They are not servants of men but of Christ.

In view of this fact that the Apostle is writing to living members of Christ, both "virgins" and those "married" belonging to Christ, it should be quite obvious to one and all, that Paul does here not exalt celibacy as a sanctified mode of life above the married state. What Paul writes in verse 34, namely, "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit" is also a goal after which the "married woman" must aspire and does aspire by the grace of God. Do we not read in I Tim. 4:3-5, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God"? Paul does not set two types of people here over against each other when he speaks of the "distinction" between the "virgin" and the "one married to a husband." He is, on the contrary, showing the difference in the actual condition created by entering into the marriage relationship, the psychological change which this effects and the problem which marriage creates in the affliction in the flesh, and the obstacles which faith must overcome because of it!

Always there is the underlying truth presupposed in the entire "judgment" that marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled. Hence, Paul does not say: I would spare you, that *ye sin not!* On the contrary he says: I would spare you affliction! I would not make the way of "undistracted" attendance upon the Lord difficult for you. Remember, says he, life is at best (wenn est Köslich ist) difficult. To add more burdens simply makes it more difficult to subject all to Christ, the Lord! This is, to be sure, a far cry from exalting a state of "virginity" above that of the marriage state as an ethical requirement and a higher state of holiness.

Were the latter the case then surely he would have "put a snare" upon the Corinthians. He would have then lassoed them in their freedom in Christ. Would the great champion of freedom, who had just written "ye are bought with a price, do not become servants of men" cast a rope of bondage about the neck of these liberated saints, by enforcing celibacy! God forbid!

No, Paul has in mind the weakness of the flesh. He points out the problems of this weakness, the very real danger which surrounds those who are married with the accumulated cares of life. Then the Word is so often choked in the cares of life. We so often are overcome in the battle. It becomes, from this *viewpoint*, more difficult to always give strong resistance!

That is the viewpoint of these verses.

Thirdly, we should also notice that Paul stimulates,

arouses in the Corinthians a *proper perspective* of the all that belongs to the fashion of this world in relationship to the eternal and heavenly things, and that all things are indeed of us, that we belong to Christ and that Christ is God's!

It is for this reason that he instructs the Corinthians to use all things without abusing them. This does not simply refer to a natural use and abuse of things, but refers to the spiritual use and abuse.

When we use things properly we will be motivated by the fact that we are now living in a certain "season." It is the last hour. The time has indeed been "shortened"! We are now nearer to the return of Christ than when we first believed, says Paul, Rom. 13:11. And this time, this season, has a certain "form." There is a "scheme" in the earthly. It is constantly passing away, and will presently be heavenly. The scheme passes away here on earth constantly and it is also changing in heaven above, correspondingly.

Well, then, let us have our wives not as an end in itself, nor as if we possessed them. They are a gift from God. Then will we serve God with them without distraction. Then will life be comely. So too with our sorrows. They will not always abide. God will wipe all tears from our eyes. Let us live in a living hope. And as to the congenial things of home life let us not see in them the real and lasting joys. And when we buy, let us remember that we are only stewards under God! Thus will our use of all things be such that we are some first-fruits of the new creation!

Such is the advice of one who received mercy to be faithful. It was a faithfulness which is a gift from God. Thus it was for Paul. And thus it must also be to us.

Every gift of God is good. Every creature of God is good. But sin creates the greatest difficulties and the greatest possibilities for being tossed to and fro in distraction, where the greatest victory must be won. He that marries does, from the viewpoint of this present need, well! However, he, that marries not, does better!

Such was Paul's experience.

This is not a commandment from the Lord.

Let each work out his own salvation in holy fear and trembling!

G.L.

### THANKFUL JOY AND PRAISE

O praise and bless the Lord, my soul,  
His wondrous love proclaim;  
Join heart and voice and all my powers  
To bless His holy Name.

O praise and bless the Lord, my soul,  
And ever thankful be;  
Forget not all the benefits  
He has bestowed on thee.

Psalms 103:1, 2

## IN HIS FEAR

### Freedom From Fear

In the land in which we live we are promised the four freedoms: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

We do well, however, to bear in mind that man cannot keep such promises. It is also obvious to all who give the matter anything but the most superficial thought that none of these promises of man are kept.

Freedom of religion we have not. Indeed men are allowed to serve the god of their choosing. And they may serve that god in whatever way it happens to please their flesh. There surely is a freedom to hold and propagate any and every false doctrine. And it is maintained that one has also the right and must be given the freedom to have no religion, if he so chooses. There is, then, also a freedom of irreligion.

And yet when one's religion denies one the right to become a member of a godless union wherein might makes right and there is no regard for the property of the employer, and the Fifth Commandment is considered to belong to the wrong kind of religion, that whole promise of freedom from want (and from fear also for that matter) vanishes in thin air. Instead you will be advised (if not compelled) to embrace a "religion" that conforms to that of the infidels whose good graces you must seek, if you want work and want to be freed from want, at the mercy of those whose tender mercies, Solomon says, are cruel, Proverbs 12:10. Soon the day will also be here, Scripture informs us, when those who hold to the true religion will have no freedom from want but instead shall not be able to buy or to sell. The mark of the beast will be the required religion. Freedom to serve the living God will not be given. And even today, according to the Scriptures, the truth shall make us free. Only God can give us true freedom of religion. Only He can free us from the lie in every form of false doctrine and false religion. And that is the true freedom of religion: to be freed from unbelief and sin and to be free to serve God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and strength.

Freedom of speech?

Here again it means that you are free to propagate and defend each and every false doctrine, each and every form of ridicule, blasphemy and devilish caricatures of God that may enter into the mind of depraved man. You may publicly deny such cardinal truths as the Virgin Birth, Divinity of Christ, Infallible Inspiration of the Scriptures, Sovereign Eternal Election and Total Depravity. Instead you may teach and fight with all the power and talents at your command for Evolutionism, Darwinism, Atheism, Mariolatry and the like. But is that freedom of speech? Do all these not

clearly indicate a heart and tongue that is wholly under the slavery and bondage of sin? Do these not show that the heart and tongue are completely under the control and power of the lie?

Nay, but freedom of speech is a joy that the living God gives to those to whom He has given the true freedom of religion, those who have been set free by the truth. Only as man is free to serve God according to the dictates of His Word is he free to speak the truth and God's praises. Yes, we said, "the dictates of His Word." For to be free does not mean to be able and to have the right to do as one pleases. One that is free is not able and does not have the right to do everything. If that were so, God would not be free. For He cannot sin. All things are possible with God; but it is not possible for Him to sin. Is that a limit imposed upon the infinite God? Not at all. To be sure it declares what He cannot do. But that is no limit imposed upon Him. God is ruled by His Own being. No man imposes a limit upon Him. No creature does. And He has the highest freedom: the freedom to do sovereignly all that which His holy, infinite being desires. And for the creature the highest freedom is to be able and to be willing to do nothing but serve and love God. The highest freedom is to be freed entirely from the love, the thought and the act of sin. That freedom of religion, that power to serve only the true God according to His sovereign demands is a freedom God gives His people in Christ. Such will have freedom of speech. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2) and therefore my tongue is free to speak the truth and to sing God's praises.

And as for freedom from want, as we already suggested, he who has the true religion and confesses, in the true freedom of speech, the Christ of the Scriptures, will soon be hated by men and pressed into a little corner of this world, denied even the opportunity to work in God's creation for a living. And even besides all this, where is there any freedom from want? Does man have power over the wind and cold? The recent cold wave and storms that destroyed the crops of hundreds and thousands even in the deep South was the finger of God as He testifies to us that man does not control these things. And many a man who seemed to have no want of food, shelter and protection has seen all his life's savings and possessions whirled away in the tornado or by the fire or else by earthquake or war. Today, we are also told of thousands upon thousands that are out of work in our own land.

Ah, but it is worse than that! He who lacks the grace of God, he who, because in his religion he worships another god — which is no god — lacks faith and peace with God, lacks all that which counts. The psalmist joyfully sings, "The Lord is my shepherd; I want nothing," Psalm 23:1. Indeed! If we have Him, we have everything. If we lack having Him as our shepherd, we have nothing.

But it is freedom from fear concerning which we desire to pen down a few lines at this time. Never in our lives —

and perhaps in the lives of men — was there a time when there was so very, very much fear. As universal is this fear as the space that surrounds this globe on which we live.

How swiftly have we not sped from fear to fear? Not too long ago we were informed that the world had entered that new age with all its awesome potentialities: the atomic age. And that age is past already! Within the past year we suddenly found that we had rushed together with the whole world into a new and even more terrifying age: the outer-space age!

Man has it in his power to make the most dreadful weapons of destruction that this world has ever seen. Just this morning's newspaper (February 24) carries the story of Soviet Russia's communist party chief's claim that the Soviet armed forces are being equipped with "the most terrifying weapons of all time . . . such weapons have not existed before." In the story it is claimed that the Soviet armed forces have missiles that can deliver a hydrogen charge to any point on earth. And already man has prided himself in regard to his latest attempt to "be like God" by placing his own satellite in God's outer-space.

On the one hand he makes weapons that can mean nothing else than that man has more and more to fear of what man can and might do to man. He makes weapons which mean that an ever increasing number of people must live in fear of being destroyed by just one bomb, just one rocket. And on the other hand he becomes less and less afraid of God, because he is learning the powers which God has placed in His creation and he is able to reach out farther and farther into the heavens.

What does it all mean?

This one thing it surely means: we are rapidly approaching that day when the beast of Revelation 13 through his subjects shall make his blasphemous cry, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" What a fear gripped us and all the nations allied with us when the Russians launched their first sputnik! What fearful things were said when the second and larger sputnik began to circle earth! What fear and disappointment when our own first attempt was a miserable failure! What rejoicing and boasts and lifting of fear (to a little degree at least) when our first Explorer began to streak around the world at the fantastic speed of 180,000 miles an hour! But what is all this? The East and the West are in a feverish race, which cannot be terminated until the one or the other attains that stage where its subjects dare to cry out, "Who is like unto the beast? Who can make war with him?" Whether that day comes through the one or through the other or through a temporary alliance and union of the two by war or peace, we will not venture to predict. But the point to which all this present day armament-race and mania to conquer outer space is aimed is clear. Russia will not back down and cannot as long as we continue to press forward. We will not let Russia keep

ahead of us, if we can help it and everything is being done that is possible to train our youth in science and mathematics to regain the lead.

And in a land of freedom of religion it is deemed ridiculous to believe that with God, we do not need better and stronger rockets and more powerful and more terrifying hydrogen bombs. In a land of freedom of speech it is considered to be a sign that one is "touched in the head" to point to the words that adorn the coins of our land, "In God We Trust." How little of the fear of the Lord there is in this land which boasts of being a Christian nation! Not living in His fear, we must live in fear of man. Let us clearly understand that there is no freedom from fear of man except in the way of the fear of the Lord. That is another way of saying that only those who have that freedom of religion that they are free to fear God can possibly have that freedom from fear that consists in peace with God and a confidence of safety even when surrounded by the ungodly with all their weapons of violence and power to persecute.

The psalmist had a word for it in Psalm 27:1, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the fortress of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" The Lord willing, we desire to say a few more things about this freedom from fear in the next issue. But let it now be understood that only those who have been set free from the lie, so that their hearts (and not simply their tongues) are free to confess this glorious truth that Jehovah is our light and our salvation, can possibly have any freedom from fear. Paradoxical as it may sound, only in His fear do we have freedom from fear. J.A.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Men's Society extends its sympathy to fellow members, Mr. J. Regnerus and Mr. W. Buiter, in the death of their sister-in-law,

MRS. TILLIE FISCHER (nee Rutgers)

May our Heavenly Father sustain them and their families in their hour of sorrow. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

The Oak Lawn Prot. Ref. Men's Society  
Rev. Vanden Berg, President  
Louis R. Regnerus, Secretary

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with three of its members, Mrs. E. Rutgers, Mrs. J. Regnerus and Mrs. W. Buiter, in the loss of their daughter and sister,

MRS. J. FISCHER (nee Rutgers)  
who passed away on February 23, 1958.

"For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light." Psalm 36:9.  
Oak Lawn, Ill.

Mrs. G. Vanden Berg, Vice-President  
Mrs. L. Wierenga, Secretary

## 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)

It has been surmised that Frederick was not a Christian. Gregory charged him specifically with blasphemy. But Frederick as specifically disavowed the charge of making Christ an impostor, and swore fealty to the orthodox faith. If he actually threw off the statement of the three impostors as charged, it must be regarded as the intemperate expression of a mood. The statement was floating about in the air. It is traced to Simon Tornacensis, a professor of theology in Paris, who died in 1201, as well as to Frederick. A book, under the title *De tribus impostoribus* can be traced into the sixteenth century. It produced the extermination of the Canaanites and other arguments against the revealed character of the Bible and relegated the incarnation to the category of the myths of the gods. Neander expresses the judgment that Frederick denied revealed religion. Schlosser withholds from him all religious and moral faith. Ranke and Freeman leave the question of his religious faith an open one. Hergenrother makes the distinction that as a man he was an unbeliever, as a monarch a strict Catholic. Gregorovius holds that he cherished convictions as sincerely catholic as those professed by the Ghibelline Dante. Fisher emphasizes his singular detachment from the current superstitions of his day. Huillard-Breholles advances the novel theory that his movement was an attempt to usurp the sovereign pontificate and found a lay papacy and to combine in himself royalty and papal functions.

Frederick was highly educated, a friend of art and learning. He was familiar with Greek, Latin, German, French, and Arabic, as well as Italian. He founded the University of Naples. He was a precursor of the Renaissance and was himself given to rhyming. He wrote a book on falconry, which Ranke calls one of the best treatments of the Middle Ages on the subject. It was characteristic of the man that while he was besieging Milan in 1239, he was sending orders back to Sicily concerning his forests and household concerns, thus reminding us of Napoleon and his care for his capital while on his Russian and other campaigns. Like other men of the age, he cultivated astrology. Michael Scott was his favorite astrologer. To these worthy traits, Frederick added the luxurious habits and apparently the cruelty of an Oriental despot. Inheriting the island of which the Saracens had once been masters, he showed them favor and did not hesitate to appropriate some of their customs. He surrounded himself with a Saracenic bodyguard and kept a harem.

Freeman's judgment must be regarded as extravagant when he says that "in mere genius, in mere accomplishments, Frederick was surely the greatest prince that ever wore a crown." Bryce pronounces him "one of the greatest personages in history." Gregorovius declares that "with all his faults he was the most complete and gifted character of his century." Dante, a half-century after his death, puts the great emperor among the heresiarchs in hell. When the news of his death reached Innocent IV, that pontiff wrote to the Sicilians that heaven and hell rejoiced at it. A juster feeling was expressed by the Freiburger Chronicle when it said, "If he had loved his soul, who would have been his equal?"

#### *The Last of the Hohenstaufen.*

The death of Frederick did not satisfy the papacy. It had decreed the ruin of the house of the Hohenstaufen. The popes denounced its surviving representatives as "the viperous brood" and "the poisonous brood of a dragon of poisonous race."

In his will, Frederick bade his son Conrad accord to the Church her just rights and to restore any he himself might have unjustly seized but on condition that she, as a merciful and pious mother, acknowledge the rights of the empire. His illegitimate son, the brilliant and princely Manfred, he appointed his representative in Italy during Conrad's absence.

Innocent broke up from Lyons in 1251, little dreaming that, a half century later, the papacy would remove there to pass an exile of seventy years. It is reported that a cardinal, after delivering a farewell sermon in Innocent's name, said, "Since our arrival in the city, we have done much good and bestowed alms. On our arrival we found three or four brothels, but now, at our departure, we leave only one behind, but that extends from the eastern to the western gate of the city." After an absence of six years, he entered Rome, 1253. The war against Frederick he continued by offering the crown of Sicily to Edmund, son of the English Henry III. Conrad descended to Italy and entered Naples, making good his claim to his ancestral crown. But the pope met him with the sentence of excommunication. Death, which seemed to be in league with the papacy against the ill-fated German house, claimed Conrad in 1254 at the age of 26. He left an only son, Conradin, then two years old.

Conrad was soon followed by Innocent to the grave, 1254. Innocent lies buried in Naples. He was the last of the great popes of an era that was hastening to its end. During the reign, perhaps, of no other pope had the exactions of Rome upon England been so exorbitant and brazen. Matthew Paris charged him with making the Church a slave and turning the papal court into a money changer's table. To his relatives, weeping around his death-bed, he is reported to have exclaimed: "Why do you weep, wretched creatures? Do I not leave you all rich?"

Under the mild reign of Alexander IV, 1254-1261, Man-

fred made himself master of Sicily and was crowned king at Palermo, 1258.

Urban IV, 1261-1264, was consecrated at Viterbo and did not enter Rome during his pontificate. He was a shoemaker's son and the first Frenchman for one hundred and sixty years to occupy the papal throne. With him the papacy came under French control, where it remained, with brief intervals, for more than a century. Urban displayed his strong national partisanship by his appointment of seven French cardinals in a conclave of seventeen. The French influence was greatly strengthened by this invitation to Charles of Anjou, youngest brother of Louis IX of France, to occupy the Sicilian throne, claiming the right to do so on the basis of the inherent authority of the papacy and on the ground that Sicily was a papal fief. For centuries the house of Anjou, with Naples as its capital, was destined to be a disturbing element in the affairs, not only of Italy, but of all Europe. It stood for a new alliance in the history of the papacy as their ancestors, the Normans, had done in the age of Hildebrand. Called as supporter and ward of the papacy, Charles of Anjou became dictator of its policy and master of the political situation in Italy.

Clement IV, 1265-1268, one of the French cardinals appointed by Urban, had a family before he entered a Carthusian convent and upon a clerical career. He preached a crusade against Manfred, who had dared to usurp the Sicilian throne, and crowned Charles of Anjou in Rome, 1266. Charles promised to pay yearly tribute to the Apostolic see. A month later, Feb. 26, 1266, the possession of the crown of Sicily was decided by the arbitrament of arms on the battlefield of Benevento, where Manfred fell.

On the youthful Conradin, grandson of Frederick II, the hopes of the proud German house now hung. His title to the imperial throne was contested from the first. William of Holland had been succeeded by the rival emperors, the rich Duke Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III, elected in 1257 by four of the electors, and Alfonso of Castile, elected by the remaining three. Alfonso never visited Germany. Richard spent part of his time there, but was destitute of political power. The threat of excommunication deterred the electors from electing Conradin. Conradin marched to Italy to assert his rights, 1267, was met by the papal ban, and, although received by popular enthusiasm even in Rome, he was no match for the tried skill of Charles of Anjou. His fortunes were shattered on the battlefield of Tagliacozzo, Aug. 23, 1268. Taken prisoner, he was given a mock trial. The Bolognese lawyer, Guido of Suzarra, made an ineffective plea that the young prince had come to Italy, not as a robber but to claim his inheritance. The majority of the judges were against the death penalty, but the the spirit of Charles knew no clemency, and at his insistence Conradin was executed at Naples, Oct. 29, 1268. The last words that fell from his lips, as he kneeled for the fatal stroke, were words of attachment to his mother, "O mother, what pain of heart do I make for you!"

With Conradin the male line of the Hohenstaufen became extinct. Its tragic end was enacted on the soil which had always been so fatal to the German rulers. Barbarossa again and again met defeat there; and in Southern Italy Henry VI, Frederick II, Conrad, Manfred, and Conradin were all laid in premature graves.

At Conradin's burial Charles accorded military honors, but not religious rites. The Roman crozier had triumphed over the German eagle. The Swabian hill, on which the proud castle of the Hohenstaufen once stood, looks down in solemn silence upon the peaceful fields of Wurttemberg and preaches the eloquent sermon that "all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass." The colossal claims of the papacy survived the blows struck again and again by this imperial family, through a century. Italy had been exposed for three generations and more to the sword, rapine, and urban strife. Europe was weary of the conflict. The German minnesingers and the chroniclers of England and the Continent were giving expression to the deep unrest. Partly as a result of the distraction bordering on anarchy, the Mongols were threatening to burst through the gates of Eastern Germany. It was an eventful time. Antioch, one of the last relics of the Crusaders in Asia Minor, fell back to the Mohammedans in 1268. Seven years earlier the Latin empire of Constantinople finally reverted to its rightful owners, the Greeks.

In the mighty duel which has been called by the last great Roman historian the grandest spectacle of the ages, the empire had been humbled to the dust. But ideas survive, and the principle of the sovereign right of the civil power within its own sphere has won its way in one form or another among European peoples and their descendants. And the fate of young Conradin was not forgotten. Three centuries later it played its part in the memories of the German nation, and through the pictures of his execution distributed in Martin Luther's writings contributed to strengthen the hand of the Protestant Reformer in his struggle with the papacy, which did not fail.

*The Empire and Papacy at Peace.* 1271-1294.

The death of Clement IV was followed by the longest interregnum the papacy has known, lasting thirty-three months, Nov. 29, 1268, to Sept. 1, 1271. It was due largely to the conflict between the French and Italian parties in the conclave and was prolonged in spite of the stern measures taken by the municipality of Viterbo, where the election occurred. Cardinals were even imprisoned. The new pope, Gregory X, archdeacon of Liege, was not an ordained priest. The news reached him at Acre while he was engaged in a pilgrimage. A man of peaceful and conciliatory spirit, he is one of the two popes of the thirteenth century who have received canonization. Pursuing the policy of keeping the empire and the kingdom of Southern Italy apart, and setting aside the pretensions of Alfonso of Castile, he actively furthered the election of Rudolf of Hapsburg to the imperial throne.

H.V.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,

#### AND THE MANNER THEREOF

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 5. Who teach: That the corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (by which they understand the light of nature), or the gifts still left him after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, viz., the evangelical or saving grace and salvation itself. And that in this way God on his part shows himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men, since he applies to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to conversion. For the experience of all ages and the Scriptures do both testify that this is untrue. "He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his statutes and his ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his ordinances they have not known them," Psalm 147:19, 20. "Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own way," Acts 14:16. And: "And they (Paul and his companions) having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit suffered them not," Acts 16:6, 7.

In regard to the translation, we offer the following rather important correction, which applies to both the English and the Holland version: according to the original Latin, the clause "since he applies to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to conversion" should read, "since he applies to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to the revelation of Christ, faith and repentance." For the rest, we suggest again that it would be more appropriate to quote the textual proofs as they are found in our King James Version.

As to the contents of this article, it is interesting not only from the point of view of the Arminian error as such, but also because we are at once reminded by its very language of the common grace controversy. This is the only place in our Reformed confessions where the term "common grace" appears. To this, therefore, we shall have to devote our attention as we explain this paragraph.

However, the article itself deals with the Arminian error. And to this we shall devote our chief attention. This is not to say that the light shed on the matter of "common grace" in this article is not important, for it is. Nor is it to say that there is no connection between the "common grace" of the First Point of 1924 and the Arminian doctrine, for we believe that there is, and that, moreover, this similarity is also touched upon in the article under consideration. Nevertheless, the fathers were not fighting the error of common grace as such, but the Arminian error of general grace. And there-

fore, as far as this article is concerned, the matter of common grace enters in rather incidentally. Hence, in our explanation we shall follow the main line of the article, and shall deal with the matter of common grace as an appendix.

If we inquire as to the main proposition of this article, we must undoubtedly conclude that it is found in the second sentence: "God on his part shows himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men." Briefly stated, this is the well-known, and in our day wide-spread, Arminian doctrine of "general grace." This doctrine, of course, follows from the Arminian doctrine of election and reprobation. Predestination, according to the Remonstrants, is conditional, based upon foreseen faith or unbelief. This necessarily implies that grace must be general, so that all men must have a real opportunity to fulfill or not to fulfill the conditions of predestination. This doctrine of "general grace" also follows from the Arminian doctrine of the death of Christ, namely, that Christ died for all men. For if Christ died for all, then God must surely show Himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men. Moreover, this doctrine necessarily requires the idea of conditionality. The Arminian must have some way of explaining the fact that while God on His part shows Himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men, nevertheless all men are not saved. If he can furnish no such explanation, he cannot escape the consequence of rank universalism, the consequence that all men are, in fact, saved. What is his explanation? Very simply stated, it is this, that the decision rests with man. It is up to man entirely whether or not he will come to faith and repentance and to the saving knowledge of God. He must come to faith and repentance; and if he does not, then God's showing of Himself as ready to reveal Christ to all men is of absolutely no avail.

Our next inquiry is: upon what do the Remonstrants base this claim that God shows Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men? According to the Arminian teaching quoted in this article, it is this: "since he applies (administers, *toedient, administret*) to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to the revelation of Christ, faith, and repentance." This is general grace in its rankest form. Notice: God administers these means *sufficiently and efficiently*. Of course, we must notice that for the Arminian "efficiently" does not really mean "efficiently." If it did, then all would come to the revelation of Christ, to faith, and to repentance. But for the Arminian grace is always of such a nature that it can be resisted, and is therefore not truly effectual. The Arminian actually means by this that God administers sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary unto faith and repentance *or unto unbelief and impenitence*. But nevertheless, taken on the Arminian basis, this thought is quite logical. Surely, if God administers these means sufficiently and efficiently to all, then He thereby shows Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men.

Our third inquiry is: how does God administer these

means to all men? The answer is to be found in *common grace*, (which to them, the Arminians, is the light of nature), or in the gifts still left to man after the fall. By the use of these gifts man can climb to the greater, that is, the evangelical or saving grace, and thus to salvation itself. Notice the following elements here: 1) Though they speak of the corrupt and natural man, this expression must be taken in the Arminian sense. And that Arminian sense is that this corrupt and natural man is not really corrupt. He has never lost the spiritual gifts of goodness, holiness, and righteousness. His will itself has never been corrupted. He is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor devoid of all powers unto spiritual good. He is not really a corrupt man, but a good man. But, of course, this is the typical *hocus-pocus* of heretics: man is corrupt, but he is not corrupt. 2) The Arminians speak of the fact that man *can* by common grace, or rather by the good use of common grace, gradually gain evangelical or saving grace, and salvation itself. Common grace (though sufficient and efficient) is here plainly a resistible grace. It all depends upon how man uses that common grace. There is a good use of it; there is also an evil use of it. By using their common grace all men *can* be saved, but all men are not necessarily saved. Here you have the same old humanistic notion of grace, therefore. It is indeed striking that at every turn when the Arminian speaks of grace he stumbles upon MAN. 3) It is plain that in the Arminian view common grace is but the starting-point and the connecting link for saving grace. And remember that this merely means that man himself is the starting-point of the grace of God unto salvation. For bear in mind: a) That to all intents and purposes there is no real distinction between common grace and evangelical grace in this Arminian view: the one is merely a higher gradation of the other. b) The common grace man is a man who has never been totally depraved. When he fell, he never fell lower than this level of common grace. The *natural man* is the *common grace man*.

How do the fathers deal with the above doctrine of the Arminians?

In the first place, we may observe that in regard to the common grace aspect of the Arminian error in this article they say nothing in the present paragraph. I emphasize *in the present paragraph* because it certainly is not true that the fathers say nothing at all about it. The preceding articles, even though they do not mention the term *common grace*, nevertheless have dealt with this subject quite adequately. There the fathers have made abundantly plain that the common-grace-man of Article 5 is nothing but pure fiction. In the second place, we may notice that they devote all their attention to the main proposition, namely, that God on His part shows Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men. This proposition they condemn as false: 1) On the basis of the experience of all ages. 2) On the basis of Scripture's testimony.

Upon the first ground they do not elaborate, but mention it only in passing. Nor need we elaborate upon it. It is

simply a fact of history that God has not shown Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men. All history proves the very opposite. For God has not by any means revealed Christ to all men, and therefore He has not shown Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men. In fact, history proves still more, namely, that God has made no attempt even to reveal Christ to all men outwardly.

And this is the plain testimony of Scripture. The first passage cited by the fathers refers to the outstanding example of Israel in distinction from all the nations of the world in the old dispensation. This passage furnishes very strong proof of the fathers' contention: 1) Because it not only presents the positive truth, that God showed His Word (and that Word is the Word of Christ) unto Jacob, but also the negative fact that God hath not dealt thus with any nation except Israel. 2) Because the entire emphasis in this passage is upon God's dealings. That Jacob has God's Word is of God's showing, and that no other nation has God's Word in the old dispensation is also of His dealings. The second passage, taken from Paul's preaching to the heathen at Lystra, Acts 14:16, is rather negative, emphasizing that the truth is the very opposite of the Arminian teaching: instead of showing Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men, God through the entire old dispensation suffered all the nations (mark you well: entire nations) to walk in their own way, that is, the way of their own sin and natural darkness. And the third passage, Acts 16:6, 7 constitutes proof by a specific instance, in which God precisely refused to reveal Christ to the men of Asia and Bithynia. The strength of this last proof lies: 1) In the fact that God's refusal and prohibition is contrasted with the apostle's readiness. 2) In the fact that the passage expressly mentions that the Holy Spirit forbade them to speak the Word in Asia, and that the same Holy Spirit suffered them not to go to Bithynia. Hence, not only it is true that God does not show Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men, but the truth is sharper still: God positively refuses to reveal Christ to some men.

And therefore, the doctrine of a sovereign, particular grace must stand. And even as far as the outward revelation of Christ in the gospel is concerned, the truth that this takes place only according to God's own sovereign dispensation must also stand: the gospel is preached at that time and to that people to whom God in His good pleasure sends it. Such is the testimony of Scripture.

H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Men's Society extends its sympathy to fellow members, Mr. P. Ipema and Mr. H. Ipema in the death of their father-in-law and grandfather respectively,

MR. K. BOSMA

May they be comforted in the knowledge that this also serves the Lord's purpose.

The Oak Lawn Prot. Ref. Men's Society  
Rev. Vanden Berg, President  
Oak Lawn, Ill. Louis R. Regnerus, Secretary

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Article 31

(Concluded)

#### K. Settled and Binding

*"And whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding . . ."*

The Dutch has: *"en 't gene door de meeste stemmen goedgevonden is, zal vast en bondig gehouden worden."*

The parliamentary rules of Synod express this same rule in a slightly different form. We find under I, 3 — *"A main motion, as soon as passed, becomes a decision of Synod."* The same rule is at least implied in Section V where the idea is negatively stated: *"After Synod has decided upon a certain matter it may not be annoyed by the same matter being brought up again unless someone voting in favor of the question when it was decided has undergone a change of mind. For such to bring matters once decided upon again before Synod three motions are available:"* This rule implies that whatever is once decided must be considered *"settled (vast)"* and *"binding (bondig)."*

The underlying idea of this rule is fundamental for the maintenance of good order in ecclesiastical assemblies. She may not be retarded in her proceedings by continued discussion or debate of matters once decided. If there are serious objections to decisions taken, these must be brought in the orderly way of appeal. Moreover, those who so hamper the proceedings of the ecclesiastical assembly do not merely violate a rule but are guilty of sin and offense in the church. Whenever the course prescribed here is not followed, the seed of discord is sown and much time is consumed that should be devoted to other matters. This was certainly the case in our own Classical meetings in October of 1953. The matter of roll call and seating of delegates was before the body. This matter was in the process of time and after extended debate brought to a vote. The matter should have then been considered settled and binding but Classis was detained from proceeding with the order of business because there were those recalcitrants who trampled under foot all law and order and refused to recognize the legally seated delegates at the Classis. They violated Article 31 and by doing so forced the Classis to spend considerable additional time on a matter that was already decided legally by a majority vote.

As for the rule itself, we may note the double expression: *"settled and binding."* This is not a mere needless duplication. The first word expresses that *"a thing is decided, established by proper measures and, therefore, has the status of a legal decision."* This is no hierarchy and certainly does not preclude the possibility of appeal and reconsideration but it merely denotes that a decision once taken must be recognized as such. It is finished. So it has been decided and so it

stands unless further action follows in the proper manner through which the decision is repealed or revoked. The second term, *"binding,"* indicates that all the churches are obligated to live up to the decisions of the assemblies concerned. This follows from the Act of Agreement. We may speak of ecclesiastical assemblies as being *advisory bodies* but then it should not be overlooked that under the church order the advice that proceeds from these bodies has a *"binding character."* Refusal to live up to the decisions is equal to breaking the Act of Agreement and severing from the denomination.

This point is so vital that Monsma and Van Dellen speak of it as a *"jewel of great value"* and add that *"it is as indispensable for the Reformed church government as the connecting-rod is for your car."*

#### L. Relation of Major Assembly Decisions to Those of Minor Assemblies

The question implied in the above sub-title follows from the binding character of ecclesiastical decisions. Is this relatively true only or is this absolutely so? Partly because this matter has already been touched upon in previous writings and partly because we will have occasion, D.V., to consider it more fully in connection with a later article in our Church Order, we will limit our comments here to two questions. They are: (1) Can a major ecclesiastical assembly nullify or invalidate a decision of a minor assembly, and (2) Must a minor assembly bow unconditionally to the decisions of the major assembly in every case where there is a conflict of opinion?

Regarding the first question, we would quote the following from *"The Church Order Commentary"* since we concur with this view. On page 143 we find this answer given:

*"No. In the church of Rome this would most assuredly be the case. Also with the churches which regard the denomination to be the real church or church unit, and local congregations and the minor assemblies of the churches as divisions of the one real church. But according to the Reformed conception and set-up, Biblically formed and historically conditioned, the local congregation is the unit, a complete church of Christ. Major assemblies most certainly can deliberate and decide. But if their decisions are contrary to decisions taken by minor assemblies, these minor assemblies must conform themselves to the conclusions of the major assemblies. Either by actual reconsideration of the question, or by silent acquiescence. As a rule the latter method is followed. Practically it does not make much difference whether one looks upon an adverse decision of a major assembly as an invalidation or nullification of the minor assembly's decision, or as being essentially an advice, and no decision to nullify the minor assembly's conclusion. The minor assembly as a rule follows the advice of the major assembly. And it must do so, inasmuch as all the churches have agreed to submit themselves to the opinion of the majority and to abide by decisions mutually taken. Only when the Word of God for-*

bids may any church or group of churches refrain from abiding by the decision of the major assemblies. But for all this, major assemblies do not dictate, and they do not have the inherent right to invalidate decisions of minor assemblies. The local church or group of churches do not receive superior orders which they must obey without further question, but they receive conclusions reached by common consent, and as such they will respect these conclusions. And as such they will accept them as their own, either formally, or by silent acquiescence."

The above quotation in part also answers our second question. To it, however, we will add three things. First of all, submission to our ecclesiastical decisions is never absolutely unconditional. The church order in this same article provides for the privilege and the right of appeal. In the second place, a church or group of churches which have dissenting views from those adopted in the major assemblies and which, after proper appeal, remain unsatisfied, must by virtue of the Act of Agreement, submit to the decision of the majority. On this rule or principle rests the possibility of maintaining an orderly federation of churches. Finally, if the differences are very vital or serious that submission is ethically impossible, the only alternative is severance of the denominational bond. When the latter occurs, those dissenting from the official and legally adopted position of the churches, do not have right or claim upon the denominational name or property of the churches. Only thieves and robbers have the audacity to press such unrighteous claims.

#### M. Was Article 31 Violated in 1953

Much has been both said and written about this in the past. I have before me several documents which were written by those who have left the fellowship of our churches and in which they advance the claim that with respect to them Article 31 was flagrantly violated by our churches. It is not my intention to elaborate upon the arguments advanced, nor to repeat all that has already been written concerning this history. To do so would be to extend our discussion of this Article to several more issues of *The Standard Bearer*. Rather, we merely want to state in the present connection that we deny the allegations made by Kok, Blankespoor, et alii and wish to point out one matter which has been frequently mentioned but, in our opinion, not emphasized sufficiently. This point exposes the claim that "*our right of appeal was denied*" as a fallacious lie and makes clear, as we stated earlier in this article, that not we but they violated Article 31 at the Classis meetings in 1953. The point is that the matter in question was a matter that concerned the calling of the roll or the seating of legal delegates. If the matter had been one regarding a decision involving doctrine or the like and they had been denied the right of appeal, it would be an entirely different story. But this was not the case. Classis decided by a majority vote who were the legal delegates from the First Church. Kok and others refused to recognize this decision as settled and binding. Such refusal was tanta-

mount to saying that Classis had become schismatic in allying themselves with those who did not represent one of the churches in the classis. It meant that regardless of whom the Classis seated and officially recognized as proper delegates, they, as mere individuals could defiantly ignore this action by the Classis and determine for themselves who were and who were not delegates. Such conceited arrogance marked those who in their rebellious ways attempted to take all law in their own hands. Furthermore, they were never denied the right of appeal as they claim. It was never demanded of them that they must "*submit or get out.*" To present it as such is the lie. They were required to acknowledge that the decision of Classis, taken by majority vote, was legal and not schismatic. This was required of them so that it would be further possible for them to work with the legally recognized delegates during the ensuing sessions of Classis. But this they refused. They obviously thought that they could continue to be represented in the Classis and do the work of Classis without recognizing some of the delegates as having legal status. But what nonsense is that? It is the evil of open rebellion, taking all law and order in one's own hands. They indeed, violated not only Article 31 but the entire spirit of the Church Order in the most flagrant manner. And unless they receive the grace of repentance, God will also judge their church political sins!

G.V.D.B.

#### THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 275)

knowing that they, too, according to their sinful flesh are still dross, they crucify their members which are upon the earth, and put on Christ. And knowing that tribulation works patience, and the thoughts of the spiritual seed are also revealed in the fire. They call upon God's name. They say to Him, "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily; be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me." And He hears them. He answers their cry. He says to them, "He is my people," fear not my chosen ones, "For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." And they say, "Jehovah is my God." And they humble themselves under His hand. And laying off the dross that still remains in them, and putting on Christ, they hope to the end for the grace that is to be revealed unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, when the two thirds will be cut off, permanently cut off, so that never again will they multiply in the land.

G.M.O.

## ALL AROUND US

### *Contemporary Evangelical Thought.*

Recently we received a new publication with the above title and edited by Carl F. H. Henry. On the inside of the jacket of this volume the editor describes briefly the purpose and contents of the book. Ten American scholars sketch the contemporary relevance of evangelical Christianity in a sweeping survey of the present century of theological debate. Writes Carl Henry, "Reaching into major spheres of life and thought — theology, philosophy, ethics, science, history, education, biblical studies, apologetics, evangelism and preaching — they discuss familiar fields with an eye on the theological turmoil of our times."

Our prime interest in reporting to our readers concerning this volume is to call attention to the brief recognition the Rev. Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches receive in the treatment given to the field of theology. Roger Nicole, professor of theology at Gordon Divinity School, is the author of the section of the book that treats of *Contemporary Evangelical Thought on Theology*. He traces theological thought as it is developed in the period 1890 to 1956 first of all in Germany and the German-speaking countries, then in the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Hungary, and finally in the United States. In the case of the latter, he subdivides his review denomination-wise. And coming to the Reformed, we quote the following from pages 93 and 94 which drew our special attention.

"The Reformed churches have always been very close to the Presbyterians in doctrine and government. The dogmatic interest of the latter has been shared by the former and we should not be surprised to find here again great productivity on the part of evangelicals.

"We start with the Christian Reformed Church, a body well known for its attachment to conservative doctrine. Her seminary, Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, its teaching staff, its journal *The Calvin Forum* (1935-1956), and its alumni have been throughout the years staunch upholders of Reformed orthodoxy. As late as 1922, a professor, Dr. Ralph Janssen, was deposed from office mainly on the charge that he had made important concessions to Old Testament criticism. There is some question as to whether the charges were sufficiently founded, but the impressive feature is that this trial proved that, in this denomination at least, yielding to biblical criticism was deemed as a sufficient reason for deposition.

"The list of Christian Reformed men who made contributions in the area of dogmatics would be a long one. We can do no more than name Henry Beets (1869-1947), H. Beuker (1834-1900), M. J. Bosma (1874-1912), Y. P. de Jong, G. K. Hemkes (1838-1920), J. van der Werp, S. Volbeda (1881-1953), and more recently R. J. Danhof, J.

K. Van Baalen, Fred Klooster, E. H. Palmer, Lewis Smedes. All of these men published materials dealing with Christian doctrine, either as a whole, or in some particular aspect.

"Two areas received special attention during this period in the Christian Reformed Church: common grace and eschatology.

"In the matter of common grace, the radical views of Henry Danhof and Herman Hoeksema, expressed in their joint volume *About Sin and Grace* (1923), were condemned by Synod in 1924. Alexander C. de Jong has well summarized the controversy which ensued in his thesis entitled *The Well-Meant Gospel Offer* (1954). Among those who dealt with this subject then or later we may note Herman Kuiper, L. Berkhof, James Daane, and William Masselink. Herman Hoeksema founded the Protestant Reformed Church and is perhaps best known for his ten-volume exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism under the general title of *The Triple Knowledge* (1943-1956)."

The writer continues for another page to comment on others who have distinguished themselves in the Christian Reformed and Reformed denominations for their theological contributions. Among these the late Louis Berkhof receives the lion's share of praise, and special mention is given to his four volumes on *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Systematic Theology*.

When we read the rather negative appraisal of Rev. Hoeksema as given above, the thought could not be suppressed "What would the writer say if he could also have perused the dogmatic works which have been produced by the Rev. H. Hoeksema?" Also this question came to mind: Why could not a society be organized to underwrite the expense of publishing Hoeksema's *Dogmatics* and other theological productions coming from his hand which society would also see to it that these productions would come to the attention of men like Roger Nicole who would then be able to give a much more positive review than appears in the quotation above?<sup>(1)</sup>

### *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia.*

Along with the volume mentioned above, we also received a two-volume supplement recently published by the Baker Book House to the original Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. The editors and publisher of these supplemental volumes felt the need of bringing the original work up-to-date. In this their endeavour they have succeeded rather remarkably in our judgment.

Naturally we were curious to know what they would say about our Protestant Reformed Churches, and so turning to that section where you would expect to find material on this subject we were disappointed to find only the name mentioned and a reference to the material dedicated to the Christian Reformed Church. Referring to the latter, we were disappointed again to read the following two sentences which vaguely refer to us. "During the years 1918-24, it was de-

fended in church trials against premillennialism, 'modernism,' and other deviations. During these controversies, numerical losses were experienced in the formation of the Berean and Protestant Reformed Churches." John H. Kromminga, who is the author of this brief review, succeeded pretty well in passing us off to the readers of the Encyclopedia as a nonentity.

However, turning to a section devoted to the subject of common grace and written by Cornelius Van Til, we come upon the following two paragraphs which are of special interest to our readers.

"II. *Recent History*: During the second decade of the present century opposition arose among Reformed theologians to the idea of common grace. It was said to tone down the doctrine of total depravity and to be, of necessity, a stepping-stone toward the Arminian idea of grace as God's desire to save all men. This opposition has been expressed with vigor in a number of publications on the part of the Reverend Herman Hoeksema and others. It is currently set forth in connection with his exposition of *The Heidelberg Catechism*.

"In 1924 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church affirmed the idea of common grace under three heads pertaining to: (1) a favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general; (2) the restraint of sin in the life of the individual and in society; and (3) the performance of civic righteousness by the unregenerate."

We would have appreciated the brief article of Van Til much more had he placed at the conclusion of his article a brief Bibliography in which reference would be given to *The Standard Bearer* in which the editor Rev. H. Hoeksema for thirty years or more has vigorously opposed the idea of common grace not only, but also just as vigorously positively drew the lines of the truth that the grace of God is only sovereignly particular. It is not a mark of erudition in our judgment that the writer concludes his article with his own philosophy of the subject.

#### *Tuition and Income Tax.*

Our readers may be interested in *The Banner* editorial of February 14th under the above title. The editor quotes the bill known as H.R. 645 which has been introduced in the first session of the 85th Congress by Representative Gerald R. Ford, Jr., Fifth District, Michigan, with the purpose of making tuition such as we pay deductible from taxable income. The bill reads as follows:

"A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to provide that certain tuition payments be treated as charitable contributions.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (relating to definition of charitable contributions) is hereby amended by adding at the end thereof the following

new sentence: 'For purposes of this paragraph, payments of tuition by the taxpayer for the attendance of his children at a primary or secondary school conducted on a religious basis by an organization organized and operated for religious or educational purposes shall be treated as a contribution or gift by the taxpayer to such organization'."

The editor also quotes Mr. Frank Meyer, who is Administrative Assistant to Mr. Ford and who prepared the following legislative history and present status of the bill:

"H.R. 645 is presently with the House Committee on Ways and Means. The Committee scheduled a hearing on the bill and John Vander Ark (Director of National Union of Christian Schools) testified in its behalf before the full committee on January 15, 1958.

"The Committee on Ways and Means has decided to send all tax bills having anything to do with education to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for analysis and report. H.R. 645 will be included with those being sent about January 30, 1958.

"Representative Ford cannot predict what further action will be taken during the current session of Congress. He doubts, however, whether the Committee of the House will be disposed to approve much legislation which has the effect of reducing Federal Revenue to any great extent.

"Representative Ford reports that he has received upwards of 800 letters in support of his bill . . . Congressmen from other districts have also received numerous communications on the bill as has the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives.

"Those who are especially interested in the proposal may want to write the new Chairman of the Committee, Representative Wilbur D. Mills (Democrat of Arkansas), or their own Representative."

The editor concludes his editorial with the following paragraph: "In a carefully prepared statement presented to the Committee on Ways and Means in the fifteen minute hearing granted him Mr. Vander Ark set forth an excellent case for the adoption of this bill. Although Congress may not be in the mood right now for any tax reductions in view of the stepped-up missile program, Mr. Ford recommends that there be no slackening in our efforts with a view to eventual success."

Personally we are pleased with this legislative maneuver since it has always been a conundrum to us why this expenditure could not be reckoned as a contribution in the income tax report. However, if this legislation in any way would jeopardize our right to private christian educational institutions then we are not in favor of it.

M.S.

(1) Mr. Eerdmans has expressed his willingness to publish my Dogmatics. Only, at the time I thought I wanted to revise it before it is published. Whether I will have time to do so is another question. H.H.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### CALVINISM — THE TRUTH

(Arminianism the Lie)

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

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

#### *Divine Sovereignty*

1. ARMINIANISM is that rejected error which has become the most insidiously devised heresy ever to lay claim to Biblical support. Its allure and popular appeal arise from its subtle flattery of depraved human nature, and in its apparent Scripture basis. In loud tones it pretends to the sovereignty of God. "He sovereignly controls all creation, universal nature and the whole of mankind; His supremacy pertains to all things, everywhere. Nothing escapes His surveillance and all-pervading control. 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good' (Pro. 15:3). It includes our lives; for 'in Him we live.' It embraces our actions, for 'in Him we move.' It extends to our very being, for in Him 'we have our being' (Ac. 17:28). We devise our own plan, but the Lord 'directeth our steps' (Pro. 16:9). Yet His superintendency is so exercised that God is not the ordainer of sin, but only by His providence *permits* it. Neither does He coercively prevent it, and thus infringe upon man's free will and responsibility. Indeed, in *that* province God does not allow His sovereignty to interfere; for He has created and maintains man's free will inviolate. Hence Joseph says of the crime of his wicked brethren, 'But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive' (Gen. 50:20). In the spiritual realm, God tenders His primary will that men be saved by obedience to the covenant of works (Gen. 3). When man broke that covenant, He, according to His ultimate will, employed an emergency plan — the cross — that men be saved by compliance with the conditions: 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish' (Luke 13:3, 5)." Here is the lie fostered that man takes central position at the hub of the universe. Man is almighty man.

CALVINISM has for its first principle, "In the beginning God!" He is the center of the universe. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever! Amen" (Ro. 11:36). In the realm of creation, nature and providence, absolutely nothing occurs without God's appointment; but He works all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). Nothing happens by chance, but by the direction and ordination of our gracious heavenly Father. "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure: . . . yea, I have spoken, and I will also bring it to

pass; I have purposed, I will also do it" (Is. 46:10, 11). Also God does more than to *permit* evil: He gives the power to perpetrate it: "Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above" (Jn. 19:11). Further, He sovereignly determines beforehand that the evil shall be done according to His eternal counsel (Ac. 4:27f). Tho Joseph's brethren wickedly sold him into Egypt, it is nevertheless true that it was not they, but God who sent him there; for it was God who ordered their evil act (Gn. 45:8). Even the evil of war is God's work: "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that He might destroy them" (Josh. 11:20). In fact, man acts only when activated by God. "In Him we live and *are* moved" (Gr., passive). So that we cannot turn to what is right unless God turn us. "Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned" (Lam. 5:21). This, because God's will alone is absolutely free; and man's will is always subject to His. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dn. 4:35). God is equally as sovereign in the field of grace. The saving death of Christ was designed chiefly for the praise and glory of God, not merely as a means to rescue souls from hell. "To the praise of the glory of His grace," "that we should be to the praise of His glory," and, the whole of "redemption (is) unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). "Unto you (God's elect people only) . . . a Saviour . . . (Why? primarily for man's betterment? No!) Glory to God in the highest!" (Lk. 2:11, 14). The highest truth of Scripture is that God in His eternal purpose seeks His own glory. God is God!

#### *Total Depravity*

2. ARMINIANISM, however, under its breath croons the siren song of man's essential goodness. Man is only "very far gone from original righteousness," not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers to spiritual good, but is wounded, badly corrupted, and left half dead (Lk. 10:30). Tho he be totally depraved, yet he remains a free moral agent, and can still hunger and thirst after righteousness and life (Mt. 5:6); he can believe (Ac. 16:31), if he will; he can will and choose, or not to will and not to choose Christ and all manner of good which may be presented to him: "How often would I have gathered thy children . . . and ye would not" (Mt. 23:37), and, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15). Therefore the initial grace of God is not that almighty power whereby He raises us out of death into life; but is only a gentle advising whereby God does not produce the consent of man's will; but merely proposes that consent to the will, and leaves man to comply and convert himself: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Ac. 2:40).

(To be continued)