

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

ABSOLUTE ABNEGATION

" . . . then I restored that which I took not away . . . "

Psalm 69:4b

There was, after all, not much for Jesus to restore!

That is, looked at from a certain viewpoint.

A manger in a filthy stable; a set of swaddling clothes; a mother with a sword piercing her poor soul; a father (?) who was seen for a few days, and then heard of no more; an existence among men that was rather insignificant; and what shall I more say?

We might accentuate this thought, and point out His lack of a pillow to lay down His head; the need of some miraculous catch of fish to pay His tax; a bed here or there; a few square feet of *terra firma*; a fisher's boat for a pulpit; mostly the open air for a church.

No; Jesus was not rich in worldly goods. There was not much to restore.

The Holy Ghost tells the story in a few words: "He became poor." II Cor. 8:9b.

But still, in this psalm He cries to His Father: "then I restored that which I did not take away!"

You believe with me that He is speaking in this psalm, do you not? With the exception of psalm 22, there is no other psalm that is quoted so often by the Holy Ghost than this one to describe the suffering of Jesus.

He was poor when He came to do His Father's will, but He became poorer as He journeyed to the end: and what an end!

At the end He gave up His life. There was nothing left to restore. I think that was the moment when He felt Himself forsaken of God. Yes, that must have been the end of this restoration. It was absolute. There was nothing left to give back, to return, to restore.

When I was a child I heard my elders say: "God verloren: al verloren!" Freely translated, that means: If you lose God, you have lost everything.

But again: did Jesus have so much to restore?

* * * *

The Anglo-Saxon word "schuldeischer" is so much more graphic than our "creditor." It is the "demander of guilt."

Well, Jesus was surrounded by "schuldeischers." From the manger to the cross He was surrounded, yea, even permeated with the howling of schuldeischers.

The correct reading of Isa. 53:6b and 7a will give you a glimpse of this. It should read this way: The Lord caused all our iniquity to run to Him, and when it all was demanded of Him, He was afflicted!

Oh yes, there was much that Jesus possessed coming into this sin-soaked world of ours.

He possessed a beautiful soul and spirit, and a body which, though weak and mortal, was pure and holy. His innocence was a symphony of beauty and splendour. His body, soul and spirit was in one word devotion to God. His very meat and drink was loving obedience to God's holy will.

Jesus had little to restore? Perish the thought. If we could but catalog His possessions when lying in the manger, and living among us for a little more than 33 years, we would see a whole world of unsurpassed glory and majesty, virtue and power. Attend to this: that Babe, that Child of God was inhabited by the fulness of the Godhead. Oh, but Jesus was rich!

He is the very foundation of a world that shall stand for aye!

Yes, there was much to restore.

An eternity of possessions did He restore.

Until there was nothing left.

* * * *

Then I restored that which I took not away!

Properly translated from the Hebrew it should read: that which I did not rob!

Jesus never robbed anyone or anything. It was rightfully His.

But as soon as He appeared among us the howling mob of creditors came upon Him. And they never left off demanding from Him. They finally demanded the very heart beat of Jesus. They asked and got His blood, His blessed body, His clothes, His natural modesty, nailing Him naked on the accursed tree, His life, the few square feet of *terra firma*: He hung suspended between heaven and earth.

And though He could have destroyed all His enemies, men and devils, He gave and restored, He returned and surrendered all His possessions.

Even Peter, our representative, helped a little in this clamor of "schuldeischers": He disowned his Lord. It must have been a bitter drop in the cup He dreaded so much.

And, strange to say, it seemed as though the living God joined this mob of "schuldeischers." In fact, He was the greatest by far. His demand on Jesus was so great, that it is evil to mention it in one breath with the demands of men and devils.

Yes, Satan had waited 4000 years to snatch the Man-child, and finally the devil caught Him: he received his hour of demanding.

Man, lost in sin and death, demanded of Jesus, privately and publicly, before the Sanhedrin and Pilate and Herod, and received their share.

But God demanded of Jesus too.

But this demand stands all by itself, and unto everlasting you will not be able to measure the sums, the sums, the sums!

It stands all by itself, I said, and that is right. It stands by itself, and it is beautiful. I can say it, I can qualify this demand, I can describe it and will be correct: it was the demand of righteousness.

But the demand of my text was the evil demand of Jesus' enemies.

But the demand of my text was the evil demand of Jesus' enemies.

The connection will tell you. They were His enemies wrongfully. They hated Him without a cause. Their one urge was: we want to destroy Him! You find it literally in the New Testament. Listen to a raucous cry: Away with Him! Away with Him! Nothing less than obliteration was their purpose. And the motive? It was hatred.

* * * *

And what did poor Jesus do?

Oh, you do not have to ask me, you, and the whole world know this. He gave and gave and gave!

He restored that which He did not rob.

Peter finally cried in his soul: that is enough! He grasped his sword, and would have split the skull of the hated soldier nearest to him. The man must have ducked for he only sheared off the ear.

It did not fit Christ's program of giving, returning, restoring, surrendering.

Listen to Him: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

I think that Jesus must have thought of my text: then I restored that which I took not away. And exactly because of this program of continual restoring, He picked up the ear, and miraculously healed it. The scars must be on Jesus, not on the world.

And they continued.

They took away, they demanded everything from Him which it was in their power to get hold of: His peace of mind, His dignity, His apparel, His modesty, His well-being, His skin, His blood, His life.

David suffered something like this, and I tremble when I write this last sentence down. The similarity is so insignificant. It may refer to the throne of Israel which he gave up to Absalom, fleeing the while. That entailed much for David: his house, his peace, his wives, his household stuff, his people. But when we look first at David when writing this pitiful tale in psalm 69, and then at Jesus in Gethsemane or at the cross,— words fail us. The first instance is but a shadow, the latter is reality.

Besides, David remembered his foolishness and his sins. He was not an entirely innocent victim of the "schuldeischers." See: verse 5 and 6. But Jesus is *Le grand Innocence*.

* * * *

And so we stand aghast at this absolute abnegation.

Shall we pity Him?

Shall we cry hot tears of sympathy for this poor Jesus?

No.

The daughters of Jerusalem did, and they were rebuked. Their pity was misplaced. They should have cried and wept for themselves and their children.

This is even so with respect to the saints who were also persecuted and asked to restore that which they took not away.

When you pity them, or when you pity yourselves, your pity is misplaced.

The same Jesus who allowed everything to be taken from Him said: Rejoice and be exceeding glad!

If you must needs pity, then pity Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, and the jeering multitudes.

How often must the four soldiers who divided the clothes of Jesus, still warm with the warmth of Jesus' blessed body, have cursed themselves in hell!

And you know how the thirty pieces of silver burned the pocket, nay, the heart and soul of poor Judas.

If you must pity, pity them.

And that is right. That is praiseworthy.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Do not pity Joseph, stript of his many coloured coat, in the pit, on the way to Egypt, to Potiphar's wife (the harlot), the dungeon, but pity Judah with his twenty pieces of silver.

It must be gruesome to appear before God with Jesus' blood on your hands.

And above all, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine: I will repay, saith the Lord."

Rather listen to Jesus: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . ."

Stephen saw the rain of stones and the wrathful faces of the Jews, but prayed: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And having said that he fell asleep in Jesus.

I know, and it is difficult.

But deep down in my heart I want to, I want to.

G.V.

GRACE AND GRATITUDE

I waited for the Lord Most High,
And He inclined to hear my cry;
He took me from destruction's pit
And from the miry clay;
Upon a rock He set my feet,
And steadfast made my way.

A new and joyful song of praise
He taught my thankful heart to raise;
And many, seeing me restored,
Shall fear the Lord and trust;
And blest are they that trust the Lord,
The humble and the just.

Psalm 40:1, 2

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EDITORIALS

The Attitude of Faith

As we wrote last time, as churches we are passing through a period of trouble.

Or let me rather say that we did pass through such a period for, except for the question about the property, which in comparison with the principle of the controversy is a minor matter, the trouble is settled, those that departed from the Protestant Reformed truth have left us, and our churches have come out of the fire of the trouble and dissension purified and strengthened.

Such is the attitude of faith which is the only proper attitude for the church and the people of God in the world to assume.

It is the attitude expressed in Rom. 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Or, as it is expressed in the same chapter: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Even the people of God do by no means always stand on the height of faith from which they are able to make this triumphant confession.

Asaph, according to Ps. 73, experienced times when he was deeply discouraged. There he tells us: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency."

Thus it often is or appears in the lives of the children of God in the world. Judging by the things that are seen, all things frequently would seem to be against them.

From the viewpoint, not of faith, but of the things that are seen, we can understand the outcry of the old patriarch Jacob: "All these things are against me." Gen. 42:36. Apparently, for the time being, this outcry was justified. Such is always the case. Lamentations, outcries of fear and despair and unbelief, are not likely to arise when all appears bright to the natural eye. When the way is smooth and we live in outward prosperity so that every desire of our heart is satisfied, it would seem rather easy to shout with

Rom. 8:28: "All things work together for good to them that love God." Then there is no reason to complain: "All these things are against me." But when things that are seen appear to be against us, when adversity is our lot, when the wicked are in power and rise up against us, when they attempt to take away our name and place in the world or even in the church, when our punishment is there every morning, — then, indeed, it would seem justifiable to complain that all things are against us.

Thus it appeared to be with Jacob.

First of all, let us notice that, at the time of this outcry, an old wound had been cruelly torn open in the patriarch's heart. Several years before this, Joseph, the son of his beloved Rachel, had been sent from home to visit his brethren and he had never returned: a blood soaked garment had told the story. Grief and sorrow are never quite forgotten, we continue to carry them along in our memory on life's pathway. In our present life in the world our tears are never quite dried. Thus Jacob had spoken at the time of Joseph's disappearance. He refused to be comforted and said: "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Now, at the time of this outcry of the patriarch, the old wound about Joseph's disappearance had been cruelly torn open.

For a new wound had been struck in Jacob's heart. There was famine in the land of Canaan and in Egypt, according to reports, there was plenty of corn. And so the brethren, the sons of Jacob, except Benjamin, had been sent there to buy corn. For a long time, longer than might have been expected, the brothers had been gone. When they finally returned they told a very strange story about that ruler in Egypt. And not only this, but they had to leave Simeon behind. For Jacob that meant not only that Simeon was gone, but it also reminded him of the disappearance of Joseph: the old wound was bleeding again. "All these things are against me."

But there was still more. Intentionally, Jacob had kept Benjamin at home with him. After Joseph's disappearance, all the love of Jacob's heart had fixed itself upon this second son of Rachel, and, therefore, he had not let him go with the brethren to Egypt, lest any evil should befall him in the way. But that strange ruler in Egypt had inquired about their family in Canaan and also about Benjamin. And when he had finally sent the brethren away, keeping Simeon with him, he had adjured the brethren that, if they should ever return for more corn, they would have to take their youngest brother with them. Did it not look as if all things conspired against the old patriarch? Joseph gone, Simeon gone, and now Benjamin? Oh, for the time being, he could easily refuse to let Benjamin go with them to Egypt, but he realized, too, that this would be a futile resolve. The famine was in the land, and before long he would surely have to send his sons to Egypt to buy corn once more. Then they would have to take Benjamin with them. Once more, I say, from the viewpoint of things that are seen, there was plenty of reason for

Jacob to cry out: "All these things are against me."

Nevertheless, it was not a confession of faith but an outcry of unbelief.

Faith always confesses: if God be for us, nothing can be against us. It makes all the difference in the world whether you look at God first and then at things, or first at things and then at God. The latter did Asaph for a while according to Ps. 73. His conclusion was the question of unbelief: Is there knowledge in the Most High? This was also the case with Jacob. In fact, when he made his outcry, he forgot God. But when we look at God first, and, in the light of the knowledge of Him, at things, the situation becomes radically different. Then we say: I know that God is in absolute control of all things; I know that He loves me and that He is for me; therefore, no matter how things may appear, they can never be against me: all things work together for good to them that love God, whom He has called according to His purpose.

Such is the language of faith.

In the life of Jacob it was even revealed that the things which, in his unbelief, he imagined were against him, all were in his favor. For God had controlled the way from beginning to end. Presently, he would see again, not only Simeon, but also Joseph. Besides, when Jacob took his journey into Egypt and came to Beersheba, the Lord appeared to him there in a vision and said to him: "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." Thus Jacob's unbelief was put to shame. Instead of all things being against him, they were all in his favor.

But this is by no means always manifested in our experience in this present time.

Our way as individual people of God may very well be a way of suffering and adversity, day by day, even unto the end. Our whole way may be dark or predominantly dark, from the viewpoint of things that are seen. Pain and grief may be our lot. Even then, yea, then especially, we must live by faith which is an evidence of things unseen, and the substance of things hoped for. Even then, and then especially, we must take the language of the Word of God upon our lips: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and also: "All things work together for good to them that love God, whom He has called according to His purpose."

The same is true of the way of the Church of God in the midst of the present world. Oh, what a way of trouble and affliction, of suffering and grief that way of the church has been throughout the ages! Always there were the enemies of Christ and His Church that aimed at her destruction and caused her to suffer. These enemies were not by any means always in the world outside of the Church. Very often the carnal seed remained in the Church and corrupted her from within. And they either gained the victory so that there were no true believers left and, though they still

called themselves the Church, they became the false church; or they constantly harassed the true believers and caused them to suffer.

This is also the case with our churches today.

Indeed, as churches we have suffered in the past. Or do you not think that it was suffering for us to be cast out of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924-25, and that, too, for the sake of the truth? It certainly was.

But in a way our recent history is the cause of more bitter suffering still. Men that were with us for several years, occupied a place as ministers of the Word in our churches, had all their education in our Protestant Reformed Theological School and pretended for some time to be Protestant Reformed, now departed from the truth and even are attempting to re-enter the Christian Reformed Church and reveal their readiness to sign the "Three Points."

Moreover, as you may gather from the missive De Wolf and his elder sent to the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, and which we published in the previous number of our *Standard Bearer*, they claim to have the right to the name: Protestant Reformed. Although De Wolf and the elders that followed him we legally suspended and deposed; although they and others with them organized a new Classis East; although it is very evident that they have all departed from the Protestant Reformed truth; yet they claim the right to the name Protestant Reformed, mostly, of course, with a view to being in a position to claim the property.

Suffering, indeed.

Suffering for the cause of the truth.

But it is exactly because of the very evident fact that our opponents have forsaken the truth while we have always maintained and still do maintain it, that we can and do have assurance in our hearts that God is for us. And if He is for us, we know that no one and nothing can possibly be against us. And then we know, at the same time, that whatever may betide, all things work together for our good and for the good of our churches.

Such is the attitude of faith.

In that faith we shall never be put to shame.

H.H.

Notice for Classis West

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

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

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

AS TO BOOKS

Christelijke Encyclopedie (Christian Encyclopaedia). Second Edition. Edited by Drs. F. W. Grosheide and G. P. Van Itterzon. Price f 29.50 per vol.

Of this work we received two volumes. It stands to reason that we cannot be expected to read through a work of this nature, and we did not. Nevertheless we perused these two volumes and read several articles in detail rather carefully. Our conclusion is that this is a very good work, indeed. It is rich in information, its viewpoint is Christian and I may even say that, on the whole, is Calvinistic.

We have one remark. This encyclopaedia presents predominantly the Dutch view of the subjects which it discusses. Perhaps this can be expected, yet in an encyclopaedia this should not be the case. I refer, e.g. to the articles on labor and the labor question. They do not speak of the labor question and the labor unions in the United States. I could mention other instances, but let this be sufficient.

Nevertheless, I repeat that I consider this a very good work and I heartily recommend it to all that are able to read the Holland language. H.H.

Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament, I Korinthe (Commentary on the New Testament, I Corinthians). By F. W. Grosheide. Price f 19.25.

This I consider a very good commentary and a rather thorough exegesis of the text. Although it is, of course, based on the original text, and is rather freely interspersed with Greek and is, for that reason especially designed for ministers and students, nevertheless, I believe that even the general reader, who is able to read the Holland language, can profitably study this commentary.

Personally, I would have liked a little more explanation of the concepts in 15:42ff. especially of the question concerning the psychical and the spiritual, the earthy and the heavenly, the corruptible and the incorruptible, the mortal and the immortal.

Heartily recommended. H.H.

Commentaar op het Oude Testament, Ezechiël. (Commentary on the Old Testament, Ezekiel). By Dr. G. Ch. Aalders.

This is the second volume of Aalder's commentary on Ezekiel. It contains chapters 25-48.

This commentary is very sound and thorough and is, of course, based entirely on the original Hebrew. For this reason, I can hardly recommend it to the general reader. It is designed for ministers and students, for those who are acquainted with the Hebrew language.

The interpretation of some passages is rather brief; cf. e.g. ch. 33. We like his interpretation of 45:1-8 and 47:1ff. Also this commentary we heartily recommend. H.H.

De Boeken der Kronieken, tweede deel, II Kron. 1-36,

by Dr. A. Noordtjij. (The Books of the Chronicles, part II; II Chron. 1-36). Price f 9.75.

I believe that I reviewed this book before in *The Standard Bearer*. This is the second edition. This is a popular but, nevertheless, very thorough commentary. As it is announced on the title page, this commentary is an explanation of the Chronicles from the original Hebrew, yet in the Dutch text of this commentary the Hebrew is entirely omitted so that anyone who is able to read the Holland language can very profitably consult it.

Once more I perused this work on II Chronicles. I like it very much and heartily recommend it. H.H.

Op de man af (Hitting the nail on the head), by Rev. Okke Jager. Price f 3.50.

This book contains, first, a series of radio talks by the author; secondly, some addresses delivered by the same author before gatherings of the Interchurch Youth Evangelisation.

The style of this book is very popular and pithy. The book can easily be read by anyone who is acquainted with the Dutch. Perhaps, because of this very attempt to reach his audiences, the author, in these talks, is not very profound, to say the least. Often I could not find very much of a line in his speeches.

But read it for yourself. You will enjoy it. H.H.

A Goodly Heritage, by Marian M. Schoolland. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Price \$2.00.

This book is a biography of the late Professor K. Schoolland. To me, this book is very interesting because it brings back to my mind all sorts of memories. In the first place, Schoolland was for five years my professor in Greek and in Dutch and he was always very thorough. The students in my day used to call him the professor of the "fijne puntjes" which was only another way of saying that he was very thorough. Personally, I always greatly appreciated the instruction of professor Schoolland. In the second place, the book even reminds me of the days of my youth. From Kampen the late professor went to the city of Groningen, where I used to live. In Groningen he boarded for a while in the home of a bookbinder, Albracht. This party I also knew rather well, not only because he was an elder in our church at the time, but also because, when I was twelve years old and had graduated from the grade school, I almost became employed by Albracht to learn the bookbinder's trade, something which, if it had succeeded, would have altered the entire course of my life.

I could mention more. But rather than go any further into this, I will heartily recommend the book by Miss Schoolland. It is written in very clear style and ought to be of interest especially to the former students of Professor K. Schoolland. H.H.

N.B. All the Dutch books I reviewed above are published by the well-known Kok of Kampen, the Netherlands.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER XV

The Shake-up of the Physical Universe

Revelation 6:12-17

Especially those that are of the opinion that in these seven seals we have reference to things that already happened in the past, reference to definite historical periods, are bound to apply this principle also to the sixth seal. All kinds of different interpretations have been presented. We will not tire your attention with all of these explanations of the sixth seal. Just one of them we will mention in this connection, just to give you an idea as to how the Word of God has strangely been interpreted in the past and how it is sometimes interpreted even in the present time. According to the interpretation we are now referring to, the earth is the Roman Empire. And the shaking of the earth by the earthquake is the shaking up of that empire at the time of Constantine the Great, about the year 313 A.D. The sun, according to this interpretation, is the chief ruler of the empire, the person of the emperor. And the moon represents his fellow ruler on the throne, while the stars are symbols of important personages throughout the provinces of the Roman Empire. Again, according to that interpretation, the eclipse of sun and moon and the falling of the stars stand for the eclipse of the glory of the rulers of the empire and their falling from office through the conquering power of Constantine the Great. The heaven, according to this explanation, is the place of the Roman deities, which also fell from their place of glory at this time since the Christian religion replaced the pagan worship at the period here referred to. And mountains and islands represent the territorial divisions of the Roman dominion, while their being moved out of their place symbolizes that they are wrested from the power of Rome. Such is a fair example of the symbolic interpretations, with which we cannot possibly agree.

Even though you may not be able to point out the fundamental error of such modes of interpreting Scripture, and particularly the Book of Revelation, you must nevertheless spontaneously feel that there is something radically wrong with such explanations. The very fact that those explanations are so numerous and that in detail they all differ from one another would, at the very best, leave the church fundamentally in doubt, wondering whether perhaps they cannot add many interpretations to those that are offered already. Besides, you all would realize that if such were the true meaning of this particular passage, the church of today would have no interest in this entire portion, except in as far as it would show how in the past prophecy has been fulfilled. But the fundamental mistake of such a way of interpreting Scripture, and particularly of the passage we

are now discussing, can also very easily be pointed out, so that you can all see what is its error. The trouble with such interpreters is that they do not and cannot distinguish symbolism from reality. When, for instance, we explained the four horses as being symbols of different forces in history, no one can possibly question the truth of this interpretation. And why not? Simply because the very representation of these horses immediately left you with the impression that they could not possibly be explained literally, but that the interpretation must be symbolical. When, for instance, we read of the fourth horse, we feel immediately that the power of death does not ride upon a real horse, and that real hell, or hades, does not follow such a horse. Hence, the whole is clearly symbolical. The same is true of the fifth seal. When we interpreted the souls under the altar as being symbolical of a higher historical reality, no one of us could possibly object. Why not? Because we realized at once that spiritual souls and material altars do not belong together, except in a symbolical way. The same is true of other portions of the Book of Revelation. When in the first chapter we read of stars, no one thinks at all that they are real bodies in the universe, or in the firmament of heaven. Why not? Because of the simple fact that these stars are found in the hands of Jesus, and therefore, if we would take the term literally, we would run into impossibilities. When we read in chapter 8:8 of a great mountain cast into the sea, we certainly do not think of a real mountain. Why not? In the first place, because the text there does not say "a mountain," but "as it were a great mountain." Not only this, but that we cannot think of a literal mountain is also evident from the effect that that mountain has upon the sea in which it is cast. When in the thirteenth verse of the same chapter we read of an eagle in mid-air, we do not think of that mighty bird in the literal sense of the word, and there is no danger at all of such an interpretation. Why not? Simply because it cries with a human voice, "Woe, woe, woe." The locusts out of the abyss, the beast with the horns, the woman with the moon on her head, and many other things are all immediately conceived as symbolical, simply because the connection in which they all occur makes a literal explanation an impossibility.

But how is this in the portion we are now discussing? The answer is: it is just the opposite. Here the literal interpretation is the only explanation possible. In the first place, let me call your attention to the fact that the whole text is very natural from this viewpoint, and that no symbolical interpretation is necessary whatsoever. It is very evident that in the text the earth is the earth as we see it and know it, and nothing else. And when it quakes, real mountains and real islands are removed out of their place. The stars fall from the heaven, that is, from the firmament. And in the firmament they are. And therefore, also in regard to this there is nothing inconceivable or impossible. The sun mentioned in the text is evidently the luminary in the firmament as we know it, and there is nothing in the context or in the

text itself that indicates the contrary. The same may be said of the moon: also it is simply the luminary in the firmament as we see it at night. In a word, it can only be by a method of putting our own thoughts into the text that we can possibly conceive of this part of the Book of Revelation as symbolical. But there is more. If we attempt to impose the symbolical interpretation upon the text, we run into serious difficulties. For in the second part of this passage we are told that because of this shake-up of the physical universe, kings and princes and chiefs and free men and bondmen are struck with fear and consternation. Now it stands to reason that if you take the first part of this passage as being symbolical and as referring to kings and princes and emperors and great men in the earth, we are obliged also to apply the symbolical interpretation to this second part of the text. However, this is never done, even by those that wish to apply the symbolical interpretation to the passage. They interpret kings as referring to real kings in the world; and the same is true of the rest of the great men mentioned in the text and even of free men and bondmen. They are all interpreted as referring to real men and to nothing else. Such an interpretation, however, is completely arbitrary. And even if we would grant that such arbitrariness of interpretation is allowable, which it certainly is not, the result is a strange contradiction. For then you come to the conclusion that the text pictures the effect of kings and chiefs and princes upon themselves, which, of course, is impossible. And finally, we must remember that it would be an impossibility to describe things that happen in the physical universe in terms of symbolism. The physical universe and elements of it may be used as symbols of things spiritual and historical, but how shall the shake-up of the physical universe be symbolized? Hence, there is nothing strange in the fact that though heretofore we have had nothing but symbolism in this part of the Book of Revelation, John beholds in vision physical realities here. Thus, at least, we understand the passage. Just as in the second part of the text real kings and real princes and captains and bondmen and free men are indicated, so in the first part nothing but real stars and real sun and moon and real mountains and islands are beheld by John in the vision as all being shaken up. What we have in the sixth seal is very plainly the shake-up of the physical universe. When that seal is opened, the stars fall from heaven, the sun is black as sackcloth of hair, the moon is weird with a color as of blood, the mountains tremble, and the islands are removed out of their place. Nothing in all the physical world remains stable and secure. All seems to turn into chaos. The whole world is passing away.

Perhaps we raise the objection that the literal interpretation of this passage does not fit in with the interpretation of the other seals. Concerning the other seals we explained that they have occurred in the past, that they still occur, and will occur in the future. But can this also be said of the sixth seal? In my opinion this is very well possible. Limited re-

alizations of the sixth seal have frequently occurred in the past although the complete realization of this seal carries us to the time immediately before the coming of the Lord. This latter fact is but natural. The effects of the coming of Christ upon the physical universe are naturally last. Just as in our individual redemption the spiritual precedes the physical, so also in the redemption of the universe all the spiritual factors must first be ready and prepared. After that the physical universe will begin to show the full signs of its coming redemption. Nevertheless, also the sixth seal has been opened ever since the time that John received this revelation. Earthquakes have occurred very frequently in the past, as we all know. Of them we read already in Holy Writ. Just after Christ had been crucified and killed, the earth quaked. And also when Paul and Silas were about to be delivered from prison, an earthquake occurred. Innumerable earthquakes have occurred ever since, some of them in alarming force and proportions. In the year 1875, so we are told by the science of seismology, as many as ninety-seven earthquakes occurred; and in the following year one hundred four. The same science informs us of the fact that between the years 1600 and 1850 there were as many as six thousand or seven thousand earthquakes in various parts of the earth. Surely, this is sufficient proof that in this respect also the sixth seal is opened throughout this dispensation in a limited way. The same is true of the darkening of the sun and moon. They also have occurred more than once. We do not now refer to the regular eclipses of sun and moon, as are recorded in our calendars, but to extraordinary obscurations of the heavenly bodies. Thus, we are told that in the year 1780 a strangely dark day was witnessed in the northeastern part of America, so strange that it has gone down in the annals of history as supernatural, at least as unaccountable. Also the red appearances of the moon have been frequently witnessed. When the text speaks of the falling of the stars, we must not think of those bodies in the heavens that are larger than our earth: for then it were impossible that they should fall on the earth. Rather do we think of those atmospheric phenomena that are called meteors, or shooting stars. One of these shooting stars, a large ball of fire, thus we are told, is able to light up an entire landscape in the night. It is very bright and light for a moment; then suddenly it is extinguished and disappears. And soon after its disappearance a loud detonation is heard in all the surrounding region. These meteors have frequently fallen in such large numbers as to strike fear and consternation into the hearts of all that were witnesses. In some instances they have fallen very thickly. In 1872 some observers counted as many as ten thousand of these shooting stars falling within two hours time. In regard to such a shower of stars happening in the tenth century one witness testifies that it had lasted "from midnight until morning; flaming stars struck one against another violently, while being born eastward and westward, northward and southward, and no one could bear to look toward the heavens on account of this phenomenon." One of these

showers we have on record with the testimony of a witness who informs us that people were thrown into consternation and cried out to God the Most High with confused clamor. From the year 900 to about 1850 there occurred as many as sixteen of such extraordinary star showers, in as far as we have them on record. Hence, also this element has occurred time and again in the present dispensation. The same is true, as we know, of the removal of the mountains and the islands. It is a well-known fact that mountains have been blown to pieces or entirely wiped out, and that many an island that has once existed can be found no more. In a word, it cannot be said that this seal has not become manifest throughout the history of the present dispensation.

But of course, all these phenomena must increase in force and generalness of manifestation. The sixth seal will not be completely realized till all these natural phenomena have become completely universal, so that all men will be able to witness them. Earthquakes will occur that affect the entire surface of the earth. Darkening of the sun and a bloody appearance of the moon will be seen that will be lasting and not again be changed to normal conditions. And a universal storm of these fiery balls will occur that will affect the whole earthly world. To be sure, the world laughs at this, and the people of God are called fools to believe this coming catastrophe. But the wisdom of the world is foolishness. And the louder their laughing and mockery now, the wilder will be their consternation when all this shall appear. For the time will surely come when, according to the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, the earth and the heavens shall shake, the sun shall be darkened and shall refuse to shed her comforting light upon the scene of wickedness, that men shall move about in darkness, only horrified all the more by the deluge of bloody light shed upon it by the moon, and that the stars shall fall to the earth without ceasing, and the heavens shall appear to be rolled together as a scroll. Our Lord Jesus Christ is King, King also over the physical universe. He is mighty to fulfill all His Word. Hence, fools may laugh at this all; the children of God look forward in earnest expectation to the time when all these things will come to pass. To be sure, the time is not yet. First the great tribulation must come. First the number of souls under the altar must become full. But after this, surely, also this sixth seal shall reach its full reality and spread horror and consternation upon all that have trampled under foot the blood of Christ.

Even before we answer the question as to the significance of these occurrences, we must first of all refer you to Scripture. For the Word of God is full of assurances that these things will actually come to pass. When Joel pictures the coming of the Lord for judgment, he says: "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible;

and who can abide it?" Joel 2:10, 11. Again, he speaks of that terrible day of Jehovah when he says: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Thus also, in the prophecy of Haggai we read: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:6, 7. Of the same shake-up of the physical universe we read in the New Testament also. In Matthew 24:29 we read, in connection with the coming of the Lord for judgment: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The same we read in the Gospel according to Luke 21:9-11: "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." And in vss. 25 and 26 the Lord speaks of the same things: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

All these portions of Scripture speak evidently of the same events that are coming in the future, and that too, in the same connection, namely, in connection with the coming of the Lord for judgment. And therefore, in general we may say that the sixth seal brings upon the earth the signs that immediately precede the coming of the Lord. Then these signs shall be realized in all their fulness. In order that you may be able fully to understand the meaning of these signs and their connection with the coming of the Lord, it is probably expedient for me to employ an illustration. Imagine that you stand at a railroad station, waiting for the train. At first all is quiet: nothing tells you that in the next half hour a train will come roaring into the station. Only now and then a passenger arrives at the station, purchasing a ticket. But gradually the scene changes. More passengers arrive, and the environment becomes a busy scene. The employees in the station begin to hustle. Baggage, trunks, and suitcases are piled up and put in a convenient place for loading them in the baggage car attached to the coming train. People begin to be restless. All these are signs to you that the train is coming. But other signs presently appear. H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

Penitential Mourning and Supplication

Chapters 12:10 - 13:1

10. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness as one is in bitterness for his first-born.* 11. *In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.* 12. *And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart.* 13. *The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeite apart and their wives apart.* 14. *All the remaining families, family by family apart and their wives apart.* Chapter 13:1. *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness.*

The expression "in that day" occurs also in this section. From an examination of the promises that set forth what the Lord will do "in that day," it is evident that the reference is to a stretch of time that extends far beyond the limits of the old dispensation.

10. In that day the Lord will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication. At the time of the utterance of this prophecy it was still the dispensation of shadows. The Spirit was not yet, seeing that Christ had not yet died. And therefore insight into the mysteries of the Gospel was still limited. Doubtless therefore the people of God of our prophet's day took the promise with which we here deal to mean that the Lord would pour His grace upon the spirits of all His elect and that, as possessors of spirits filled with His grace, they would supplicate. But that the word "spirit" in the expression "spirit of grace" denotes the second Person in the Trinity as the Spirit of Christ and that therefore what is here promised is that the Lord will pour this His Spirit upon His church, when the day of Pentecost has fully come, follows from this, namely, that the prophet goes on to say that these supplicants will look upon Him whom they have pierced and that the one to be pierced is Christ. This latter we learn from the apostle John, who tells us that the doing of the soldier by which he pierced Christ's side with a spear was the fulfilment of the prediction of our prophet, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

It is plain then that it is the Spirit that is here being promised, the very Spirit who is of one and the same essence, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son from eternity proceeding from the Father and the Son and herein as the eternal power and might distinguished from both and therefore Spirit in whom is the fellowship of the Father with the Son and the Son with the Father within the being of the Godhead. However it is as the Spirit of Christ that He will be poured upon the house of David, that is, as the Spirit that the triune Jehovah through the blood of Christ merited for Christ and His body the church. As the Spirit of Christ He will be given, or from our vantage point has been given to the church to make her partaker of all His benefits. And He, the Spirit, is and will be in the church, for He abides with her everlastingly, the principle, the fountain, source, originator of her life, of all her glory and blessedness, of all her good works, her prayers and supplications, praise, thanksgivings and adorations. From Him, as the Spirit of Christ, the elect are born. By Him they are led into all truth. For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. For the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit. And He reveals them unto us. Things they are that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man—things that God hath prepared for them that love Him (I Cor. 2:9ff). But all that He, the Spirit, gives and shews He takes of that which is Christ's, whose Spirit He is (John 16:14).

Spirit of Grace. Grace in this expression denotes the total of gifts imparted. That these gifts are called gifts of grace has its reasons. First, they are gifts of spiritual beauty that beautify the recipients. (The word grace means beauty). Born of the flesh they were flesh, vile sinners doing the works of their father the devil. But born now of the Spirit they are spirit. They are new creatures in Christ Jesus partaking of God's nature and reflecting His glories. Second, the gifts of the Spirit are called grace because they are unmerited and therefore free and freely given and given to men unworthy not alone but ill-deserving as well. The wind blows where it chooses and its sound is heard, but it cannot be said whence it comes and whither it goes. So is every one born of the Spirit (John 3:9). He is one who in Christ is the object of God's eternal and sovereign love for whom Christ therefore died and whom the Spirit graces.

Being the Spirit of grace the Spirit is therefore at once the Spirit of supplication, of all true prayer. Only they graced by the Spirit can pray. For prayer is seeking after God for God's sake. It is the panting of the soul after God. It is the thirsting of the soul for God. The supplicants have none in heaven but God and none on earth that they desire after Him. They long to see God as He is. And because his hope is in them they purify themselves, lay off sin and put on Christ. And in true contrition of heart they confess their sins and taste that the Lord is gracious in the assurance that their sins are forgiven them. And they besiege the throne

of grace for grace. And seeking they find and asking they receive grace for grace. Having they receive and have more abundantly. True prayer then is the heart open to grace. It is the soul drinking from the river of grace that flows from the Throne.

The Spirit was poured upon the church as represented in the vision of our prophet by the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the families and their wives of which mention is made in verse 12. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, the incarnate Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having redeemed His people from their sins by His blood, and being by the right hand of God exalted, received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, and shed Him forth (Acts 2:33). It was now that the Spirit was given, seeing that the Son of God had assumed the flesh and blood of His brethren, had suffered and died for His people and was glorified. Not that in the Old Dispensation the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, was not active in gathering the church. He was certainly. For the church is gathered from the beginning to the end of the world. But in that day the Spirit was not active as the Spirit of the *incarnate* Son of God. In that day therefore the church was not yet as the body of Christ, seeing that He was without a glorified human nature. Before He could properly become the true vine, the true bread and the living water, the sanctification, justification and redemption of His people, He first had to become flesh and receive the promise of the Spirit in it. It explains why the Spirit was not poured upon the church before. He first had to be poured upon the flesh of Christ. And so He was—He the Spirit of all grace and supplication. There is therefore grace only for that people, His people, grafted in Him by a living faith. For with Him and Him alone dwells the Spirit of grace. In Him and in Him alone dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Not to be in Him is to be without grace everlastingly. Said Jesus to the multitude, “I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:48ff). Let us take notice, the bread that Christ will give is His flesh, His Spirit-filled assumed humanity.

And upon His flesh the Spirit was poured, and thereupon poured of Him upon His body, the church—poured was the Spirit, that is, given copiously, abundantly, without measure. Though active in the Old Dispensation, it cannot be said that the Spirit was poured upon the church of that day. The Scriptures also contain clear evidences of this difference between the two dispensations of the Spirit. In the language of our prophet there were feeble in the church, stumblers. In courage and daring they were far from measuring up to David. They were not endowed of the Spirit with

the implicit trust in God that characterized David, the mighty man of valour in Israel. But now in this new dispensation of the Spirit it is different. The stumblers are like David, and the house of David is like God, like the angel of the Lord before them. All with courage fight the good fight. All know and all prophesy. For all now have the anointing and revelation has been completed and has become the property of all the saints. In the Old Dispensation it was not so, seeing that in that day the Lord communicated His revelations only to a limited number of His people, called prophets, and seeing that they alone were mandated and qualified of the Spirit to proclaim what had been revealed. In gathering the church the Spirit uses means. Now this means is the promise fulfilled, the glorified and Spirit-filled Christ as presented to view through the Scriptures. In the Old Dispensation the means was the shadows of the law, the promise as unfulfilled. That even long before Christ died and was exalted there could be these preliminary workings of the Spirit is owing to the fact that Christ was slain from before the foundations of the world.

The prophet goes on to say in this verse that “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and that they shall mourn for him . . .” It has already been shown that the pronoun *me* looks to God revealed in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ. The pronoun *they* looks back to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Implied in these statements is the prediction that this house and these inhabitants will pierce Christ. And so they did. They crucified Him. Said Peter to the men of Israel in reply to their reactions to the pouring of the Spirit on the church when the day of Pentecost was come, “Hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:22, 23). What is being told us also here is that also the church, the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had a hand in piercing, crucifying Christ—the church including the elect. This is further confirmed by Christ’s prayer in the hour of His crucifixion, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And of this amazing sin all God’s people to the last saint are guilty. For we by nature are no better than they. Had we been walking among them in that day, also our cry would have been, “crucify Him,” except restrained by the redeeming grace of God. Besides, piercing God is the essence of sin, and the saints sin continually. Surely God commended His love toward us in that even while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). The men of Israel crucified Christ. But, said the apostle unto them later, “And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” They did not know that the blood of Christ was the blood of the atonement. And therefore the great sin could be forgiven them.

And it was forgiven them in the way of their repentance. Surely they, the elect of God, repented. For upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Lord had poured the Spirit of grace and supplication. And all the saints repent with them. For not to repent of this great sin is to approve it. It is to crucify Christ afresh and put Him to open shame. But as to all such with whom dwells the Spirit of grace and supplication, looking upon Him whom they have pierced with an eye of faith, they, in the language of our prophet, mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son and are in bitterness as one in bitterness for his only son. The thought that they pierced and through their daily sinning continue to pierce the only begotten One, the God of their salvation, fills them with sorrow unspeakable.

11. And so, through the ages, there is a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. The plain of Megiddon was the scene of one of the most disastrous events in Hebrew history, the mortal wounding of the God-fearing king Josiah (II Kings 23:29, 30). For many years a public lamentation was held in commemoration of the death of this king (II Chron. 35:25). Hadadrimmon is the place where Josiah fell. With this mourning the weeping of all saints over their sins is here compared.

12-14. These verses describe the universality of the lamentation. All parts of the church will participate. Their wives apart.—The men were the moving spirits in the piercing of the Saviour, but the women feel themselves involved in the guilt. They as well as the men are sinners before God. The family is the clan or tribe. David . . . Nathan . . . Levi . . . Shimeite.—In the first instance the house of David means the successors of David, that is, the rulers. The house of Levi represents the priesthood. The house of Nathan might denote the prophetic order. The Shimeites are the descendants of Shimei, the grandson of Levi. All the rest of the families will repent, the obscure ones and whose names are therefore not mentioned. Thus all will repent, the women as well as the men, the prominent as well as the obscure. What we deal with here is type and symbol foreshadowing the weeping of the Spirit-filled church over her sins.

Chap. 13:1. The Gospel of this verse is that in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. The expression "in that day" heads also this verse. In that day a fountain shall be opened. The reference is to the moment in which this opening will take place and to the entire day in which the grace of the fountain will flow. It is the same period that in the previous chapter is indicated by this expression. The expression looks back especially to the final verses of the preceding chapter. There it is stated that in that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and that He will seek to destroy all the nations. But in the same day he will pour out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem

the Spirit of grace and supplications. And the fruit thereof will be that they will see their God whom they pierced, and they will weep and lament on account of their sins with a great lamentation. And so there will be a great thirsting after the tiding that a provision has been made for sin and uncleanness, and that provision is this fountain.

But is it to be a fountain the waters of which will be for the cleansing of the penitents or for the quenching of their thirst? The question can also be stated thus: Is it to be a fountain for sin and uncleanness, or, as the Holland Bible has it, against sin? The Hebrew binds us to the former of these two renderings. For the preposition used is the lamedh, which never means *against* but always *for, to, belonging to, as to, in respect to*. It is this a fountain the waters of which are *for, to*, in respect to sin. But this does not yet answer the question how and why the waters of this fountain are for sin? Is it because the waters of the fountain as drunk are a cure, a remedy for sin and death and the pollution thereof? Is this the idea of the imagery? It is more likely that the fountain of which this verse speaks is one whose waters are for the washing away of sin. They are waters for cleansing and not for drinking.

The Hebrew word here used for sin means missing the mark, as for example the archer misses the mark at which he aims. His missing the mark, however, was not what he purposed. For he took careful aim. But the natural man misses the mark deliberately, and this mark is the glory of God. The sinner will not make God the purpose of his existence. The shrine before which he is prostrated is that of his own ego, and all his thoughts are that there is no God. This is his misery. And this is his great guilt before God. The word uncleanness in this verse has reference to the spiritual pollution of his nature, to the corruption of his heart, the darkness of his mind and the perverseness of his will.

But there will be a fountain opened for the cleansing of all sin,—the sin of the penitent ones, the contrite of heart. And this fountain is He Who was made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—the crucified, glorified and Spirit-filled Christ. For His blood cleanses from all sin. And it was the Father who opened Him through His smiting Him for our iniquities. For our transgressions He was wounded, for our iniquities He was bruised. Upon Him was the chastisement of our peace. And it is by His stripes that we are healed.

G.M.O.

OVERSHADOWING PROTECTION

The man who once has found abode
Within the secret place of God
Shall with Almighty God abide,
And in His shadow safely hide.

Psalms 91:1

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 7

IV.

(I Corinthians 7:12-16)

We now come to the passage in which Paul speaks of what has often been denominated: the matter of *mixed marriages*!

This passage reads as follows: *"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him, (put him away). For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean: but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace (in peace). For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how (what) knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"*

We should notice that Paul emphasizes that what he says here concerning "the rest," that is, concerning those families and relationships between husbands and wives where one is a believer and the other is not, is a matter in which Paul had no direct revelation from God. He had no explicit teaching of the Lord Jesus on this point. Paul's teaching was not such as he had received from God through the medium of the other apostles. See Gal. 1:11. Concerning the Lord's Supper he had received a very definite revelation "from the Lord." See I Cor. 11:23. Also concerning the relationship between husband and wife he had a definite and explicit word from Christ himself, as we have pointed out in our former essay when we commented on the verses 8-11. However, here Paul had no such definite word. Hence, he says, "I say" and "not the Lord."

It should be observed that this does in no way imply that this might for the very reason, that it is "not the Lord," but Paul who speaks, be considered a teaching which would not be a rule of faith and conduct. It certainly is. And we do well to give heed and direct our life out of faith, according to God's law, and unto His glory, the glory of His grace!

In the matter of the so-called "mixed marriages" we should remember that there is a basic difference between the forbidden "mixed marriages" in the Old Testament dispensation and the matters spoken of in the verses 12-16 under consideration.

What is that distinction?

Briefly it is this: in the Old Testament it meant that

Israel, the holy seed, was not to marry with the heathen nations of the land, but was called upon by the Lord to utterly destroy them with the sword of Jehovah. While in the New Testament dispensation the heathen nations too have the gospel preached in their midst. God calls his church also from the gentile peoples. And such were these Corinthians. They were those who were "not my people" but are now called (Ammi) my people; they were not the objects of mercy, but now they receive mercy!

This basic difference between the fact that in the O. T. dispensation the gentiles were strangers of the covenants, outside of the commonwealth of Israel, and that now they are "joint-heirs" with the Jewish Christians of the hope of Israel, has far-reaching consequences also in the interpretation of the Scripture passage under consideration!

Hence, we read in Deut. 7:1-6 as follows in part: "When **the LORD** thy God shall bring thee into the land **whither** thou goest to possess it, and has cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, even nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: *neither shalt thou make marriages with them* For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly For thou art an *holy people* unto the LORD thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

From this passage it is evident that Israel in the O. T. dispensation was limited to the natural descendants of Abraham. The nations, whom God would destroy and have Israel destroy, formed a "mixed" marriage when they married with the sons and daughters of God. Thus it was also before the flood, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose." Gen. 6:1, 2. That was a bonafide case of "mixed marriages."

In "such cases" a man was surely under the "bondage" of sin. Such was Esau with his heathen wives, showing him to be a profane person. Gen. 26:34, 35. Surely Isaac and Rebekah saw the horrible implications of Esau's "mixed" marriages for we read, "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

They saw before their very eyes that Esau was "under bondage" of sin as a profane person!

Small wonder that Rebekah says to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a

wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these are which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" Gen. 27:46.

How jealously the LORD maintains the honor of His election of grace for His chosen people we again see in the days of Ezra. We read in Ezra 9:1-4 as follows, "Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. *For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons*: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass"

And what must be done with these wives (woman) and the children whom they begat by them? Both the wives and the children, born of them, must be put away. For in "such cases" in the O.T. dispensation the children were not clean by an unholy thing. Wherefore we read in Ezra 10:3, "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God *to put away all the wives and such as are born of them*, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law."

In these O. T. mixed cases we are dealing with quite a different situation from what we have in the church at Corinth in the N. T. dispensation!

Would anyone in the N. T. dispensation, who has married an unbelieving or a disobedient wife, also will to take the consequences of sending off the children with the putting away of such an errant wife? Methinks not!

Nor is such the case in the N. T. dispensation, particularly in the church at Corinth. For here we are dealing with a situation which has been radically changed because now they, who were sometimes far, have been brought nigh through the blood of Christ Jesus. For the situation of the congregation of Corinth is such that they were all once heathen. But God has chosen them to the fellowship in the Gospel in Christ. He says to Paul in a revelation, "I have much people in this city." Acts 18:10. And these people believed, as many as were ordained to eternal life at God's time, under the preaching of the gospel. Thus there were cases where either a man or a wife believed, while their respective wife or husband did not, or did *not yet* believe. However, even so, it was not a mingling of the holy seed, between Israel and the unclean nations. It was simply a case of a new *status quo*, a new spiritual status in the entire family. For the word had entered not merely to save an individual man or woman, but the "promise is to you and to your children, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call*." Acts 2:39 (Joel 2:32).

A new status quo!

Christ had come into such a *family* according to the law of elective grace!

This implies that not the believing parent and the children live with the unbelieving parent, but the contrary is true that the unbeliever lives with (dwells with) the believing parent and the children, be this parent the father or the mother.

Now such an unbelieving parent (either husband or wife) can live willingly with such a believing family or he will not will to live there. The term to *be pleased* is in Greek a compound verb: *suneudokei*, that is, *mutually willing* to dwell with the believing family. It implies to agree to, to be "pleased together with." Then there is no problem. But suppose such a person will not live in a family where the *spiritual status quo* has changed, and actually leaves the domicile, what then? There is then nothing to do about it. Let such a one depart. She changed her *place* of dwelling. Her leaving doesn't change the sanctity of the family. The children are still holy because of the believing parent.

However, such leaving is not tantamount to an annulment of the marriage before the face of God. Marriage is a natural tie of the flesh, which is sanctified by faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The fact that the unbelieving partner in marriage changed his *place* of dwelling (choorizoo) does not affect the tie which God had effected in marriage! The fact that if one of the parents is an unbeliever it does not change or annul marriage, is evident from the instruction of Paul that if the unbeliever is desirous to remain that he be not put away!

Besides, it should not be overlooked that Paul still denominates the party who has left the family which is sanctified in Christ, a "husband" and "wife", shows with indisputable certainty that such "leaving" does not annul the marriage-tie before the Lord.

Certain what Paul says in verse 39 is not conditioned by some such exception as "provided he or she is not an unbeliever!"

And, as we hope to point out in a future essay, Paul does not say that a brother or a sister is not "bound" in such a case by the law of the husband, but rather that "in such cases a brother or sister is not *under bondage*."

More of that in our consideration of the verses 17-24.

G.L.

IN MEMORIAM

Ruth Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to its sister member, Mrs. Gerald Korhorn, in the loss of her brother

GEORGE KORHORN

and also her brother-in-law

HARRY VISSER

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:27.

Rev. H. Hanko, President
Mrs. D. Eerdmans, Secretary

IN HIS FEAR

Spiritually Sensitive

(6)

"Fear God and keep His commandments."

That, Solomon declares, is the sole duty of man.

But let us be sure that we understand that these two are inseparable. These are not two duties of man. Solomon speaks of the sole duty of man and not of the chiefest duties of man. We are not to fear God some of the time and keep His commandments the rest of the time. The duty of a custodian may be to keep the building clean and to keep the lawn neatly mowed. These, however, he is not to do at the same time. Nor does he mow the lawn in order to keep the building clean. These are separate works that belong to his duty. But in order to keep God's commandments we will have to be fearing Him. And all breaking of His commandments is due to the fact that we have ceased to fear Him.

Now to fear Him is to believe in Him as the only true God. To fear Him means that we have pureness of doctrine. It means that we have and believe the truth concerning Him. It means that we believe in Him as the God that He is and not as the god of man's imagination.

Therefore one cannot truly be spiritually sensitive unless he is that in regard to doctrine. Not infrequently we hear men clamoring for less doctrine and for more practical preaching. Not too infrequently also these same people become highly indignant when in the fulfilling of this "request" of practical preaching the sins in which they are walking are called such and their life has been shown not to be one in His fear. Very often the first to clamor for practical preaching are also the first to defend the sins that this practical preaching condemns. But apart from that, this often — though not always — accompanies the request for practical preaching. So that we may say that the cry for practical preaching is not sincere unless it is rooted in a deep and spiritual love for doctrine.

And have you ever noticed that the more superficial the doctrine becomes, the more liberal the stand becomes over against the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? And have you ever taken note of the fact that the shorter the sermons become the more loosely the congregation lives, without a word of condemnation being spoken from the pulpit? Oh, indeed, there may be ten, fifteen minute "sermons" in which some worldly moral is loudly and vehemently maintained. But the shorter the sermons and the more superficial the preaching, the more the Sabbath — the part that is left after these abbreviated services — is spent in anything but spiritual exercises. For ten, fifteen or

even twenty minutes men are told to smile in suffering, be polite, never complain and such sins as gossip, backbiting, unfaithfulness to promises, dishonesty *as sins against man* may be hammered home. And the congregation goes home congratulating itself on having secured such a practical preacher. Jealousy, greed are furiously condemned and love, pity, living as a brotherhood of all men, being good citizens who take interest in the cultural and educational standards of the community are strongly advocated. The cross, the Church as the body of Christ, the Trinity, justification, sanctification, the means of grace, God's counsel and a host of other doctrinal subjects are carefully avoided as being too dry, too stuffy and fit for a ministers' conference, perhaps, but not for the pulpit. And though the audience goes home stating, "What a fine, practical minister we have!" they do not practice the principles of true godliness. Often very gross sins are committed and sponsored by that very church. For it is insensible spiritually to these wicked ways. Its spiritual sensitivity is almost, if not entirely, gone. It is the church with a superficial doctrine that begins to sponsor dances, to defend divorce, to uphold membership in secret organizations that demand one to swear allegiance to it above all other organizations and thus above allegiance to God in His Church. They sponsor lotteries which even the world condemns as gambling and often forbids these churches. They extol Hollywood and their adulterous generation and advocate seeking its entertainment. They harbor in their midst unmolested those who deny the divinity and virgin birth of Christ, the spiritual character of the kingdom of God, the atonement of Calvary, the infallible inspiration of the Word of God. They strain and become red-faced in their vehemence to strain at a few gnats and they swallow with relish a camel!

There is a reason for this. The chief distinguishing mark of the true church is the pure preaching of the Word. Where you have that, this word will advocate and realize the exercise of Christian discipline. Where the preaching becomes impure, discipline falls by the wayside. And although the cry is raised for practical preaching rather than doctrinal, it is all too often due to the fact that men want to practice evil.

Of course there is practical preaching in the good sense of the word. Of course there is a need for practical preaching. The congregation must be shown how these doctrines affect us in practical life. We must be taught how to practice faith and godliness. We must be taught how to practice living in His fear and keeping His commandments, which Solomon says is our sole duty. But there is so much of that clamoring for practical preaching that is due to the fact that its advocates are not spiritually sensitive. They want you to tell them each step of the way what they must do, how they must behave as children of God. They claim that they do not know in a given circumstance just what to do; what to reject and what to receive; what to seek and from what to flee; what is right in God's sight and what is evil; what they

may do and what they may not do; what is keeping His commandments and what is not.

What they need is doctrinal preaching. They have become, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews declares, "dull of hearing." And anyone who reads the context of his words will understand that he is speaking here of being dull of hearing the doctrines of Scripture. For he states, "For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat," Hebrews 5:11, 12. We plan to say more about this later but at this point we make mention of it because doctrine and life go hand in hand. We must fear God in order to keep His commandments. And there will be no spiritual sensitivity in regard to what is right and wrong as long as there is no spiritual sensitivity as to what is the truth and what is the lie.

The fall of man in paradise clearly reveals that truth. It was the lie that Satan used to lead man into sin. He sought to destroy man's fear of God in order to make him cease to keep His commandments. Not fearing God and not keeping His commandments are cleverly woven together in Satan's first question, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" It was corrupt doctrine, a false presentation of God that he employed in order to make man cease keeping God's commandments. His first object is to make man insensible to the truth and to change his opinion of God, to corrupt his doctrine in order to make him corrupt his way. We must not, therefore, simply ask whether a man is spiritually sensitive enough to detect right from wrong, righteousness from sin, God's will from His hot displeasure in any given circumstance. We must also, by all means, ask whether a man is spiritually sensitive enough to detect the truth from the lie, the doctrine of Scripture from the heresies of man, God's Word from the philosophies of the world, yea God's Word from Satan's.

We must not fall into the error of considering Satan to be one whose only and chief purpose is to tempt man into wicked practices. Rebellion, riot, murder, theft, deceit, lying, adultery, jealousy and covetousness are readily conceded to be works into which Satan has deceived and led man. But let it be maintained just as readily that heresy, false doctrines, blasphemies against God, against His Christ and against His Church, and mental images of God are not only works in which he delights greatly but also works which he strives incessantly to produce in man. And although he does this in order to realize all manner of wicked deeds, these are not simply means unto an end. He is as pleased with the heretic as with the murderer. He delights in the foul speech of the false prophet as in the adulterer. He rejoices over the lie spoken against and concerning God as much as in the false witness against man. And we repeat, there will be no spiritual sensitivity in regard to what is

right and wrong as long as there is no spiritual sensitivity as to what is the truth and what is the lie.

It is for that reason that the Church of Christ does not yield to every cry for ecumenicity. The Church of Christ in her spiritual sensitivity shudders at the beliefs and doctrines that fill the world today. She is not attracted but repelled by the philosophies of man. And before unions and alliances are made, she must be absolutely certain that all the doctrines to be held and to be defended jointly are the teachings of Scripture. She will not stand for a moment for any dishonoring or dethroning of God. She will not walk with those who want the lie in any form whatsoever. She is highly suspicious of anything that smells the least bit like the lie. And because she sees all manner of wicked practices; because she sees evil condoned instead of condemned, she knows that the doctrine cannot be pure. And she shies away from any merger that even threatens to result in an off-color doctrine.

Union for the sake of oneness is as wicked as union for the sake of greatness. Indeed Jesus said, "That they may be one"; but He does not say that they may be one in body and organization alone. He surely means one in doctrine, one in faith, one in dedication to the cause of God's glory, one in purpose-of-heart to fight all heresy.

A church seeks merger with another church either because it is spiritually sensitive and is attracted by the true doctrine of the other or is spiritually dull of hearing, is no longer hurt by the lie in the other church. It comes down to this: they are one already because both have become insensible to the lie and are no longer attracted by the truth; or the one finds that it has been in error and now, through God's grace, has been caused to see the beauty of the truth in another church and realizes its doctrinal oneness with it. There is, of course, the remote possibility that two churches are one, perfectly one, in doctrine and only recently have become acquainted with one another. But the fact remains, union is due to oneness of spiritual sensitivity already existing and already evident in oneness of doctrine or it is oneness of spiritual insensibility that is ready to call nonessential what formerly it deemed essential enough for separate existence. Dullness of hearing then, has brought union, unwillingness to hear the voice of Christ.

We have no space left for this time. We do want to make one final remark which we plan to develop further next time, the Lord willing. Because the preaching of the Word is the chief earmark of the true church, and it determines what shall and what shall not be disciplined in the church, it is impossible for one spiritually sensitive to what is the truth and what is the lie, to seek merger with those who plainly reveal that they are insensible to what is righteousness and what is sin. No one so spiritually sensitive that the truth fills his soul with joy and the lie in every form irritates him is going to hold conferences to see whether

(Continued on page 212)

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)

We will recall that we concluded our preceding article by calling attention to the treaty which was arranged between Frederick II and Gregory IX at Anagni, Sept. 1, 1230, upon Frederick's triumphant return from Jerusalem, the holy city. The army of the emperor had been victorious, and the shrewd pontiff evidently considered that prudence was the better part of valor. He deemed it wise to form a truce with the conquering emperor, Frederick II.

The truce lasted four years, Gregory in the meantime composing, with the emperor's help, his difficulties with the municipality of Rome. Again he addressed Frederick as "his beloved son in Christ." But formal terms of endearment did not prevent the renewal of the conflict, this time over Frederick's resolution to force his authority upon the Lombard cities. This struggle engaged him in war with the papacy from this time forward to his death, 1235-1250. After crushing the rebellion of his son Henry in the North, and seeing his second son Conrad crowned, the emperor hastened south to subdue Lombardy. Henry died in an Italian prison. Conrad, whose mother was Iolanthe, was nine years old at the time of his coronation. In 1235 Frederick married for the third time Isabella, sister of Henry III, of England. This marriage explains Frederick's repeated appeals to the clergy and people of England. "Italy," he wrote in answer to the pope's protests, 1236, "Italy is my heritage, as all the world well knows." His arms seemed to be completely successful by the battle of Cortenuova, 1237. But Gregory abated none of his opposition. "Priests are fathers and masters of kings and princes," he wrote, "and to them is given authority over men's bodies as well as over their souls." It was his policy to thwart at all hazards Frederick's designs upon upper Italy, which he wanted to keep independent of Sicily as a protection to the papal state. The accession of the emperor's favorite son Enzo to the throne of Sardinia, through his marriage with the princess Adelasia, was a new cause of offence to Gregory. For Sardinia was regarded as a papal fief, and the pope had not been consulted in the arrangements leading to the marriage. And so for the fifth time, in 1239, Gregory pronounced upon the

emperor the anathema. In view of these repeated fulminations it is no wonder that the papal legate, Albert of Bohemia, wrote from Bavaria that the clergy did not care a bean for the sentence of excommunication. The sentence charged him with stirring up sedition against the Church in Rome from which Gregory had been forced to flee in the conflicts between the Ghibelline and Guelf parties, with seizing territory belonging to the Holy See, and with violence towards prelates and benefices. The Ghibellines were supporters in Italy of the German emperor in the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. Concerning the Guelf party we have the following. A Guelf was a member of a German royal family, so named from Welf, its original home in Swabia. So a Guelf was a supporter of the house of Guelf which became the royal family of Hanover and also of England; later, a member of the papal and popular party in medieval Italy, opposed to the imperial and aristocratic party of the Ghibellines.

A conflict with the pen followed which has a unique place in the history of the papacy. Both parties made appeal to public opinion, a thing which was novel up to that time. The pope compared the emperor to the beast in the Book of Revelation which "rose out of the sea full of words of blasphemy and had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, and like a leopard in its other parts, opens its mouth in blasphemies against God's name, his dwelling place, and the saints in heaven. This beast strives to grind everything to pieces with his claws and teeth of iron and to trample with his feet on the universal world." He accused Frederick of lies and perjuries, and called him "the one of lies, heaping falsehood on falsehood, robber, blasphemer, a wolf in sheep's clothing, the dragon emitting waters of persecution from his mouth like a river." He made the famous declaration that "as the king of pestilence, Frederick had openly asserted that the world had been deceived by three impostors,—Jesus, Moses, and Mohammed, two of these having died in glory and Jesus having been suspended on the cross." Moreover, he had denied the possibility of God's becoming incarnate of a virgin. This charge was made in an encyclical of Gregory sent forth between May 21 and July 1, 1239. These words, incidentally, are truly terrible words—H.V. The pope here accuses the king of the most terrible heresies, that Jesus was an impostor, and that it was impossible for God to become incarnate of a virgin. This means that the emperor denied that Jesus is the Son of God.

This extensive document is, no doubt, one of the most vehement personal fulminations which has ever proceeded from Rome. Epithets could go no further. It is a proof of the great influence of Frederick's personality and the growing spirit of democracy in the Italian cities that the emperor was not wholly shunned by all men and crushed under the dead weight of such fearful condemnations.

In his retort, not to be behind his antagonist in Scripture quotations, Frederick compared Gregory to the rider

on the red horse who destroyed peace on the earth. As the pope had called him a beast, *bestia*, so he would call him a wild beast, *belua*, antichrist, a second Balaam, who used the prerogative of blessing and cursing for money. He declares that, as God had placed the greater and lesser lights in the heavens, so he had placed the priesthood, *sacerdotium*, and the empire, *imperium*, on the earth. But the pope had sought to put the second light into eclipse by denying the purity of Frederick's faith and comparing him to the beast rising out of the sea. Indignantly denying the accusation of the three impostors, he declared his faith in the "only Son of God as coequal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, begotten from the beginning of all worlds. Mohammed's body is suspended in the air, but his soul is given over to the torments of hell." And there is apparently no reason whatever to doubt the truthfulness of this claim of the emperor. — H.V. One receives the impression that the one tried to outdo the other in the bitterness of his denunciations of the other.

Gregory went further than words and offered to the count of Artois the imperial crown, which at the instance of his brother, Louis IX of France, the count declined. The German bishops espoused Frederick's cause. On the other hand, the mendicant friars proved true allies of the pope. The emperor drove the papal army behind the walls of Rome. In spite of enemies within the city, the aged pontiff went forth from the Lateran in solemn procession, supplicating heads of the Apostles Peter and Paul. When Frederick retreated, it seemed as if the city had been delivered by a miracle. However, untenable we may regard the assumptions of the Apostolic see, we cannot withhold admiration from the brave old pope.

Only one source of possible relief was left to Gregory, a council of the whole Church, and this he summoned to meet in Rome in 1241. Frederick was equal to the emergency, and with the aid of his son Enzo checkmated the pope by a maneuver which, serious as it was for Gregory, cannot fail to appeal to the sense of the ludicrous. The Genoese fleet conveying the prelates to Rome, most of them from France, Northern Italy, and Spain, was captured by Enzo, and the would-be councillors, numbering nearly one hundred and including Cardinal Otto, a papal legate, were taken to Naples and held in prison. In his letter of condolence to the imprisoned dignitaries the pope represents them as awaiting their sentence from the new Pharaoh. Brilliant as was the *coup de main*, it was destined to return to trouble the inventor. And the indignity heaped by Frederick upon the prelates was at a later time made a chief charge against him.

Gregory died in the summer of 1241, at an age greater than the age of Leo XIII, at that pope's death. But he died, as it were, with his armor on and with his face turned towards his imperial antagonist, whose army at the time lay within a few hours of the city. He had fought one of the most strenuous conflicts of the Middle Ages. To the last moments his intrepid courage remained unabated. A few

weeks before his death he wrote, in sublime confidence in the papal prerogative: "Ye faithful, have trust in God and hear his dispensations with patience. The ship of Peter will for a while be driven through storms and between rocks, but soon, and at a time unexpected, it will rise again above the foaming billows and sail on unharmed, over the placid surface."

The Roman communion owes to Gregory IX the collection of decretals which became a part of its statute book. He made the Inquisition a permanent institution and saw it enforced in the city of Rome. He accorded the honors of canonization to the founders of the mendicant orders, St. Francis of Assisi and Dominic of Spain.

Concerning Gregory IX the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia has the following: "He began his spiritual career under Innocent III, his uncle, who created him cardinal deacon and afterward appointed him cardinal bishop of Ostia. Honorius III honored him with important commissions. His name is likewise intimately connected with the history of the rise of the Franciscan order, while Dominic, the founder of the Dominican order, likewise had his support. Gregory quickly came into strained relations with Frederick II of Germany, although they had previously been on good terms. He also gave attention to crusading plans, and was occupied with thoughts of missions. His early relations with the mendicant orders proved to their advantage, though the division among the Franciscans began even in his time. His converting the battle against heresy, on the conclusion of the Albigensian wars, into a permanent institution of the Church came to be of epoch-making significance for the medieval Church, for the laws affecting heresy, as developed in his time, maintained themselves. His importance for medieval philosophy and theology was due to the fact that he approved the study of Aristotle. Finally, Gregory's pontificate was of the utmost importance in the sphere of canon law, since through his chaplain, Raymond of Pennaforte, he had a collection of decretals compiled which gained universal recognition as a codification of canon law and thus contributed to the victory of the pope's legislative authority. Gregory died Aug. 22, 1241. He may be called great in his zeal for the Church. That he was blinded by his hatred of Frederick and unscrupulous in his aggressive measures is the blot on his reputation. — end of quote from the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia.

Indeed, the use of unscrupulous measures to establish themselves upon the throne of St. Peter characterizes the popes throughout this amazing history of the supremacy of the pope. And we repeat that such unscrupulous use of measures to establish themselves is hardly in harmony with the principles of the Word which they were supposed to guard and to champion. The next time, the Lord willing, we will continue with the reign of Frederick and his struggle with the popes.

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 2. Who teach: That the spiritual gifts, or the good qualities and virtues, such as: goodness, holiness, righteousness, could not belong to the will of man when he was first created, and that these, therefore, could not have been separated therefrom in the fall. For such is contrary to the description of the image of God, which the Apostle gives in Eph. 4:24, where he declares that it consists in righteousness and holiness, which undoubtedly belong to the will.

The above translation is substantially correct, though it might be possible to improve upon it as to some of the finer points. We would prefer to bring out the thought in the first part somewhat as follows: "Who teach: That it was impossible for the spiritual gifts, or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, to have their place in (to reside in; Latin: *locum habere non potuisse*) the will of man, when he was first created, and that accordingly it was impossible for them to be separated from his will in the fall." We would also make the minor correction of changing "undoubtedly" to "entirely" or "altogether." However, it probably takes a little explanation no matter which way the translation reads before we properly understand this error.

Before we proceed with this explanation we wish to remark that this and the two following articles are rather closely related, and that the relation is such that these three articles form three steps in the Arminian reasoning concerning man's so-called "free will." And this present article is rather fundamental to the whole chain of reasoning. This can readily be understood. The article deals with man's creation, with his original position and nature by virtue of his creation. And it stands to reason that what you say about man's creation will determine to no small degree what you say about his fall and, in turn, about his conversion or restoration.

At the same time we may remark that today in Arminian preaching one does not very easily meet with the error condemned in this article in this direct form. This is probably

due largely to the fact that Arminian preaching in its modern form does not busy itself very much with basic doctrines. Besides, it is mostly Christological and Soteriological in its emphasis, that is, it deals directly almost solely with matters concerning Christ and salvation, and that too, of course, in a very sentimental and false way. This does not mean, however, that Arminianism is not a doctrine. Nor does it mean that the false doctrine treated in this article of our *Canons* is not still the Arminian doctrine. It is. And it still forms the doctrinal basis upon which modern Arminianism builds its whole false scheme of doctrine. Basically Arminianism is humanistic. And because it is, we may well look for some of its key errors in regard to its implicit doctrine of man, its anthropology. Hence, we do well to pay attention to the error that is treated here.

What is that error?

The first aspect of the error is stated as follows in the article: "That it was impossible for the spiritual gifts, or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, to have their place in the will of man, when he was first created." The question is, however: what did the Arminians mean by this?

In the first place, the Arminians maintained that the will as such, conceived of apart from any action of the will, any act of willing, any determination, any choice, is simply the faculty or power of the soul to choose. The will, therefore, is able to choose either good or evil, and, in fact, is able to choose good and evil. In the second place, it follows, according to this same conception, that the will itself, as a faculty or power of the soul, cannot be described in terms of the spiritual and ethical. You cannot speak of a holy or an unholy will, a good or an evil will, a righteous or an unrighteous will. The spiritual gifts, or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, could not belong to the will of man when he was first created. No more than you can speak of a circle in terms of its being square or out of square, no more can you speak of a will in terms of its being holy, righteous, good, or unholy, unrighteous, evil. The two categories of thought do not belong together. Why not, according to the Arminian? Simply because that is not part of the creation of man.

The second aspect of the Arminian error in this connection is expressed as follows in the article: "and that these (spiritual gifts), therefore, could not have been separated therefrom in the fall." This is, of course, a conclusion from the preceding proposition. And we may add too that it is a perfectly logical conclusion if you grant that the premise on which it is based is correct. It certainly follows that if these spiritual gifts did not belong to the will of man by virtue of creation, they could not be separated therefrom in the fall. The will could not lose what it did not have to begin with. And we may insert at this point that here is a plain example of the fact that if you say "A" you must say "B", and that it is of crucial importance to be very careful and precise in

regard to your doctrine of man's original state and his creation. What you say about man's creation will certainly determine all that you say about his fall and his restoration.

Now what do the fathers say of this error?

We may notice that in this case they do not bother to classify this Arminian error with Pelagianism. It most certainly is Pelagianism. The same old errors of Pelagius, that sin is only in the act, not in the nature; that the will remains free to choose good and evil; that you can never really speak of a corrupt will as such; as well as the implied error of individualism, — these may all be discovered in this statement of the Arminians. In fact, it is almost amazing that such an error could ever have arisen in Reformed circles. Nor would it be difficult to show the similarity between this doctrine and Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of man *in puris naturalibus* and his conception of the image of God as a *donum superadditum*. Neither, however, do the fathers at this point argue against this doctrine by pointing to its evil consequences for the rest of our doctrine. For it certainly does not take much vision to see in what direction this error takes one. The effect of this error is going to be an inevitable denial of man's total depravity, — a denial that is indispensable to the idea of a conditional salvation.

No, the method of the fathers here is to take us step by step along the Arminians' line of reasoning. The consequences of this teaching in Article 2 will become plain in the following articles. But at each step the fathers point out the most fundamental error of the Arminians, namely, that they oppose Scripture: "For such is contrary to the description of the image of God, which the Apostle gives in Eph. 4:24, where he declares that it consists in righteousness and holiness, which undoubtedly belong to the will."

In the passage referred to we read: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Concerning this passage, the following:

1. The fathers are correct in finding here a description of the image of God. It is true that the image of God is not literally mentioned here. But nevertheless the idea is plainly stated in the expression, "created after God." This is the same as saying "created in God's image, after His likeness." This is confirmed also by the somewhat parallel passage in Colossians 3:10: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

2. That as far as the present article is concerned, the fathers are correct in quoting it with a view to man's creation. For while it is certainly true that the text in point speaks of man's recreation, we must not forget that salvation implies that the image of God is restored in the child of God. In other words, you have a description here of the image of God, whether in creation or in recreation.

The question remains yet: how does this argument over-

throw the Arminian position? In answer, let us note the following elements:

1. Notice that the passage in question speaks exactly of spiritual gifts, or good qualities and virtues. This is important. It does not speak merely of a righteous or holy action or a righteous or holy choice. It speaks of qualities, virtues, spiritual gifts.

2. Notice, in the second place, that these qualities, virtues, gifts themselves constitute the image of God.

3. Now if we remember that the image of God was not something added to man, but something which he possessed by virtue of his very being created, so that the Scripture says that he was *created in God's image, and after God's likeness*, then it must be plain that this righteousness and holiness were indeed qualities of man's will when he was created. Man was not neutral. His creation after God's image certainly did not mean that he was merely created a creature with the power of will. It means very definitely that he was created with a righteous and holy will. His righteousness and holiness were in-created.

All this does not touch, of course, on another phase of man's creation, namely, that his righteousness and holiness were in-created in such a way that the first man was lapsible, could fall, and could lose his spiritual gifts and good qualities and virtues. But that is another question. That man could change and fall and become corrupt is certainly not to be explained by saying that his will as such had no qualities of righteousness and holiness to begin with, and that it was neutral, capable of willing both good and evil. Then you deny the fall. And, in fact, the Arminian denies the very possibility of man's fall in the error at present under discussion. But Reformed and Scriptural it is to say that these spiritual gifts resided in man's will when he was at first created. Reformed and Scriptural it is to say that therefore these good qualities could be and were separated from man's will when he fell. And Reformed and Scriptural it is to reject the Arminian error that is repugnant thereto, and to do so expressly.

H.C.H.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 208)

merger with churches that are so spiritually insensible that they defend divorce, membership in godless unions, membership in lodges and similar sins, which plainly reveal that the doctrine of Scripture concerning these matters is no longer maintained in these churches. The Church of Christ shudders before these sins and knows that essentials of doctrine are denied where these things are practiced. Peter Meiderlin is reported to have stated, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love." We would like to say a few things about that next time. It requires spiritual sensitivity to determine what are essentials.

J.A.H.

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN

You read about it in the 24th chapter of Matthew, that classic and in a way dreadful passage on the return of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of this present dispensation.

Jesus and His disciples are on the Mount of Olives. From where they are sitting they can see the Holy City stretching out before them. Somewhere near the middle of the city are the royal palace and the temple buildings. Just previous to coming to this beloved rendezvous Jesus had told His disciples concerning those very buildings, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Vs. 2. That prophecy weighed heavily on the minds of the disciples and evokes from them the question, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the SIGN of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Vs. 3. Obviously, even the disciples expected a special sign in connection with the final advent of the Lord Jesus. This question in turn leads to the entire wonderful discussion of His second coming, which comprises this most significant chapter. The Lord speaks of the many things that must take place before the end can come. He warns of the numerous antichrists and false prophets that will come in His name and will deceive many. Then too, they will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Jesus speaks, too, of the great apostasy that lies ahead and the preaching of the gospel to all nations before the end of the world can come. Especially does He warn them concerning the fiery persecutions that must befall the church before that great day of their redemption can come. Finally we hear Him say, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Vss. 29, 30.

Especially in verses 3 and 30, therefore, we find direct reference to this sign of the Son of man in heaven.

* * * *

It is obvious that our Lord here speaks of a special sign to be revealed at the final, personal, visible coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, also known as the Parousia.

Scripture speaks of various comings of Christ. The judgment of God whereby the earthly Jerusalem was ravaged may certainly be characterized as a coming of the glorified Jesus. There can be no question that much in Matthew 24 has reference to this dreadful type of the final advent of the Savior. Perhaps, too, we may speak of the moment of every Christian's death as a coming of the Savior for the deliverance of His own from the earthly house of this tabernacle. Pentecost definitely marks a return of Jesus to His church. Had He not promised His disciples, "I will pray the Father,

and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:16, 17. And then He adds, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Vs. 18. In fact, Scripture even speaks of a coming of the Lord throughout the ages. Remember what Christ said to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin in the dreadful hour of His condemnation, "Hereafter (from now on) shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matthew 26:64.

However, this "sign of the Son of man" stands in connection with the Parousia, the final coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the quick and the dead. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, etc. AND THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven."

* * * *

It need not greatly surprise us, that many and varying interpretations are offered by scholars of Holy Writ of this phrase. The question is: Is this sign of the Son of man to be distinguished from the Son of man Himself, or are the two to be identified? Also: if a definite distinction must be made between "sign" and "Son of man," does the former merely *accompany* the coming of Christ or is it something that *precedes* and heralds the latter?

Calvin teaches the former. He distinguishes between the sign and the Son of man, but not between the appearance of the former and the actual, personal coming of the latter. They are not two distinct moments in the whole of Christ's second advent. The sign accompanies, but does not precede, the coming proper. "And therefore He declares that He will appear openly at His last coming, and, surrounded by the heavenly power, which will be a *sign* erected on an elevated spot, He will turn the eyes of the whole world upon himself." According to Calvin, "the heavenly power, by which He shall be surrounded, will serve as a standard displayed to compel the whole world to look at Him." This church father, therefore, to whom we are so greatly indebted, does not identify sign and thing signified, but he does synchronize them.

Barnes takes the same position when he says, "At the end of the world the sign of His coming will be His personal approach with the glory of His Father and the holy angels."

"Some effort," says Lenski, "is made to find a distinction between the sign of the Son of man and its appearance, and the Son of man Himself coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. But why seek for a distinction?" To him it is simply the sign by which he shows His presence. The sign does not precede the coming in any way; it merely accompanies it. "No sign, say a glowing, dazzling light shall hang over the earth for a shorter or longer time after which sign the Son shall arrive. (Is this a touch of sarcasm? What Lenski here suggests and denies is indeed extremely possible. R.V.) All will be one grand act."

With all the above we cannot agree. It is our considered opinion that Meyer does far more justice to the passage in question. He speaks of "the sign of the Son of man inquired about in verse 3, that phenomenon, namely, which is *immediately* to precede the coming Messiah, the Son of man, and which is to indicate that His second coming is now on the point of taking place, which is to be the *signal* of the latter event."

With this the Rev. H. Hoeksema also agrees, as those familiar with his exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism may know. "It seems, then, that we must make a distinction between His sudden appearance in the clouds of heaven, to all that shall live on the earth at the time of His advent, and His complete revelation to all that have ever lived in the world, after the resurrection. It would seem that Scripture makes this distinction in Matt. 24:30. Whatever this "Sign of the Son of man in heaven" may be it seems that it must be distinguished from His full and final revelation." Vol. IV, p. 132.

* * * *

We believe and maintain, therefore, that this "appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven" must be definitely and clearly distinguished from the coming proper of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, and that so, that the former precedes the latter in the one grand wonder of the return of our Lord Jesus to judge the quick and the dead and make all things new.

An unforced reading of the text from Matthew would appear to press to this conclusion, especially the twice occurring expression "and then." "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, . . . AND THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: AND THEN . . . they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." That this sign shall precede the coming proper is indicated as well by the question of the disciples in verse 3, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

What shall constitute this sign of the Son of man? Who shall say? We cannot know what God has not been pleased to reveal to us, nor can there be profit in idle speculation. Augustine and others have ventured the guess, that this sign will be in the nature of a cross appearing in the heavens. Interesting and intriguing, perhaps, but quite groundless. Others conjecture that it will be in the nature of a special star. These people are thinking of Numbers 24:17. Perhaps Meyer is nearest the truth, when he says, "Jesus does not say what this is to be; therefore it should be left indefinite. Only this much may be inferred from what is predicted in verse 29 about the *darkening* of the heavenly bodies, that it must be of the nature of a *manifestation of light*, the dawning of the Messianic glory which is perhaps to go on increasing in brilliancy and splendor until the Messiah Himself steps forth from the midst of it in the ful-

ness of His glory." Certainly, there would seem to be merit in this reasoning. However, take all these for what they are worth; the simple fact stands that Christ does not divulge the precise nature of this sign.

Certainly, there is nothing foreign to the idea that the wonder of the Savior's return should be accompanied by a great sign. The incarnation was realized via the sign of all signs, the Virgin Birth. The death of Christ and His resurrection were accompanied by mighty signs in nature: the rending of the veil, the rending of the rocks and opening of graves, the earthquake. Why should it seem strange that the final, all including and all concluding wonder should be accompanied by a most majestic and unmistakable sign?

Not only must such a sign *accompany* the miracle of the return, but it is quite necessary that it shall *precede* it. Remember that the Parousia (the final coming) is a wonder of grace, spiritual and heavenly in nature, and therefore itself imperceptible as far as our present, earthly senses are concerned. It belongs to the "other side." Indeed, the coming of Christ will be personal and visible. However, the body with which He is coming will be heavenly, not earthy; spiritual, not natural. The point is: Christ in His advent will be visible only to creatures already transformed and in their resurrection bodies. For the living and the dead to see the Lord in His glory, the resurrection of the dead will have to precede His actual coming. And so it will. That the resurrection of the dead must precede the coming proper of Christ is also evident from the fact, that *every* eye shall see Him, also those who pierced Him. That certainly presupposes the resurrection. That does not mean, however, that this resurrection of the dead will take place without any warning and indication of the coming of the Lord. All will be preceded by the sign of the Son of man in heaven, the sign in the realm of the natural that will be visible to all on the earth and that will mark the beginning of that miraculous chain of events that will culminate in the end of all present things and the eternal glorification of Christ and His church in the new heavens and the new earth. It would appear, therefore, that the very nature of the return of Christ, transcendent and heavenly as it will be, indicates the propriety and necessity of just such a preceding sign of the Son of man.

The order of events in the Parousia, therefore, will perhaps be as follows: a. When the counsel of God with respect to all things shall have been realized and the great tribulation shall have taken place, the signs in nature will occur which are described to us in Matthew 24:29. b. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. c. Then the resurrection of the dead will take place, the good and the bad. d. Then Christ Himself shall come in the full revelation of His glory and all shall see Him, righteous and wicked, in their resurrection bodies. e. Then will be the last judgment, the passing and execution of the sentence, and the creation of the new heaven and earth, wherein only righteousness will dwell. Then the wicked will be destroyed forever, while the righteous will shine as suns in the heavenly Father's realm. R.V.

ALL AROUND US

The Church in Soviet Russia.

In the latest issues of *Life* magazine a serial appears acquainting the readers with the history of the rise to power of modern Soviet Russia. The story begins with the narration of the pomp and glory of the Czarist rule before the turn of the century, and develops the steps that led to the overthrow of that government and the rise to power by the revolutionary communist regime that is threatening the existence of all so-called democratic ideologies. The reading of this series, which treats the subject from a merely secular point of view, may prove to be instructive to the reader who knows little or nothing of the history of that nation.

Christianity Today, in its December 23, 1957 issue, also presents an instructive article, entitled: Christ and Marx: The Church in Soviet Russia, which I found to be most interesting. It presents facts little known by the most of us, and perhaps even contrary to the conceptions of many that in Soviet Russia which is said to be thoroughly godless there are no churches at all.

For the benefit of our readers I am going to quote as much of the article as I can, and desist from any further comment of my own. The article is written by Henlee H. Barnett, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, who, as the article indicates, has visited Russia and gives his report. He writes:

The Church of Christ has survived and even flourished under all kinds of governments. It was born in a totalitarian Roman world and survived the persecution of Nero, Diocletian, and other dictators. All the powers of the underworld, the agnostics, the atheists, principalities, powers in high places, have not been able to destroy this fellowship of the redeemed. Civilizations rise and fall, kingdoms crumble, ideologies have their day and cease to be, but the Church endures. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

The invincible nature of the Church is dramatically demonstrated in Communist Russia today. The powers in the Kremlin have not succeeded in stamping out Christian faith. Not only is the Church surviving in Communist dominated countries, it is growing in strength. In the summer of 1957, for example, I discovered that the Church in Russia is surrounded by anti-God forces, Christians are persecuted, and Soviet officials, inveigh against God. Even under these circumstances the Church endures. Here are reasons why.

THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED

On the stained glass window of the Kharkov Baptist Church in the Ukraine are the following words, "We preach Christ crucified." This is the message of the Russian Baptists to the Communist world. They preach "Christ crucified" as the revelation of the sinfulness of man, the manifestation of the Grace of God, and the disclosure of the meaning of

discipleship. When asked what the preachers did to combat Communism, the pastor of the Kharkov Church pointed to the Scripture verse in the glass stained window and quoted, "We preach Christ crucified."

From 1917 to 1935, the number of Russian Orthodox Churches fell from 46,000 to 5,000, the number of priests from 50,000 to 5,000. Today there are more than 35,000 Orthodox priests and 20,000 churches with approximately 40 million members.

Lutherans are growing in both Latvia and Estonia. In Latvia Lutherans are organized into 15 districts and 300 parishes with more than 300 churches. There are 110 Lutheran pastors who are, in most instances, required to serve more than one parish. In Estonia, the population is overwhelmingly Lutheran. Parishes are large with an average of from 6,000 to 10,000 people in each parish. Churches destroyed during World War II are being restored, courses are offered for such church vocations as the priesthood and ministers of music. All told there are approximately 150 Lutheran pastors in Estonia and 100 churches with a total ault membership of 350,000.

This year Russian Baptists are celebrating their ninetyeth anniversary. In 1867 Nikita Voronin was the first Russian to be baptized into the Baptist faith. Today there are more than 550,000 Russian Baptist church members. There are approximately four million people over whom the Baptist Churches have an influence. Today these churches are baptizing annually from 12,000 to 15,000 converts. When I bragged to a pastor in Kharkov that I represented eight and one-half million Southern Baptists, he chided me by saying that Russian Baptists would soon catch up with us! Russian people are deeply religious and, if they could throw off the Communists who dominate them, there would be one of the greatest revivals of religion in the history of the church.

In addition to Greek Orthodox, Evangelical Baptists and Lutherans, there are in Russia small groups of Roman Catholics, Methodists, Reformed, Mennonites, Friends, and Adventists.

Article 124 in the Constitution of the USSR declares that Church and State are separated and the school from the Church. There is "freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda." Christians can gather in State owned churches or small private buildings licensed by the government for worship purposes. No form of religious education is permitted. There are no Sunday Schools, Training Unions, libraries, handcraft clubs, or organized groups. The churches sponsor no hospitals, orphans' homes, or any sort of welfare program. Such would be an offense to the government which claims to care for everyone's social needs from the cradle to the grave. Preachers are not allowed to criticize the government. Those who have challenged the Communists have suffered persecution. Some have been shot, others sent to Siberia and to slave labor camps.

But in spite of a limited religious freedom, the churches are growing. Recently, the Communist press printed 15,000

hymn books for Baptists along with a few Bibles. This is the same Communist press which has turned out tons of anti-God literature. Today it is turning out Bibles for domestic use and for export. The Ambassador of Sweden to Russia told a group of us that the Russian government has been more considerate of the Church due to the fact that during World War II it needed the aid of the Church. Hence, the Communists became less hostile to religion in Russia purely for political purposes. Another reason for the so-called "soft policy" toward the churches is due to the fact that so many of the letters came from Russian soldiers on the battle-fields and in the hospitals begging their Christian parents to pray for them. Indeed so many of these letters were written that the government officials began to discourage any serious attacks upon the churches and Christian people.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAITH

With the exception of the Baptist Church in Russia, the churches are filled with adults. About twenty percent of those who attend Baptist Churches are young people. A number of these youths are preparing themselves for leadership in churches in the offices of pastors, choir directors, deacons, deaconesses and lay preachers. Another evidence of the strong appeal of the Christian faith to the youth of Russia is seen in the fact that during the summer of 1957, 400,000 young people were expelled from the Komsomols (Young Communist League). They were guilty of "immorality" and attendance at religious services. This is happening in spite of the fact that all their lives these young people have been taught by their public school teachers that God is a myth and that religion is a superstition. Recently the Kremlin has become alarmed at this rising interest of youth in religion. School teachers are given slogans to pass along to the children. They read, "Religion is poison." "Food comes from collective farms, not Christ." "When God is forgotten life is better." Teachers are urged to use every means available to combat the Christian faith.

In July, 1957, two communist guides accompanied a group of Americans, of which I was a member, to the Baptist Church in Moscow. It was the guides' first time to be in a church service. The Holy Spirit worked so mightily upon their hearts that one of them went out of the church in the middle of the worship service. During the singing of the closing hymn I turned to see tears upon the other one's cheeks. God's Spirit had moved upon their hearts. Thereafter they became more tolerant and concerned about the Christian way of life. Perhaps someday these young people will make a clean break with the godless Communists.

GOD'S "ROD OF ANGER"

Communism could be God's judgment upon the Church of Russia. The Greek Orthodox Church had become political and worldly. Today the magnificent church buildings of Russia have been made into museums. A church can become a museum, passing on embalmed traditions, if it loses a concern for the needs of the people. I talked with Metropolitan

Nicolai of Moscow who also holds the position of Vice-Patriarch of all the Greek Orthodox Churches of Russia. He admitted that the Communist revolution made at least one positive contribution to the Greek Orthodox Church. He explained by saying that prior to the revolution the church forced everyone, atheists and believers, to belong to the church and to attend the services, and to support the churches financially. Now, he observed, that the church and State are separate and that only those who really want to attend church are present at the services.

Another reason the Church in Russia can take heart is the presence of the living Christ. Professor Emil Brunner, attending a conference of Christian workers from all countries, met a young Russian who as an officer of the Russian army was taken prisoner for five years and had been doing Christian work among fellow prisoners. His father, who was once a diplomat and later turned to the priesthood, was so persecuted by the Communist party that his wife, the mother of the young man, collapsed and died in terror. One night his father was taken away and disappeared in the mines of Siberia. The young man told how he had been present at an Easter service in the region of Odessa back in 1940. Forty thousand Christians came to this Eastertide celebration in order to worship. The Communists organized a counterblast assembly to disturb the Christian worship in every way possible. Later they compelled the 40,000 people to listen to their godless Communist propaganda for hours. Then one of the Christians got up and announced his desire to speak. He was at first refused, but when he promised to say only four words they allowed him to come to the platform. These were his words: "Brothers and sisters, Christ is risen." The whole 40,000 responded with the Easter greeting: "Yes, he has risen indeed." After 40 years of suffering at the hands of the Communists the people held fast to their convictions that they were serving a living Christ. Today more than 50 million Russians profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Soviet dominated Poland the Church is manifesting new life and strength. Recently I visited Warsaw of which seventy per cent was destroyed during the last war. On the facade of a rebuilt church were these challenging words: *Sursum Corda*. In the midst of rubble, ruin, and a Communist State, here is a church with a message of hope—Lift up your heart!

The Church will triumph. During the racial movements in the fifth century the Roman Empire fell but the Church endured. The renaissance of the fifteenth century uprooted the medieval way of life, but the Church survived. The Church was divided in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, but all branches became stronger. The Church suffers under the Red regime in contemporary Russia. She will never be at peace while the Communists rule, but the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. *Sursum Corda!*

M.S.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

January 8, 9, 1958

Creston Prot. Ref. Church

Rev. C. Hanko who presided at the October meeting led in devotions and declared the classis constituted after the credentials of the various churches represented had been accepted.

Rev. H. Hanko then presided and spoke a word of welcome to the delegates, while the Rev. C. Hanko transcribed the minutes.

Kalamazoo requested classical appointments and the schedule adopted was as follows: Jan. 26, R. Veldman; Feb. 2, M. Schipper; Feb. 9, J. McCollam; Feb. 16, G. Lanting; Feb. 23, C. Hanko; March 2, B. Woudenberg; March 9, H. Hanko; March 16, R. Veldman; March 23, G. Vos; March 30, M. Schipper; April 6, C. Hanko; April 13, G. Lanting; April 20, B. Woudenberg; April 27, G. Vos; May 4, J. McCollam; May 11, H. Hanko.

The Stated Clerk and Classical Committee gave their reports.

The classis then spent considerable time treating a protest and an appeal related to the Holland case.

A request from Fourth Church, now known as South-East Prot. Ref. Church, was granted to come to the next classis with an overture to synod.

Second Church requested classis to be registered as South-West Prot. Ref. Church.

Two churches requested advice regarding increase of censure.

Hope Church came with an overture for synod re the adoption of a Conscientious Objector's Card. This matter was given into the hands of a committee for study and to report to the next classis. Committee: M. Schipper, G. Lanting, and J. Docter.

Requests for Subsidy were considered from several churches, and the requests were granted, and in two cases raised.

Classis voted for synodical delegates, with the following result:

Primi	Secundi
MINISTERS	MINISTERS
G. Vos	G. Lanting
C. Hanko	B. Woudenberg
H. Hoeksema	R. Veldman
M. Schipper	H. Hanko
ELDERS	ELDERS
G. Stadt	J. Docter
R. Newhouse	W. Kamps
G. M. Ophoff	J. Kortering
H. Zwak	T. Engelsma

Delegates ad examina chosen were: Primi — R. Veldman for 3 years, M. Schipper for 2 years, G. Vos for one year. Secundi — G. Lanting for 3 years, C. Hanko for 2 years, and B. Woudenberg for one year.

Classis decided to meet next time on the last Wednesday in March in First Church. This change was due to the fact that Good Friday comes in the first week in April, the usual time for classis to meet.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

Rev. G. Lanting offered the closing prayer.

M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*