

# THE STANDARD

*A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE*

VOLUME XXXIV

OCTOBER 1, 1957 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 1

## MEDITATION

### THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE JUSTIFIED SINNER

"A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1, 2

My text is quoted many years later by Paul in Romans 4:7, 8, and is employed by Paul to prove that the elect of God are justified by faith without the works of the law. It is curious to note that the Holy Spirit in Paul really interprets David's message to Israel. Interprets, for Paul states the truth in a positive form rather than the negative way which David employs. David says that the Lord doth not impute iniquity, but Paul says that God imputes righteousness without works.

Here is an example of the age-old truth that the Scriptures exposit the Scriptures.

The Blessedness of the Justified Sinner!

Indeed!

That sinner is described from a threefold point of view. And it is not attractive.

First, he is the transgressor.

The meaning of that word is to jerk loose, to tear loose, to break loose. And according to the idea it is our rebellion against God.

Principally that refers to Adam and Eve in their fall from original righteousness. The idea of the rebellion we find in such words as "wanton" in the phrase employed by Reformed dogmatics such as "wanton disobedience of Adam."

Our fall from God was far from innocent. It was down right rebellion.

And this terrible rebellion was repeated and approved of by us, by all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

The word *transgressor* points to the wantonness of our sinning.

Watch your children: see how they wilfully transgress your ordinances and prohibitions!

Watch your own heart and mind: how you and I turn to evil with hardness and the spirit of bravado! And shudder.

But that sinner has another name. It is sin.

Sin is literally: to miss the mark, to turn away. It is the next logical step in our corruption.

And here is the idea:

God has set a certain mark for every man to shoot at, and has provided man with numerous arrows. From within and from without the Lord has qualified man for this shooting gallery. From the very heavens and the earth come a thousand voices, telling him to shoot and how to shoot.

The bull's eye of this mark is the glory of God, the enhancing of His majesty and power, the singing of His praises forever. Man is called to always honor the Godhead.

But man tore himself away from God, but retained his armour. He still shoots.

But he shoots at a different mark. He turned away from God and searched for other aims.

If you would ask me to catalog his aims I would have to give you a sorry listing. There is a magnitude of foulness and dirt in this catalog.

The Bible speaks of the aim of the belly. His god is his belly.

It also speaks of the pride of life, the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh. Altogether the aims of sinful man.

Then also, there is mention of covetousness, concupiscence, uncleanness, idolatry, and deception.

And shooting at his mark, he lost his God. And as the ages restlessly roll around, he gets farther and farther away from God.

Look around you and see present day civilization. And shudder again.

Life is full and rich. Invention and human ingenuity knows no bounds. Everything is full and plentiful. No matter how much leisure our civilization may bring, there is much to enjoy and cherish. Life is a riot of pleasure.

They even enjoy(?) their religion. There are churches and temples and synagogues. But far from "sanctifying the Lord God in their hearts" (and that is the striking of the right bull's eye), we find BIG MAN on the throne, and the

real, the Biblical God and His Christ are thrown out of doors.

Oh, yes, Pelagius has his doubtful, vain, victories.

But God did not receive His due.

More and more, the world approaches the day when Man, the Wicked One, Anti-Christ, inhabits the throne.

That is sin, missing the mark, losing your God.

And then there is another characterization: the sinner is unrighteous.

And that is the worst of all.

Because unrighteousness is to make crooked that which was straight, to set awry, to do wrong.

The idea of that horror is to be perverse, to be crooked, to be hideous, to be very ugly in the face of God and His angels.

Oh, dear reader, when we have received the full heavenly capacity to see and to evaluate all things, we shall see that the horror of hell fits the sinner perfectly. Now we often wonder if the punishment fits the crime. And that is caused exactly by the fact that we neither know God nor sin to the full. And at that time it will become plain too how the elect can sing when they are standing by the glass sea, mingled with the red of God's indignation.

A pre-audition and pre-vision of that you receive when you watch the deportment of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, with the men and women redeemed from Egypt, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb at the shores of the Red Sea.

But the above is the explanation of the threefold characterization of the sinner.

But this sinner, this object of David's psalm and Paul's epistle, is blessed. The Dutch has a beautiful name for him. In English you simply read that he is blessed, but the Dutch calls him "Welgelukzalig." Welgelukzalig means three things. First, he is "zalig," i.e., full of that which he really needs, and that is God. Second, this fulness is called "geluk," and stresses his joy, his ecstasy his superabounding gladness in the God he might find. And "wel" strengthens both his "zaligheid" and his "geluk."

\* \* \* \*

The question forces itself upon us: how is this come about?

How can the rebel, the wanton sinner who lost his God, and the ugly crook find such heavenly bliss?

How can he escape hell? How is it that the severe punishment of "rampzaligheid" is not meted out to him?

The answer to that question is the main theme of this psalm, and, in fact, to the everlasting Gospel of God.

In a word: he is justified!

Justification, according to this psalm, consists in this: First, his transgression is *forgiven*.

That means that the Lord God took all his transgression and bore it away, never to return.

John the Baptist must have seen a glimpse of this astounding truth when he cried: "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"

Isaiah also when he avows that God cast our sins into the depth of the sea. Many, many years ago I listened to prayers and often heard the sentence: Oh God, who hast cast our sins in the sea of everlasting forgetfulness!

Second, his sin is *covered*.

That means that the Lord God looked at His people from all eternity, and all He saw was the precious blood of Jesus Christ. There was no sin anymore.

Third, his iniquity was not *imputed*.

That means that the Lord God never counted, enumerated the sins of His people whom He foreknew. It is as if he never sinned. No, further than that, it is as if they perfectly fulfilled the whole law of God.

This man is justified before the throne of the Judge.

The rebellion is lifted up and carried away.

The wandering away from God and the losing of God is covered up, and shall never be seen again unto all eternity.

The crookedness is never reckoned in the day when God shall reveal His book keeping. There are no entries against this man. The debit side of his book is clean.

But, oh God of eternal miracles, how is this come about?

We have heard of Thee that the soul of the sinner shall die?!

We have heard that Thou art too righteous than to look upon sin and iniquity? We have heard it say that Thou revealest Thyself as a great Wrestler to the man that defies Thee?

How then can this man go free and be justified?

The answer to all these and many more questions is Jesus Christ. And if you love to dig down to the very depths of things, the answer is: Jehovah!

For all the rebellion of the elect sinner we see a little Lamb, the Lamb of God. Far from being rebellious and tearing away from His God, He cries out in the utmost agony of the cross: Why, o My God, hast Thou forsaken Me? He wants to stay close to His God even though that God reveals nothing but horror to His soul.

For all the wandering of the sinner we see One who never departed from His God, but who always travels to-

ward Him even though that way was the way of the cross.

And for all the crookedness of man we see One who is straight to the utmost degree. His name is the Lord our Righteousness. He is the Good Shepherd.

He shows a value, a merit, a virtue that is enough for all the billions of the redeemed. To them the Lord did not reckon sin, crookedness and filth. No, because the Lord God reckoned all this horror to His beloved Son. He bore the guilt of all that were given Him by the Father.

And wending His way along the awful pathway of eternal death and agony, he merited a goodness, a righteousness and a holiness that shall crown the people of God forever.

\* \* \* \*

But, who are those happy people?

With one stroke of the pen God has given their identity.

They are the people in whose spirit there is no guile.

Oh yes, God has put a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

At some time or another God inhabits the justified sinner. That is regeneration. And as surely as day follows night, conversion follows regeneration.

You may know whether or not you are justified. God seals His justification in a heart, a spirit where there is no guile. Negative speech which means that God's own uprightness is granted in the inmost heart.

G.V.

## ACTS OF SYNOD

The Acts of our 1957 Synod are now ready for distribution. Have you obtained your copy? There should be one in every Protestant Reformed home! Get yours through the Clerk or Minister of your church or send \$1.00 to undersigned.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, Stated Clerk  
9402 South 53rd Court  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

## Eastern Ladies' League

The Eastern Ladies' League will hold its fall meeting, October 24, at 8 P. M. in our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. R. Veldman will speak on the topic, "Obedience in the home."

Reserve this date and enjoy an evening of Christian fellowshipship.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, Vice Secretary

## THE STANDARD BEARER

*Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August*

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to  
Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E.,  
Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr.  
G. Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above  
address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

RENEWAL: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

*Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

## CONTENTS

MEDITATION —	
The Blessedness of the Justified Sinner.....	1
Rev. G. Vos	
EDITORIALS —	
The Three Points and Those that Forsook the	
Protestant Truth .....	4
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
OUR DOCTRINE —	
The Book of Revelation.....	6
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
THE DAY OF SHADOWS —	
The Prophecy of Zechariah .....	9
Rev. G. M. Ophoff	
FROM HOLY WRIT —	
Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14.....	12
Rev. G. Lubbers	
IN HIS FEAR —	
Showing the Coming Generation God's Praises (2).....	14
Rev. J. A. Heys	
FEATURE ARTICLE —	
The Symbolism of Colors in Scripture .....	16
Rev. R. Veldman	
THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —	
The Canons of Dordrecht.....	18
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema	
DECENCY AND ORDER —	
Legal Matters .....	20
Rev. G. Vanden Berg	
ALL AROUND US —	
God is not Deformed.....	22
Rev. M. Schipper	

## EDITORIALS

### **The Three Points and Those that Forsook the Protestant Reformed Truth**

In *The Banner* of Sept. 6, 1957, we find a rather complete account of the attempt on the part of those that were once with us but who denied the Protestant Reformed truth, attempted to corrupt our churches from within and, when they did not succeed, forsook the fellowship of our churches, to return to the fold of the Christian Reformed Churches.

The editor of *The Banner* leaves the impression with me that he is rather favorably disposed to this attempt and would like to see it succeed. Writes he in an introductory statement:

"A source of deep grief on the part of all who truly love the peace of Zion must have long been felt in view of the sharp cleavage that has separated the members of our denomination from brothers and sisters in the Protestant Reformed Churches since 1924. It is painful to contemplate that we who have so much in common could possibly be so far apart and that bitterness and heartbreaking divisions have occurred which have often given the enemies of Christ great cause to rejoice.

"To try to fix the blame for this sad situation is not within the scope of this writing. Our purpose at this time is rather to report with gratitude the proposal made in a brotherly spirit by the Protestant Reformed Churches often referred to as the De Wolf group to establish contact with our denomination with a view to the welfare and the unity of the church of Christ."

The reader will admit that the editor appears rather glad with this proposal on the part of the schismatics to reunite with the Christian Reformed Church.

At the same time, I must confess that I am rather surprised because of two elements in the above paragraphs.

In the first place, what I find amazing is the strong note of grief expressed by the editor because of the separation that was effected in 1924. According to him, this grief was felt for already a long time. To him, and apparently to many others, this separation is very painful. This, I must confess, I cannot understand. If it were and is true, how does the editor explain the fact that, on the part of the Christian Reformed Church, never an attempt was made to heal the breach? We, on our part, made such attempts. In the early part of our history we addressed the synod of the Christian Reformed Church reminding them of their sin of having cast us out and admonishing them to repent. This, as far as I know, they threw in the waste basket. During the first visit of Dr. Schilder we made another attempt. Then several brethren, both of our churches and the Christian Reformed Church met in conference, in the presence of Dr. Schilder,

in a room in the Pantlind Hotel, for the purpose of discussing the cause of the schism and of the possibility of a reunion. At that conference I read a paper in which I elaborately discussed the Three Points as the cause of the schism and I invited the brethren of the Christian Reformed Church that were present there to discuss them with us. They refrained from all discussion. But what attempts did the Christian Reformed Church ever make in the direction of Reunion? None whatever.

And now they, i.e. the editor of *The Banner* reports with gratitude the proposal made by the schismatics that left us!

The second element in the article of the editor that struck my attention is that he refrains from fixing "the blame for this sad situation."

From this I get the impression that he himself is not sure where the blame lies.

Let me help him.

The blame lies entirely with the synod of 1924 and with the classes East and West Grand Rapids as they existed at that time.

The synod of 1924 adopted the "Three Points" of common grace which, to say the least, are not based on our Reformed Confessions, nor are they Scriptural, although an attempt was made to prove that they are. The committee of synod that was appointed to advise synod in the case and drew up the "Three Points" also stated in their report that we, i.e., the Rev. H. Danhof and undersigned, should be demanded that we sign the "Three Points" and, if we refused, should be disciplined. The latter element of the report was not adopted. This meant, of course, that we did not have to sign them.

But what synod did not want to do the Grand Rapids classes did. Although the case was synodically finished, these two classes took it up once more, not in order to refer the matter once more to synod as they might have done but to treat the two pastors involved.

This was, of course, illegal seeing that the case was finished at synod.

My case (I was the only one of the pastors that belonged to Classis East; the Rev. Danhof and also the Rev. Ophoff, who took our side, belonged to Classis West) developed briefly as follows. Protests including the demand that I sign the "Three Points" were lodged against me at my consistory and when the consistory refused to treat them they were delivered to classis. Classis took and treated them. They decided to demand of my consistory that they ask of their pastor to express himself about the "Three Points." The consistory refused on the basis of the fact that the whole case had been decided by synod and that the latter body had never asked me a single question about those points of doctrine. Then the classis itself took the matter in hand. I gave them very definitely to understand that I could not agree with the "Three Points" and would never sign them. They finally asked me whether I would promise to be

silent about them. I informed them that this, too, was impossible for the simple reason that those points of doctrine were not Reformed and that I had to speak and write against them. Well, the outcome was that I and practically my whole consistory were deposed.

In the light of the above, let the editor of *The Banner* "fix the blame for this sad situation."

\* \* \* \*

Now, in regard to the attempt on the part of those that left us to be received back in the Christian Reformed Church, I will be brief. Anyone can readily understand that this whole matter is, to me, very obnoxious.

The synod of the schismatics that met last June in Redlands, California, wrote a letter to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church that is partly quoted in *The Banner*. We reproduce it here:

"Realizing anew, as churches, that Christ is one and that the calling of believers is always to seek the unity of the Spirit in the Gospel of Peace, we address this missive to you.

"We feel that it is essential that we thoroughly understand each other. Let us not say that it is futile to approach one another for that is to deny the calling of our Lord to strive toward the unity of the church. Rather let us trust that where the Spirit is and where brotherly love in submission to the Scriptures is present, there is also the possibility of a united witness in the same Spirit. To approach such understanding of each other, we, on our part, assure you that if any misunderstanding or error becomes evident that we will confess and forsake the same, and we trust that you on your part will do likewise.

"So, brethren, we propose to you to consider prayerfully the following propositions:

"1. Will you kindly favor us with an answer to this missive so that we may feel a corresponding desire on your part to seek the welfare and the unity of the church of Christ?

"2. Will you kindly consider the fears we have expressed concerning the Three Points of 1924 and consider the possibility of an interpretative statement which will allay these fears and show that these Three Points are and are intended to be a clear setting forth of the Reformed Faith?

"3. For this purpose or for broader contact will you kindly consider the appointment of a broad committee whose duty it shall be to meet with a like committee from our churches, both committees empowered to discuss freely the differences and similarities which are found to exist and to report back to respective churches?

"4. If your Synod should consider some other way of seeking the contact proposed in this letter, will you please inform us of it?"

It must be said that the above is a very "nice" and kind and humble missive.

But let that be.

I want to call attention to the second point in this missive. For this is not true and, at the same time, it shows which way the wind is blowing: in the direction of agreeing with and signing the "Three Points" which, no doubt, the schismatics will have to do if they are ever to be received again in the Christian Reformed Church.

Consider:

1. The Christian Reformed Church adopted the "Three Points" in 1924 and they will never retract or change them. This has been shown more than once in the past, and the composers of the above missive know this just as well as we do. It has been shown in the past, too, that any minister who was Protestant Reformed and who knocked at the door of the Christian Reformed Church to be admitted is required to sign those "Three Points" before he is admitted.

2. I say that this second point is not true if by "we" they refer to the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is not even true if by the pronoun "we" they refer to themselves. When, I ask, did they ever express fear concerning the "Three Points"? Never to my knowledge. But if they refer to the Protestant Reformed Churches, it is nothing less than a glaring untruth. When did they ever express such a fear? I say again: never! Fear, to say the least, implies doubt. When I say that I fear that the "Three Points" are not true, I mean that I am not certain. And this cannot be said of the Protestant Reformed Churches. They always maintained very positively and they still do that those points are contrary to Scripture and the Confessions. This is evident from all the literature that has been produced by our churches and their leaders. Hence, this is glaring untruth as anyone will readily acknowledge.

3. By stating this, however, they at once weaken their own position and already compromise with the Christian Reformed Church. The latter has no fears concerning the "Three Points" of 1924, at least not as a church. By talking about their fears the senders of this missive suggest already that they may easily be persuaded to adopt the "Three Points" for themselves if only the Christian Reformed Church will "kindly" receive them back.

4. This is corroborated by what follows in the same second point of this missive. They ask the Christian Reformed Church so to interpret the "Three Points" that their fear may be allayed and they ask them to show that those points "are and are intended to be a clear setting forth of the Reformed Faith." This admits the possibility, as far as they are concerned, that the "Three Points" are Reformed, and that they are not all sure but what they might be. Moreover, as far as their asking for an interpretation is concerned,

(Continued on page 8)

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### CHAPTER 13

#### THE FOUR HORSEMEN

#### Revelation 6:1-8

At first we intended to treat these seals separately, one by one; but a study of the first four seals soon led us to the conclusion that such a method would be both impossible and impracticable. For, in the first place, it soon becomes evident, as one investigates the contents of the first four seals, that they really belong together, are very closely allied, and therefore ought to be discussed in their relation to one another and in their combined effect upon the history of this dispensation. And in the second place, a method that would discuss these seals one by one would be in danger of calling attention to all kinds of doctrines and truths that are undoubtedly implied in the text, but the discussion of which would be irrelevant to the main purpose of the Book of Revelation, that is, to reveal the coming Christ in glory. We now therefore enter upon a discussion of the first four seals, which contain the vision of the four horsemen.

Before we begin the discussion of the significance of each of these four horsemen, it will perhaps not be superfluous to give a word of general introduction both in regard to the general character of the seven seals and the proper mode of their interpretation. As to the first question, there seems to be a rather general impression that all of the seven seals can be classified in the category of judgment-acts of Christ over a sinful and antagonistic world in the special and narrow sense of the word. Now it is very well possible to consider all that Christ performs in the world in this dispensation as being acts of judgment in a general sense of the word, either for good or for evil, in as far, namely, as He is the King of glory Who works for the establishment and final perfection of His kingdom, and as such appears always as the great opponent of Satan and his dominion. But if we take the word "judgment" in its specific and narrower sense, namely, as a calamity sent by Jesus Christ for the purpose of chastizing the world, or by way of recompense for wrong committed, it will soon become evident that the most general idea of all the seals cannot be expressed by that one term. To begin with, it is rather difficult to discover the idea of judgment in the sense designated in the first horse and its rider, going forth conquering and to conquer, and symbolizing,—as a superficial consideration of the text will assure us,—the victorious progress of the cause of the kingdom of God in this dispensation. The same conclusions must be reached in regard to the fifth seal. As it is opened, the souls under the altar

appeal to the Judge of heaven and earth for vengeance because their blood has been shed by the enemies of the kingdom of God on earth. Also in this case it is difficult to detect any act of judgment whatsoever. The martyred saints are simply told to be patient yet a little while; and white robes are given them as a symbol of their anticipatory glory and righteousness. And therefore we must arrive at a more general, comprehensive conception of the nature of these seven seals, and consider them rather as symbolizing the history of this present dispensation from its main aspects, the chief currents of events as they all flow toward the one great goal of all history, the perfection of the glorious kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. The history of this dispensation has only one possible purpose and consummation the coming of the glorious kingdom of God. All the events of history, all the factors and agencies that combine to make history must be conducive to that one great purpose. And any event in the world's history possesses its own peculiar significance for the coming of the kingdom of glory. Taking in consideration, therefore, that the one important theme of the Book of Revelation is the coming King and the completion of the kingdom, and that the book of the seven seals must be taken as symbolic of the living and powerful decree of the Almighty, the ultimate purpose of which is the glory of God's name through the coming of God's kingdom, we are safe in drawing the conclusion that these seven seals are intended to reveal to us the main aspects and larger currents of the history of this dispensation as they cooperate to bring the kingdom of Christ to its perfect consummation.

In regard to the second question we raised, pertaining, namely, to the proper mode of interpretation, we would remark that we cannot agree with those interpreters that explain these seals in the temporal, historical sense, as if we must consider them as revealing the successive events of history in their exact chronological order, each seal extending over a rather definitely designated period of history, till finally the climax of this dispensation is reached in the kingdom of God. In regard to this mode of interpretation we would make the practical observation, in the first place, that it not infrequently has been conducive to the wildest speculations with respect to the exact date of the coming of Christ for final judgment. Naturally, if the different seals are indicative of seven successive periods of the history of the church and of the world, and if, moreover, it is possible to identify these periods in actual history with any approach to definiteness, we must surely be able to ascertain rather reliably exactly how far we have advanced in our day on the road to the second advent, and make at least some calculation as to the length of the way still before us. This, however, is an impossibility if we may believe that the Word of Jesus in relation to the exact day and hour of His coming is true today as well as at the time when it was spoken. Besides, such an interpretation is based on an altogether too mechanical view of history, and is not at all



in harmony with reality. It is, for instance, not true that the first four seals,—call them, if you please: the victorious progress of the kingdom, war, famine, and pestilence,—find their corresponding realization in definitely marked periods of history. On the contrary, history much rather presents such an aspect as to make a surmise from the outset that these four riders are simultaneously upon earth, although with this exception, that now the one, now the other, appears emphatically on the foreground. And therefore, this mode of interpretation cannot be accepted as the proper one. On the other hand, we must also dissent from those that would refer the realization of the prophecy contained in all the seven seals entirely to the future, preferably to a period immediately preceding the coming of our Lord. Among these we may especially note that class of interpreters that would place all the seals in the period of the great tribulation. The church has already been taken up into heaven, the rapture has taken place, when these seals shall be realized. Against this view may rightly be urged that in that case the book loses its value and purpose. For it undoubtedly means to be a source of instruction and consolation for the church of Christ in general, which she scarcely needs if all these things shall be realized after she has been taken up into glory. Against this may be urged, in the second place, that heretofore the book has not spoken of a rapture of the church whatsoever. The slender ground that is supposed to be found in chapter 4, verse 1, where the seer is called “up hither,” is altogether too feeble to support this theory. And finally, against this may also be urged the fact that history plainly reveals that the things symbolized in the seals to a certain extent actually do come to pass and are realized day by day. Hence, we must rather combine the two theories mentioned into one, and maintain that although the realization of the seals undoubtedly must be looked upon as to a certain extent still future, and although there is a certain succession noticeable in the fulfillment of their prophecy in actual history, so that new elements enter in occasionally that have not been witnessed in the past, and, besides, there is an increase in clearness and vividness of their realization, nevertheless to a large extent the seals,—especially the first six,—are being realized simultaneously, so that, as we have remarked, the four horsemen are making their drive through the earth all at the same time, and that throughout the period spanned by this dispensation many of these things have come to pass in days gone by, are being realized in the present day, repeat themselves in the history of the world from time to time with increasing vehemence and clearness, till all the different streams and currents of history shall converge in the final goal, the completed kingdom of our God.

Turning our attention now to the first four seals, we may remark, in the first place, that they belong together and form a group of seals distinct from the rest. First of all, they are plainly distinguished by their allegorical figures,

the horses and their riders, which occur in connection with all the first four seals, and with them only. In the second place, they are distinct by the fact that in the issuing forth of each one of them one of the four living creatures that surround the throne of the Almighty sounds the command, or invitation: “Come!” This is evidently the correct rendering. Our version has it that in each case one of the living creatures bids: “Come and see.” And the impression might be that every time it is John who is addressed, rather than the horse and its rider. However, this is not the case. John is already in the Spirit in heaven, and does not need the invitation to come and see. And if such an invitation should have been necessary at the rushing forth of the first horse, it certainly would have been superfluous to repeat it with the other three cases. Besides, it may be supposed that John is wide awake, stirred to the depths of his soul, profoundly interested in the vision he receives, and therefore does not need the invitation, “Come and see.” Not to him, but to the horseman that is about to rush forward on its impetuous drive through the earth, comes the simple command: “Come!” And if now we remember that in these four living creatures we have the symbols of the fulness of all earthly creation, we understand immediately that the suggestion is given in this four-fold command that all the world is deeply interested in the work of these four horses with their riders. However this may be, certain it is that also in this repeated bid we have an indication that the first four seals evidently belong together, and form a distinct group.

In regard to the symbolism implied in these seals, in general we have our attention called, in the first place, to the figure of the horses and their riders. Even in our day the horse is an animal employed in battle. But especially in Scripture does the horse occur preeminently as an animal of war. Already from Psalm 33:17 this becomes evident, where we read: “A horse is a vain thing for safety, neither doth he deliver any by his great power.” Here the horse is evidently referred to in connection with the battle. And then it is also plain that he is pictured in Scripture, even by implication in the text quoted, as symbolic of undaunted courage and vehement, irrepressible onslaught in battle. Beautiful is from this point of view the description we have of the horse in Job 39:19-25: “Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.” This is surely a most beautiful and masterful picture of the horse from a literary point of view.

But for our purpose it is sufficient to observe that the Word of God knows the horse as the animal for battle *par excellence*, the picture of strength and undaunted courage, of irrepressible onslaught, and vehement eagerness for the battle. Hence, when we see these horses go forth into the earth, we may be assured that there is to be war and battle, and that the power of these seals cannot be checked or successfully opposed. However, they do not symbolize wild and undirected forces. On the contrary, these horses all have a rider, who, of course, directs the horse according to his will. This shows in general that the powers and forces symbolized by these horses can do nothing more than they are supposed to do. They are forces directed and limited by intelligent will to a definite goal. Already the fact that they proceed from the book with its seven seals, and that they therefore are liberated to do their work at the bidding of the Lamb, inspires us with confidence that they cannot run at random, that they are not blind powers or independent forces. But especially the fact that each of these horses has a rider, directing them intelligently, is symbolic of the fact that they cannot run wild, that the forces symbolized by the horses are well controlled and directed to their proper destination. We must not ask the irrelevant question as to who the rider represents on every horse, for the simple reason that he does not symbolize any particular person definitely. Horse and rider belong together. They constitute one whole. They represent one idea. And that idea is an irrepressibly strong and vehement force, ready for battle, completely controlled by intelligent will. Or, if you please, it reveals to us that history in this dispensation is completely under the control of the Lamb that standeth as though it hath been slain, to Whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, and that events on this earth are definitely and intelligently directed by His Spirit, sent forth into all the earth.

Our next observation in regard to the symbolism of these four seals concerns the color of each horse, and in harmony with their respective colors the other details of description. The color of the first horse is white, which is symbolic of victory. Repeatedly this color appears as such in Scripture. Those that are faithful and overcome shall ultimately appear in white robes. In chapter 19:11, ff., where we have a final description of the battle of Armageddon, the Lord Jesus appears as the victor, seated upon a white horse, in all the glory of His power and victory. Thus it was also customary in the Roman army that the victors should return riding on white horses. Hence, it may be deemed rather evident that the white horse is symbol of a victorious power. In harmony with this color of the horse are the other features pictured in the text. First of all, we are told that the rider has a bow, which is symbolic of righteous and victorious warfare. In Psalm 45:5 we read of the king that is typical of Christ: "Thine arrows are sharp, the peoples fall under thee, they are in the heart of the king's enemies."

In the second place, the rider receives a crown: not the royal diadem in this case, but the garland, the wreath of victory. And finally, this idea of victory is definitely expressed in the last clause, that the rider goes forth "conquering and to conquer," which by its peculiar repetition assures us of the certainty of the victory this rider will win. Therefore, we have in the first seal the picture of an armed warrior, going forth to battle, whose victory is assured him beforehand.

The color of the second horse is red, or, as the original indicates, a color glowing like fire. It is the color of wrath and anger, of heated passion and violent emotion, such as causes a man's blood to rush to his countenance, of lust and gain, of envy and revenge, of blood and war. The man that cometh from Bozrah, with sprinkled garments, who has trodden the winepress of Jehovah's anger alone, is red in his apparel. And when the Lord is described in all the holy zeal of His heated anger, He is pictured in Scripture as a consuming fire. This horse bears the color of a glowing fire, of heated passion and revenge and bloodshed and war, of which it is also symbolic. Again, the other details mentioned of this second horse and its rider serve to corroborate and enforce this idea. For, in the first place, we read that he receives a great sword, symbolic of war and death and destruction. And in the second place, the definite information is given us that this horse receives the power to take peace from the earth. And therefore, in general the second horse and his rider are the picture of heated passion and wrath going forth to do its work in the earth.

The third horse is black. Occurring in the Word of God this color is the symbol of scarcity and famine. In referring to a drought in the land of Judah in his own time, the prophet Jeremiah writes: "Judah mourneth and the gates thereof languish, they sit in black upon the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up." Jeremiah 14:2.

H.H.

## EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 5)

they know very well, or they should know if they are not entirely ignorant, that such an interpretation has been given more than once and that the Christian Reformed can simply refer to those interpretations. It is not very likely that they will depart from or repudiate the interpretation offered by the former professor Berkhof, one of the chief authors of the "Three Points."

Let this be sufficient.

I feel confident that if the schismatics are demanded to sign the "Three Points," as they undoubtedly will be asked to do, in order to get back to the Christian Reformed Church, they will have no objection unless a large number of their followers raise their voice against it.

H.H.



## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Zechariah

Chapter 9:14-17

14. *And Jehovah shall appear above them, and like lightning shall his arrow go forth, and the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet, and go forth in the storms of the South.* 15. *Jehovah of hosts shall protect them, and they devour and tread down sling-stones, and they drink and make a noise as from wine, and become full like bowls, as the corners of the altar.* 16. *And Jehovah their God saves them in that day, (saves) like a flock his people, for Jewels like a crown shall they be, sparkling over the land.* 17. *For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Corn makes the young men grow, and new wine the maidens.*

The promise that the Lord will reward His people double (verse 12) can only be realized in the way of the destruction of the wicked, of all such who make answer of war to the proclamation of peace to the heathen. There is still therefore a fight to be fought, the good warfare of faith that Christ wages through His church toward the victory that He merited for her and that is hers in Him. In this section (verses 13-17), this victorious warfare is described in figures bold and sublime. In this warfare Judah and Ephraim are bow and arrow in the hand of Jehovah and Zion the sword (verse 13). Being creatures, who live and move and have their being in God, also the wicked in their violence are rods in God's hand—rods of His anger. So the king of Assyria whom the Lord sent against the people of His wrath and charged to tread them down like the mire of the street, Isa. 10:5ff. But the saints are a sword in the hand of God as His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto a warfare that is holy, which God hath before ordained that they should wage it, which they do by His mercy. By His spirit He stirs them up against the adversary. And their sword is now solely the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ. It is this word that pierces and slays the enemies of the church. For the Word, the Gospel, demands and foretells the overthrow of the enemies, and being the Word of God that He speaks it always accomplishes what He declares. And as identified by faith with the Word, the saints overcome the world, yet not they but the Word.

14. *And Jehovah shall appear above them.* With the saints fighting the good fight the Lord is manifest above them as their captain to lead, protect and fight for them and to give them the victory. During the forty years of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, the Lord was manifested to His people for these purposes by the "pillar of cloud" that the Scriptures in the book of Exodus identifies with the Angel of the Lord and the latter with Jehovah. And through the Scriptures the church of this age sees this same Angel now

the incarnate Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the throne, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and the head over all things in the church. *And like lightning shall his arrow go forth.* According to the preceding verse, this arrow is His people. As stirred up by Christ's Spirit they go forth and pierce the enemy, yet not they but the Word that dwells rightly in them and with the power of which they are surcharged and that they proclaim by a living faith. *And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet.* And there is heard the trumpet-blast, the gospel-sound by which Christ calls His people to the holy warfare. *And go forth in the whirlwinds of the south.* The Lord fights for His people through all the brute forces in His creation. For all things are Christ's and Christ is theirs. Singled out here are the storms of the south, from across the broad desert and peculiarly severe. Penetrated by His essence, they whirl and twist their way over the earth by His power. And therefore it is so true that He comes in them. And the place of their origination is the south. Perhaps there is an illusion to Sinai, as the original dwelling place of the Lord, from whence He proceeded to fight for His people. But the church has come to the heavenly Jerusalem and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. From here comes now all her help.

15. *And the Lord of hosts shall cover them.* He is their sun and shield through Christ who prays for them. And therefore no real harm can befall them. Their faith abides. And though the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day. *And they devour and subdue with sling-stones and they drink.* Their subduing the enemy as armed with nothing more formidable in the way of weapons of war than slings and pebbles accentuates the truth that their victory is a wonder of God. *Flesh* is to be supplied as the object of *devour* and *blood* as that of *drink*. The figure is that of a lion that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of his victim. An identical figure is that of Num. 23:24, "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain." The reality denoted by this imagery is the overwhelming and complete victory of the saints over their enemies. The world-powers will be overthrown never again to rehabilitate themselves. The world will pass away with a finality that will spell its end forever. The wicked, the heathen that made answer of war, will go into perdition. The devil will be cast into the bottomless pit. Corruption will put on incorruption and this mortal immortality and thereby death swallowed up in victory. The elements will melt with a fervant heat and the heavens will be rolled up as a scroll, and there will be new heavens and a new earth upon which righteousness shall dwell. And the saints devour subdue and drink. It is therefore to be an accomplishment of the saints yet not of the saints but of the Word of God, of the Christ of God. There are works that the saints perform as the fruit of the working of Christ's

Spirit in them. By His mercy they believe in His name, crucify their members which are upon the earth, walk in newness of life, confess His name before men and proclaim His gospel. But there are also works of Christ that He performs apart from them, such as overthrowing and making an end of the kingdoms of this world, etc. But also these works they are said to do because of their being in Him by a living faith. He the vine and they the branches. This explains the closing verses of the book of Deuteronomy where it stated that there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face in all the signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt. The reference is to the ten plagues. Here the Lord as good as tells us that Moses brought over Egypt these plagues, which can only mean that the Lord performed these wonders in the way of Moses' implicit trust in Him as the wonder-working God and thus in the way of Moses' holding His promises and relying upon His Word. By faith, by such faith, the saints overcome the world, yet not they but the Christ in whom they put all their confidence. Because they have such faith as given them of God, they are said to do what Christ alone can do. Because by faith they are in Christ, it is through Christ that they do all things, not alone fight the good fight of faith as the fruit of the working of Christ's grace in them but in this fight overcome the devil and His whole dominion. Being more than conquerors in Christ, *they make a noise as of wine*. Wine is a physical stimulant that makes glad the heart. Christ is the true bread and the true wine. Eating and drinking Him they have life in themselves and a heavenly gladness floods their soul. Having achieved the victory through Him they joy in Him and make a joyful sound. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. *And they become full like a bowl, as the corners of the altar*. The bowl is the one in which the blood of the sacrificial victim was caught (Ex. 38:3; Num. 4:14). As these were filled with the blood of the sacrificial animal, so the saints will be filled with the blood of their enemies devoted to God on the altar of His wrath. And they shall be covered with the blood of their enemies like the corners of the altar are covered with the blood of the sacrificial victim. The reference is to the sprinkling of the blood against the altar (Lev. 1:5, 11), and not to the putting of the blood upon the horns (Ex. 29:12). Indicated is again the overwhelming and complete victory of the saints over the enemy.

16. As their victory is solely their faith, our prophet goes on to say that *Jehovah their God will save them in that day, save like a flock* His people. He shall deliver them from the totality of their enemies — sin, death and the world and the prince thereof, the devil — and give them life in glory. And He saves them that, according to His purpose, *they be for jewels of a crown, sparkling over His land*, that is, glittering in their heavenly beauty over the new earth, or, according to the Hebrew text literally translated, *For jewels of a crown, raising themselves up over his land*. The verbal

form is reflexive and is derived from a stem meaning *to raise up*.

17. But what is this beauty of the church but the creatural reflection of the goodness and the beauty of the God of her salvation. In lively awareness of this the prophet exclaims in joyful amazement, *For how great is his goodness and his beauty!* And concludes, *Corn makes the young men thrive, and wine the maidens*. The Lord will provide abundantly for His living jewels, His redeemed and glorified people. It explains their everlasting well-being and sparkle.

Some additional remarks on verse 15.

*And they shall subdue with sling-stones*. Some think that the enemies are contemptuously called sling-stones or mere pebbles tread down by the saints and therefore translate here, *And they shall tread down sling-stones*. This view is strained. Yet it is not inadmissible as far as the possible grammar of the Hebrew is concerned. *Sling-stones* may also be the object of the verb in this sentence.

*And they shall be filled as a bowl and as the corners of the altar*, but according to others, "And they shall fill both the bowl and the corners of the altar," that is, by offering sacrifices in token of their gratitude for victory. But this rendering is hardly warranted by the grammar of the Hebrew.

From the description of Zion's King contained in this chapter — He is lowly and meek and afflicted and just. He speaks peace to the *heathen* and His kingdom includes the whole earth and its peoples — it is clear that the reach of the prophecies of these verses extends to the end of time. That I spiritualized our prophet's predictions, expressing their thought in the language of the New Testament Scriptures, was therefore the right thing to do. What comfort could the church of this age derive from these discourses, if the prophets are not always dealing in types, if, in other words, they in the final instance are not occupied with the work of the incarnate Son of God in this present dispensation of the world and with the final deliverance and glorification of the church? No comfort whatever. To refuse to spiritualize where it is plain that we should, and accordingly end with these promises in the Jews is to fall into the error of premillennialism.

## Chapter X

### THE LORD THE ONLY FOUNTAIN OF ALL GOOD, 1, 2

1. *Ask of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain; Jehovah creates lightnings, and showers of rain will he give them, to everyone grass in the field.* 2. *For the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and speak dreams of deceit, they comfort in vain; therefore they have wandered like a flock, they are oppressed because there is no shepherd.*

The prophecies of this chapter are encumbered by an indefiniteness peculiar to all prophecy of the Scriptures seeing that it is not history written beforehand.

Also the Gospel of this chapter comes, as it always does, to the people of God who are oppressed and afflicted and in consequence thereof in great distress, and who, such is the implication, look to the Lord for deliverance. They are the same people whom the prophet in the previous chapter calls *prisoners of hope*. At the time of the utterance of this prophecy they were found in every land of what was then the known world as a result of the dispersion of the Israel of the ten tribes among the nations. But also through centuries previous to this time the heathen had been preying upon the people of Israel and leading away captive many of them. Not to be included in these oppressed and distressed ones are the voluntary exiles in Babylon, Jews who, because of their love of this world, had abided in that heathen land, where they had prospered, instead of heeding the exhortation of Cyrus to return to Jerusalem and build the temple. But there is no reason to exclude the believing Jews in Judea. For though the Lord had turned their captivity, they were still under the dominion of the world powers and were looking for the consolation of Israel. And the lot of these believing Jews there in Judea was also hard. For they were oppressed and exploited by the carnal Israel in their midst, most of whom were rich and who refused to build the temple on which account the Lord withheld rain and sent drought. And this affliction had also to be endured by the devout in Judea also certainly on account of their own sins. In fine, these oppressed ones are the church in tribulation also of this present age. It means that also the Gospel of this chapter is for us.

I. *Ask of Jehovah rain* . . . So the prophets of the Lord had been crying to the people of Israel through all the ages of the past from the day of Moses on, when in punishment of their apostacies the Lord had sent drought and smitten His people with divers calamities. Moses had forewarned them. "And it shall come to pass," He had said, "if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." In the succeeding verses these blessings are named. These blessing included also plentiful goods, in the fruit of their body, and in the fruit of their cattle, and in the fruit of their ground, in the land that the Lord swore unto their fathers to give them. In the way of their obedience the Lord will open to them His good treasures, the heaven to give rain unto the land in his season, and to bless all the work of their hands (Deut. 28:1ff). But it shall come to pass, if thy will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God, that all these curses shall come upon them. In the succeeding verses these curses are named. They include also drought. Their heaven that is over their head shall be brass and the earth under them iron. The Lord will make the rain of their land powder and dust. From

heaven it shall come upon them until they be destroyed. These curses included further being smitten before their enemies and removed into all the kingdoms of the earth (Deut. 28:15ff). So were the blessings and the curses of the law made to reveal themselves in the existence of the church of that day, it being the dispensation of shadows. This material prosperity was shadow. It typified the spiritual and heavenly blessings of the kingdom of Christ, while the divers calamities by which the nation was overtaken when it forsook the Lord foreshadowed the nameless woe to be suffered by the damned in hell. This material good, being the token of God's favor and love was a blessing only for the elect. For the others it was a curse and was also so intended. These calamities were a curse only for the reprobated. For the elect they were a blessing, seeing that, according to the purpose of God, they drove them into the arms of Christ.

*Ask of Jehovah rain* exhorted the Lord's prophets when in time of national apostacy there was no rain and the heaven over head was brass and the earth under foot iron. Rightly considered it was a call to repentance that came to the whole nation soul for soul, a mandate that they forsake their abominations and seek after God in their afflictions as confessing that it was He who was smitting them on account of their sins. And there was also a promise unto these asking and seeking ones who by His mercy would humble themselves under His mighty hand and confess that His strokes were deserved. The promise was this, *Jehovah creates lightning, and showers of rain will he give them, to every one grass in the field*, that is, to every penitent ones.

So spake, rebuked and admonished, the true prophets of the Lord. But there were also other, the diviners and their idols, the false prophets in Israel. Their great sin was that they prophesied of rain and general prosperity and peace without calling the apostate Israel to repentance. This was like declaring that God loves impenitent, reprobated men and that grace is common. In the false prophets the apostate Israel put all its confidence. Instead of asking rain of the Lord, it asked rain of them and repented not. So, when the cup of iniquity was filled up the Lord removed Israel into the kingdoms of the nation. He scattered them among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other, as Moses had foretold (Deut. 27:64). And among these people, in these strange lands, they found no rease, neither rest for the sole of their foot, but trembling of heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. Their life hung in doubt before them and they feared day and night and had no assurance of their life. They were sold unto their enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and there was no man to resem them (Deut. 28:65ff). In the words of our prophets, there in those strange lands, *they wandered as a flock, and were oppressed, afflicted, because they had no shepherd*, meaning that such was their terrible lot because they had no king to

(Continued on page 21)

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

#### XI.

(I Corinthians 14:21)

In our former essay we pointed out the very grave error of the Corinthians in regard to their perversion of the "gift of tongues." They were very little concerned with the word of prophecy, with the clear expression in their "own tongue" of the message of salvation in Christ Jesus, the Lord. It seems quite evident that this "speaking with tongues" in the bonafide sense of the word had deteriorated into mere foolish and unintelligent gibberish.

In their folly for striving after "speaking with tongues" they had separated what God had in his wisdom joined together. Thus they tempted God in the church. For they did not will to hear the clear speech of God in prophecy. They did not will to hear and heed the "thus saith the Lord."

Principally they were on the road of those for whom the Holy Scripture had become a closed book. Thus "tongues" were not a medium of hearing the Word of God, the Gospel of our salvation, but they were simply the empty form, a counterfeit of the true speaking with tongues, which were an evidence that God was truly in their midst.

To demonstrate the profound error of this reckless disregard of prophecy and to warn the church of its consequences Paul quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah, which he denominates as "law." It is written "in the law," which is the rule of faith and life. He quotes the very significant passage which reads as follows: "Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little. *Nay but by men of strange lips with another tongue will he speak to this people*; to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: *yet they would not hear.*" Isaiah 28:9-12.

The reader will notice that the part which Paul quotes in I Cor. 14:21 is underscored by us in the text quoted from Isaiah 28. This is quoted by Paul in I Corinthians 14:21 as follows: "In the law is written, *By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people: and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord.*"

After making a rather careful and comparative study of I Cor. 14:21 in the light of Isaiah 28:9-12, we submit the following for the considered and sanctified attention of the reader of these lines:

1. In general we may note that in Isaiah 28 the prophet is addressing Israel from the viewpoint of its being the Is-

rael which is called Israel, but which really is not Israel of the promise at all. It is merely Israel as they are the children of the flesh. They are essentially no different than was Ishmael, who was *not* born from the free-woman but from the bond-woman. They are still in the bondage of sin. They are those who are "cast out" by God as was Ishmael of old. Hence, they are called "this people." From a natural-organic viewpoint they are one with Israel, to whom pertained the adoption, the law-giving, the promises, and from whom Christ is born, who is God blessed forever, Amen! Rom. 9:1-5. The designation "this people" reminds us of what Jesus says in Matthew 15:8, "*This people* honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men."

2. As such they are to be considered to be principally different from the children of the promise, those whom the prophets call the "residue of my people" (Is. 28:5). This latter people is the people who are blessed because they know the joyful sound, hear the message. Psalm 89:15. Of this latter people Isaiah had prophesied when he named his son "Jear-jashub," a remnant will return, the remnant according to election. See Isaiah 7:3 and Isaiah 10:20-23. Did not the angel say unto Gabriel when explaining the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit in Mary, "And ye shall call His name JESUS, for he shall save His *people* from their sins." And did not the angel declare unto the shepherds in Bethlehem-Ephratha that this glad-tidings was of such a nature that it would be to "*all the people?*"

3. When the prophet speaks of what God will say to "this people" it ought to be clear that he is speaking to a rebellious and stiffnecked people, to those who are not merely little in faith, but who are unbelievers. They are those which caused Isaiah to cry out, "Lord who hath believed our report and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed." Isaiah 53:1. Compare Romans 10:16. They are those in whom the hearing was not mingled with faith. Yes, they had indeed heard with a natural hearing. They understood very well with their natural understanding the Word of God. But their hearts are fat, as we read in Isaiah 6:10, "Make the heart of *this people* fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." Of these Jesus says in Matthew 13:11, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them* (that are without) (the rest — Luke 8:10) it is not given. For whosoever hath to him it shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but whosoever hath not from him shall be taken what he hath. "And in Luke 8:18 we read of these same unbelieving Israelites as follows, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken *even that which he thinketh to have.*" And does not John say in the Gospel, Chapter 12:37-40, "But though

he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him: that the word of Isaiah might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart: lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart and should turn and I should heal them."

4. Here in Isaiah 38:9-13 we should notice the following particulars concerning "this people" to whom it is said that the Lord will speak to them by the "strange tongues and by the lips of strangers." In the first place we should notice that we cannot agree with the various interpretations which would make "this people" the true children of God for the simple reason that it does not agree with the context nor with the manner in which the Holy Spirit in Paul quotes this passage to refute the evil "speaking with tongues" among the Corinthians. When the prophet says, personifying God, the Lord, what he will do to "this people," he is speaking of those who have turned away from the Word of God as spoken clearly by the prophets. The yare those who are "weaned from milk" and "drawn from breasts." They are, so to speak on their own. They do not long for the pure milk of the word to grow thereby. They have not tasted that the Lord is good. The Stone in Zion is for them a Rock of offense—unto which they have been set. (Compare I Peter 2:1-8). In the second place, their stumbling at the "Rock of offence," the Stone laid in Zion, reveals itself in their evil and unbelieving speech. Tired of the clear word of the prophets they mimic them and say: Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. This is not an objective description of God's favor to the Jews, their abundant instruction in the oracles of God intrusted to them, nor is this a description of the method of instruction necessary for a people for whom it is difficult to learn higher knowledge, nor does this refer to the methods of teachers, being a description of their puerile and childish methods of instruction. It is simply the unbelieving sing-song mockery and jest of "this people" who honors God with their lips, but who in their deepest heart is far from God! This is very descriptive in the Hebrew where transliterated we read: tsau latzau, tsau latzau, kau lakau, kau lakau, tsau latzau, tsau latzau, kau lakau, kau lakau. It is for them here a little there a little. They hate, what they consider, this minuteness in detail, and this perpetual repetition of the prophets. Of this "this people" is sick and tired. Thirdly, we know that these people never heard "the message" of the Christ in the Scriptures. At this they "stumble." Hence, all they have left is the law. They principally kill the Lord of glory with the book of the prophets in their hand as a "closed book," which they cannot read!

5. To "this people" the Lord announces a terrible judgment. It is on the basis of their own unbelief. They get

exactly what they desired in the fury and hot displeasure of the Lord. God will now speak to them by "another tongue, by the lips of a strange people." They did not desire "the message" in their "own tongues"; they did not desire to hear the wonderful works of God in the Christ, which was to come. Hence, the prophetic word will be wholly taken from them. In the first place, it should be noticed that these "other tongues" are the tongues which are principally "other" from those who have uttered the Word of the Lord. They are the "tongues" of the Assyrians. In these "tongues of others" they shall not hear words in which the manner and the time of the suffering of Christ is searched out and the glory to follow. (I Peter 1:11). The Hebrew text calls the stammering lips. They do not proclaim rest for the weary. They are words which speak only of judgment, loudly they proclaim the reality that, that which they thought to have was taken from them. Then, in the second place, it should be noticed that even thus they do not desire to hear the Lord. There is no return. There is no repentance. It is a finished work. For a full end, and that determined, (full consummation) will the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, make in the midst of the earth. From this there is no return. There is not a "second chance." Only the Remnant shall return, the remnant according to the election of grace.

6. That Paul quotes this tremendous passage, in connection with the conduct of the Corinthians, shows how serious Paul considered this erroneous speaking with tongues. Surely the mere fact that Paul quotes this passage and intimates the relevancy of this passage to the condition in Corinth is ample reason for becoming sober and serious. They who desire tongues, without prophecy, or interpretation with tongues, evidently did not like the "message" of hope and redemption in the Cross. Whether there be "rest" proclaimed for the "weary" means nothing to these "tongues" zealots. Thus their flesh was like the unbelief of Israel, if not worse.

Just how such a speaking with tongues in Corinth stands in the way of the church being the mother of believers, in the way of the offices and Charismata in the church to edify the entire body, we hope to show in our next article, D.V.

G.L.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society and the Men's Society of the Holland Church join together in expressing their heartfelt sympathy to their fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Justin H. Kortering and their family, in the recent death of Mrs. Kortering's mother

MRS. DIENA BARKEL

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Psalm 27:1

## IN HIS FEAR

### Showing the Coming Generation God's Praises

#### 2.

*"My people give ear, attend to my word,  
In parables new deep truths shall be heard;  
The wonderful story our fathers made known  
To children succeeding by us must be shown."*

So we sing. And so the psalmist wrote in Psalm 78:1-4. And we like to call special attention to that "by us must be shown." This is brought out more strongly and properly emphasized in the second stanza of Psalter number 213, of which we quoted the first verse above. In it we sing,

*"Instructing our sons we gladly record  
The praises, the works, the might of the Lord,  
For He hath commanded that what He hath done  
Be passed in tradition from father to son."*

You will note that here we have the "must" of this showing of God's praises to the coming generations. He hath *commanded* that what He hath done be passed in tradition from father to son.

There is one point of difference between the psalm as written by Asaph and the versification quoted above. The versification is a very faithful one; and we are not criticizing it as misleading and leaving a wrong impression. But we want to note that the psalm does not speak of instructing our sons, and of father passing tradition to his son, but instead to of the sons of the Church and of shewing these things to the coming generations.

The versification is correct in that it expresses the fundamental Scriptural principle that God holds the parent responsible for the covenant training of his own son first of all. A man not interested in providing for the spiritual training of his own flesh and blood will not, of course, have any sincere desire to show God's praises, or help others to show God's praises to the children of other covenant parents. The Scriptures know nothing of a sincere, fervent zeal for bringing to the Hottentot in Africa and his children the praises, the works and the might of the Lord that has no interest in the children between our homes and Africa and in providing all the training that is possible for the children in the very home itself. The Apostles were not set on fire with a zeal to go first to the ends of the earth. They started in Jerusalem with an ever widening circle of activity as God opened the way. And they were instructed to go first to the Jew and then to the Gentile. For that reason we can

subscribe fully to the versification which says, "Instructing our sons . . . for He hath commanded that what He hath done be passed in tradition from father to son."

That is where it must begin!

God gives to us the children which He is pleased to place under our care. And He demands of those to whom He gives these children that they use all their faculties and resources — which He also gave and over which He has made us stewards — to train up those children in the fear of His name. That calling and that responsibility cannot be transferred to other parents. The parent may — and in this day and age that is an absolute must because of the complexity of our present day life — hire others to do this for him. Parents may, and wisely do, band together to form a school society and hire teachers to give instruction in the various subjects for which the parents have neither the time nor the training. But then the parent does not transfer his responsibility to that teacher. He only adds to his own. He still is responsible for that covenant training of his child; and he is now also responsible for seeing to it that the teacher he hires — individually or collectively as member of the school society — gives the instruction which he must see that his child gets. This is a calling and a responsibility every parent has in respect to all his children.

However we have not said all when we say that the parent must see to it that God's praises are shown to his son. It is not enough to say that the father must pass to his son the tradition (the truth concerning God) he received from his father. (We understand, of course, that this is Old Testament language, when there was no printed Bible for each home to possess. And God preserved the truth concerning Himself by tradition as father handed down to his son the praises of God when he would tell and retell of the mighty works of God). That is not what Asaph says in this psalm. He writes, "We will not hide them from their children . . . For He . . . commanded our fathers, that they should make them know unto their children." The whole Church has a calling and a responsibility before God for the instruction in God's praises of all the children of the Church. Note that the psalmist speaks of "their" children and says that "We will not hide them." The actual training and giving of instruction may not and often cannot be given by one to the children of others; but the calling of all is to support financially and with moral support the training and instruction in which God's praises, His might and His wonderful works are shown to the youth of the Church.

The childless have a calling to contribute financially toward and support morally the covenant training of the children of others. Those whose children are now parents and who have no more children at home to send to a Christian school still have a calling to assist the training of the children of others. The psalmist speaks the language of faith



when he says that the believers will show forth the praises of God to the coming generations. The believer has interest in God's kingdom, in His cause, in the spiritual joy and salvation of all the youth of the Church. And therefore he, with Asaph, says WE will not hide them: WE will show them to the coming generations.

The Church is not a group of rugged individualists. The Church is the body of Christ and is composed of members that stand in an inseparable connection with each other. They shall not simply comprise a body in the new creation. That Church of Christ is now already the body of Christ. It was designed and brought into being by God as a body. All the members work together for the same goal. All the members are interested in the wellbeing of the other members. When one member suffers, they all suffer. Therefore the members who have no children (or whose children have graduated from school and no longer have personal need of an institution that gives instruction and training that has for its purpose the showing of God's praises to His people) will understand their calling to help in the showing of God's praises and will *desire* to do so in the love of God.

That brings us to the second observation which we wish to make at this time. The reason why a child of God shows the praises of God to the coming generation is that he loves God. O, indeed, he loves his children; and in that love he seeks the very best of everything for them. In his love for his child a parent will surely desire the salvation of that child will desire to see that his child has the joy of the only comfort in life and in death. Yet we must not confuse natural love, which even the reprobate, sin-hardened individual may have for his child, and the love of God which comes from God, returns unto Him in all the things which He gives to us and does for us and delights in His praise and glory. It is that love of God that causes us to show His praises to His children.

Why should a childless couple, why should a father and mother whose children are grown up continue to support financially and morally the showing of God's praises to those children who have no physical tie of relationship and natural love to them? The answer is and must be: Because they love God. A parent in his natural love for his child may and will desire to see his child escape the awful torments of hell. Such is also the implication of the parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus. He surely desires to see his five brothers escape the agony in which he found himself. There is nothing spiritual in that. A carnal, natural love can cause that. Yea, a man can desire that while he hates the God Who inflicts that torment in His justice and holiness. But it takes the love of God to cause a man to desire to show God's praises unto God's covenant children. The rich man in the parable makes no mention of that. God is not in all his thoughts.

That we will not hide these things from the covenant youth because we love God is also set forth by the psalmist

who expresses this covenant resolve before God's face. For in verse 5 he adds, "For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known unto their children."

It is God's law that we should!

God has commanded that we should shew His praises, His might and His wonderful works to our children. If and when natural love should fail and the love of money, which we cannot force ourselves to spend for this instruction, rules us instead, we cannot get away from that command of God. If and when natural love fails and convenience and the ease and comfort of our flesh asserts itself in the place of that natural love, we still have a law which God appointed in Israel. And Israel here means His Church in all ages.

You can get around men. You can ignore what man tells you from the pulpit. You can argue with them in your home. You can even convince them that yours is a good excuse, yours is a just case. But remember you cannot get around God. You cannot ignore Him and have Him remain helpless over against your opposition to His laws and commandments. You cannot convince Him that your excuse is good and that your cause is just. You have to deal with Him. You must live always, also with your children and their training in His fear.

And, you will now understand, then it is the love of God that will cause you to shew, and see to it that others show, unto your children God's praises, His strength and His wonderful works. Only the love of God will cause us to keep His law. His law demands love in the inner being. Without the love of God we cannot keep His commandments; not this one either.

You have that love of God.

You confessed that when you brought your child to receive the sign and seal of the covenant at its baptism.

Walk then in that love.

Then, and then only, we walk in His fear.

J.A.H.

---

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church wishes to extend its sympathy to a fellow office bearer, elder G. Gunnink, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. JENNIE GUNNINK

May the Lord comfort him in this bereavement and give him grace to rejoice in the assurance that "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Rev. H. Veldman, President

## THE SYMBOLISM OF COLORS IN SCRIPTURE

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Ps. 19:1, 2. Indeed they do! Speech about God; His infinite beauties! Knowledge about God; His divine praises and glory! How well David understood that all creation is a continuous speech, declaring to us the eternal and wonderful thoughts of God.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Rom. 1:20. The things of God are in themselves invisible. They are seen and understood, however, by the things that are made. The creature may do with them what he pleases; acknowledge God or ignore Him; bless or curse; adore God or despise Him; serve His Maker or go his own reprobate way; the simple fact stands that all things speak of God.

It pleased God to reveal Himself in a creature outside of Himself. He did so in Scripture as the God of our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. He did so as well in all the works of His hands. Revelation is God's speech concerning Himself in language the creature is able to understand. Such divine speech we find in all things round about us; the inanimate creation, mountain and valley, ocean and lake and river, rocks and precious stones; the world of plants and of animals no less; the human body and soul with all their marvelous parts and functions; the heavens as we see them, sun and moon and stars, firmament and clouds, rain and snow. All are creaturely embodiments of divine Self-knowledge, that together spell out the name of God and reveal to us His infinite greatness and beauty.

In the midst of all this Self-revelation God placed man, wondrously made to understand it and through it know His Maker. Else there still could be no revelation, however beautiful might be the creaturely mirror of God's wonders in all the works of His hands. There had to be a subject capable of receiving this revelation. To that end God made man in His own image with an intellect capable of knowing Him, a heart adapted to love Him and a mouth fashioned to declare His praises. Again, that man he endowed with marvelous faculties of sight and hearing, touch and taste and smell, that by means of these he might have contact with creation round about him and be able to read this handwriting of God. Of these five senses the two most important are sight and hearing. Of the two the more important, no doubt, is sight.

Thus God speaks to us through all the miracles of His creation. True, we need the light of Scripture to understand it. In its light only do we see the light. God must interpret for us His own handwriting. Equally true it is, that to under-

stand this revelation of God in nature His Spirit must dwell and work in our minds and hearts. Even so, the speech is there. Every creature is the expression of a divine thought. That is speech. Nor is it so that this speech of God in creation merely concerns the wisdom and power and beauty of the Creator in a general way; that there is in nature no speech concerning Christ and grace, salvation and heavenly things; that nature and Scripture are simply two unconnected revelations. The two are closely related since the one God is the author of both. He adapted the one to the other, things earthly to things heavenly. Essentially general and special revelation are one.

Therefore we can speak of symbolism in creation.

There is symbolism, rich and beautiful, in nature itself, in the world of animals, in grass and flowers and trees, in numbers and shapes. All creation is one grand parable.

There is symbolism, too, in colors. Day unto day uttereth speech!

Scripture abounds in references to one color or another. In either the Authorized or Revised Version of the Bible you find mention of at least fifteen different colors. Bay, a shade of red, is used very rarely. Black appears quite frequently in Holy Writ and with application to various things. It is applied to hair, marble or pavement, mourning, passion, horses, the heavens, the sun, the skin and to flocks. Eight different words, indicating as many shades of meaning, have been thus translated. Blue occurs a number of times, mostly with reference to the fringes, veil and coverings of tabernacle and ark; to the vestments of the priests; to "workers in blue"; to palace adornments and royal apparel. The Authorized Version speaks in Gen. 30:32 of the "brown cattle among the sheep." In the Revised Version, however, the same word is translated "black." Crimson, known best for its brilliance, is applied especially to raiment and sins. The color green occurs rather often in Scripture, but almost exclusively as the color of vegetation. Grey is the color of the hair in old age. The same word is also rendered "hoar" or "hoary." Purple is a color often mentioned in the Bible. It was utilized extensively in connection with the adornment of the tabernacle. Among those summoned to assist in the beautifying of the temple were also the "workers in purple." It is used often for regal attire and for gorgeous apparel in general. Red is prominent in Scripture and has a clear symbolic significance. It is applied to dyed skins animals, human skin and eyes, sores, wine, water, pavement and pottage, apparel, the sky and to sin. Scarlet is a shade of red. It, too, was prominent in the equipment of the tabernacle as well as in the cleansing rites for lepers and purification ceremonies. It is used for royal or gorgeous apparel and with various other applications. Sorrel is used only once, in the RV. Vermilion, another shade of red, appears in Jeremiah 22:14 and Ezekiel 23:14 only. Yellow occurs only in Esther 1:6 to describe pavement, in Lev. 13 to describe leprous hair, and in Psalm 68:13 to describe gold. Finally,

there is the color white, used numerous times and with diverse applications.

Although there is little doubt, in view of the infinite wisdom of our Maker, that all these colors must and do have symbolic significance, it is by no means easy or, in some cases, even possible to ascertain just what that significance is. Bay, brown, sorrel, vermillion, even green and yellow are referred to, but no further light is shed on any figurative meaning. Nor should we resort to guesswork or personal philosophy; this can lead only to confusion and arbitrariness. Other colors, such as black, crimson, even blue and scarlet appear to have more than one symbolic connotation. Their precise significance will have to be determined in each case by the concrete context.

It is well, too, to bear in mind that some colors have a figurative significance in every day life, which they cannot be said to have in the Word of God. This is true particularly of yellow and green. When a man is a coward he is said to be "yellow." The color is also used to symbolize caution. In Scripture you find nothing of the kind. Green in every day parlance is often used to denote envy and jealousy. A person is said to be "green with envy" and jealousy is referred to as the "green-eyed monster." Again, however, the connotation seems quite foreign to the Word of God and even more so to God's own creation, where green is most prominent, most soothing and comforting too.

Let us examine a few of the more prominent colors mentioned in Scripture a bit more closely, that is, from the viewpoint of their symbolism.

Of all the colors mentioned in the Bible not one is used more often and with a clearer symbolic significance than "white." It is the color of righteousness, holiness and complete victory; purity, innocence, peace and light. Now the one, then the other connotation appears on the foreground. Therefore it was used so extensively in connection with the tabernacle, its curtains, the veil, the ephod and girdle and breastplate of the high priest. The breeches and miter of the high priest as well as the garments of the lower priests were white exclusively. The first of the four riders of the Apocalypse sits on a white horse. Rev. 6:2. Here the color clearly typifies complete and eternal victory. The other things said about this first horseman put this meaning beyond the reach of all contradiction. To him was given a "crown," a victory wreath, and "he went forth conquering and to conquer." The "Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:9) appears in a garment white as snow and even the hair of His head is like the pure wool. "Let thy garments be always white," Eccl. 9:8. Here the reference is to righteousness and ethical purity. In Rev. 15:6 we see the seven angels having the seven last plagues "clothed in pure and white linen." Always the angels are presented as clad in white. Of the angel at the empty tomb of Jesus it is said, "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Matthew

28:3. Immediately after the ascension of Christ two men stood by the disciples "in white apparel." Acts 1:10. The same is true of the redeemed saints. To Daniel it is said concerning the last times, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly." Daniel 12:10. Of the Lamb's wife Rev. 19:8 tells us, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." When Christ was transfigured on the mount "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." In Rev. 6:11 it is said of the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held, "And white robes were given unto every one of them." The throne of God which Ezekiel saw was white and in Rev. 20:11 we see Christ sitting on "a great, white throne." We could not go on, but there is no need. White is the color of righteousness, holiness, victory; the color of heaven and its inhabitants; the color of God.

Strong, too, in symbicism is the color "red." It is the color of anger, passion, wrath, violence and murder, war and bloodshed. These naturally are denoted by red. In Scripture it is no different. The man that comes from Edom is "red in his apparel," Isaiah 63:1, 2. Little wonder, for he has been treading the winepress of the wrath of God and his garments are stained with the blood of God's and his enemies. In His terrible wrath God is a consuming fire. Red is the color of fire. The second of the Apocalyptic horsemen rides on a red horse and concerning him it is said: "And power was given to him to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given to him a great sword." Rev. 6:4. The indication is, that there would be great wars, wherein multitudes would be killed and streams of blood would flow. Therefore we see Satan in Rev. 12:3 as "a great red dragon." By the same token red is also the color of sin. "Though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18. Red, here, does not stand for indelibility, although this meaning need not be entirely excluded. It is a hard, fast, stubborn color. Try to wash it off and usually you only worsen matters. That is also true of sin. All man's accomplishments cannot blot it out. Nothing can wash it away, — "nothing but the blood of Jesus." The idea is striking enough and true. Even so, this is not the primary significance of red. It is the color of unbridled lust, blind fury, wrath, bloodshed, war and terrible destruction.

The third horseman sits on a black horse. It is the color of want, hunger, mourning, death; also of filth and corruption. It is the absence of all color. The night is black and dark. In Jeremiah 14:2 we see the gates of the city as black of the drought.

"Scarlet" is referred to some forty or more times in the Word of God, often in connection with the tabernacle and the vestments of the priests. It symbolizes wealth and prosperity.

*(Continued on page 24)*

## 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

Article 15. God is under no obligation to confer this grace upon any; for how can he be indebted to man, who had no previous gifts to bestow, as a foundation for such recompense? Nay, who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He therefore who becomes the subject of this grace, owes eternal gratitude to God, and gives him thanks forever. Whoever is not made partaker thereof, is either altogether regardless of these spiritual gifts, and satisfied with his own condition; or is in no apprehension of danger, and vainly boasts the possession of that which he has not. With respect to those who make an external profession of faith, and live regular lives, we are bound, after the example of the apostle, to judgment and speak of them in the most favorable manner. For the secret recesses of the heart are unknown to us. And as to others, who have not yet been called, it is our duty to pray for them to God, who calls the things that are not, as if they were. But we are in no wise to conduct ourselves towards them with haughtiness, as if we had made ourselves to differ.

Much of the above translation is, I believe, more of a paraphrasing of the thought of the original than a translation of it. And in my opinion the attempt to paraphrase is by no means successful, but rather hides the original thought instead of elucidating it. We will therefore present a complete translation of the article, and a translation which, as the reader may discover by a comparison, also is in substantial agreement with the official Dutch version of this paragraph. Our translation is as follows :

This grace God owes to no one. For what would he owe to him who beforehand is able to give nothing, in order that it should be repaid to him? Nay more, what would he owe to him, who has nothing as regards his own things (nothing of himself), except sin and a lie? Whoever therefore receives that grace owes and gives eternal thanks to the only God; whoever does not receive it, he is either altogether unconcerned about these spiritual things, and delights himself in his own: or, being careless (Latin: *securus*, having the unfavorable connotation of a false sense of security), he vainly boasts that he has that which he does not have. Further, concerning those who externally profess their faith and show amendment of life, we are to judge and to speak the best, according to the example of the apostles, for the secret recesses of the hearts are unknown to us. Moreover, on behalf of those who are not yet called we are to pray God, who calls the things which are not as if they were. Certainly in no wise are we to be haughty over against them, as if we had made ourselves to differ.

It is of importance for the understanding of this article that we try to conceive again of the erroneous, Arminian position over against which the fathers present these truths. After all, while it is certainly true that the fathers here present a certain positive truth and lay down certain guiding principles for the conduct of the Reformed believer toward others in the church, the primary aim also here is to combat and expose the Arminian errors and calumnies brought against the Reformed position. And an analysis of these will bring to light the interesting fact that the tactics of the enemy have not changed much in our day. He who is truly Reformed will have to face some of the very same charges and wicked calumnies that were brought against the Reformed believer of yester-year.

The main accusation which is answered in this fifteenth article is that the Reformed doctrine of sovereign predestination and particular and irresistible grace is a proud doctrine. It is the charge that it is proud and conceited for anyone to claim that he, in distinction from and to the exclusion of others of his fellow men, is chosen of God and the recipient of God's grace unto salvation. They charge, first of all, that this is pride over against God. And secondly, in close connection therewith, they charge that this doctrine leads to pride over against the fellow-believer and the fellow-man. It causes one to divide men into elect and reprobate, to pass judgment as to whether they are elect or not, and to assume a boastful and haughty attitude over against those who are not elect. That this is indeed the charge that is answered in the article we are considering is plain from its entire approach and language, especially from the last part which deals with the proper attitude of the recipient of God's grace toward others.

In this connection we would point out that this is, of course, nothing strange to the Reformed believer of the present day. Some such false charges as, "You preach only to the elect," or, "You try to determine who are the elect and who are the reprobate in the church," or "You people think that you are the elect, that only members of your church are saved," etc., etc., are not unknown among those who maintain the Reformed truth strictly. And for that same reason it is well that we be acquainted with the answer which our fathers had to such calumniators.

We may observe, furthermore, that the Arminians follow the age-old tactics of heretics in general, namely, that they register charges against the truth and against those who maintain the truth of which they themselves are actually guilty. For the truth is not that the Reformed doctrine of sovereign predestination and irresistible grace is a proud doctrine, but that the Arminian heresy is a proud doctrine,—a doctrine that exalts man rather than God not only, but also a doctrine that in actual fact causes one man to conduct himself with haughtiness over against another, as though he had made himself to differ, had distinguished himself by the exercise of his own free will.

Now let us note how the fathers maintain the truth over against the Arminian error in this connection.

In the first place, they speak of the mutual relation of God and man in respect to the bestowal of the grace of conversion. The Arminian charges that it is proud and conceited for anyone to claim to be the object of such irresistible grace that has its source in sovereign election. They present the Reformed confessor as one who acts indeed as though God were obligated to bestow His grace upon him. And, to be sure, any doctrine that teaches that God is obligated to bestow His grace upon a man is a proud doctrine. But that is exactly true of the Arminian heresy. It is the remonstrants who teach that God's grace is conditional, that the reception of the blessings of salvation is dependent upon the exercise of the free will of man, that corrupt and natural man can by the use of common grace (by which they understand the light of nature) gradually gain a greater, that is, the evangelical or saving grace and salvation itself, that unregenerate man can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit. The Remonstrant position is founded from beginning to end on *Man*. But what is the Reformed truth? In this connection the fathers do not emphasize the *sovereign* character of God's grace, but the *unmerited, undeserved* character of the grace of regeneration and conversion. Of course, the former lies at the root of the latter; and the latter cannot be successfully maintained without the former. The truth behind the truth that is presented in this article is the truth that God is sovereign, that He is the Divine Potter and we are the clay, that He is absolutely free to let that clay serve His glory in whatever way it pleases Him, the truth that He is merciful to whom He wills and that whom He wills He hardens. Nevertheless, the fathers here stress the fact that God's grace is absolutely undeserved, unmerited. "This grace God owes to no one." There is on the part of God no relation of obligation, of debt, toward any man. And the fathers really present a two-fold reason for this statement. In the first place, they claim that this is impossible because of the very position of man as man, as a creature, — apart now from the fact that he is a sinner. Now, if it were true that man could first give God something, then it might also be true that man could cause God to be indebted to him. But the fathers emphasize that we are able to give God nothing beforehand, in order that it should be repaid to us. Man as man, as a creature, apart from the consideration of sin, has nothing which he has not in the first place received. All that he has has been bestowed upon him by God. Even the right to serve God is a privilege. Such was the case with Adam in the state of righteousness. To be sure, he was the object of God's grace, His favor. And he had the calling to serve God, to love Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. But could he merit anything with God? If Adam served God perfectly for a certain length of time, would God then be obligated to bestow upon him eternal life, as the theory of the covenant of

works has it? Nay, would God be obligated to bestow upon him even one minute more of life in His favor in the earthly paradise? Not at all. All that Adam could ever say, even when he obeyed and served God perfectly, was: "I am an unprofitable servant; I have done that which is my duty to do. And for the very fact that I might serve Thee, O God, with all my heart and mind and soul and strength, I owe Thee my undying gratitude." To be sure, God would not kill him. Death is punishment; it is the expression of wrath. But neither is it true that God would be obligated to Adam in any sense. Abstractly considered, it were conceivable that God would drop Adam back into the nothingness out of which he was created, simply drop him out of existence. But never, not even with everlasting obedience, could Adam have a claim upon God. Hence, the point which the fathers make, first of all, is that God's grace is always undeserved, unmerited, and that God never can stand in a relation of obligation to His creature. This is a good point to bear in mind. We sometimes define grace as unmerited favor. And as a handy and brief definition this is all right, provided we bear in mind that God's favor did not become undeserved merely through sin, but that in regard to the creature God's grace is in the very nature of the case undeserved. God never owes the creature anything. God is God!

But, in the second place, the fathers emphasize here that the situation is far worse. Not only has man as man nothing whereby he can make God indebted to him. The very opposite is true. Man is a sinner. All that he has of his own is sin and falsehood? That is all he can ever bring to God of himself. He can bring no hunger and thirst after righteousness, no broken and contrite heart, no "decision for Christ," — nothing does he have of his own except sin and lie. Hence, not only is God not obligated to bestow His grace upon such a sinful man, but the very opposite is true; that sinner has merited eternal wrath and condemnation. As the fathers have stated earlier, II, A, 1: "His justice requires (as he hath revealed himself in his Word), that our sins committed against his infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal, but with eternal punishment, both in body and soul." Where is boasting then? It is excluded, completely out of the question. God owes this grace to no one.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, mourns the loss of one of its faithful members,

MRS. GEO. YONKER

whom the Lord took unto himself July 21, 1957.

We hereby express our sincere sympathy with her husband and family. May our heavenly Father's grace and care help to comfort and guide them day by day.

Mrs. Hoeksema, President

Mrs. J. Van Winsheym, Secretary

P. S. The above memorium which was to be placed in the August 1, issue was delayed because of misplacement.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Legal Matters

In our last article we raised the question, "What determines the legal status of matters presented to the various ecclesiastical assemblies for deliberation and decision?" We cited at that time seven rules of the Christian Reformed Church governing the legality of matters presented to the Synod and we stated then that our churches do not have such a compilation of definitely written rules but that a committee of Synod is at present mandated to provide them. This does not mean, however, that our churches have throughout the years been functioning without rules in regard to these matters. On the contrary there are several fundamental rules incorporated in the body of our Church Order that are binding upon every ecclesiastical assembly. They prescribe in general what is required in order that a given matter be declared legally before the Consistory, Classis or Synod. We note in this connection the following:

1. Article 30 stipulates three things:
  - a) First, the matter must be of an ecclesiastical nature which means that it is classified with those matters that properly belong to the business and jurisdiction of the church.
  - b) Secondly, if presented in a major assembly it must be evident that it could not be finished in the minor assembly. The legal procedure in all cases is that matters be treated in the order of consistory, classis and synod.
  - c) Thirdly, the exception to the aforecited rule is that matters pertaining to the churches in common may and should be legally treated in the major assemblies without prior treatment in the minor assemblies.
2. Article 46 sets forth the principle that what has once been decided by the major assembly shall not be treated anew unless there is a preponderant reason for reconsideration or revision.

However, these rules cover only the major facets of the problem and frequently there arise various other complexities that give rise to the question, "Is this or that matter legally before the body?" These situations often lead to time consuming debates which impede the proceedings of the assembly and contribute little, if anything, to the execution of the real labors of the body. They decide nothing as far as the matter in question is concerned. These debates expend much valuable energy of the delegates with the result that frequently later matters are treated with undue haste and rushed through without proper consideration because the assembly has become weary through needlessly long sessions.

This is undesirable and damaging and, therefore, it ought to be agreed, insofar as is possible, what the legal requisites for treating matters are so that the question of legality in most instances can be disposed of with dispatch.

Now it must also be understood that no set of rules can be so broad and involved so as to cover every possibly circumstance that may arise. Always there exists that possibility that a case is presented wherein the circumstances simply do not fit the rules. From such instances, however, one cannot argue for the abolition of all rules. Rather, these are exceptions and must be treated as such. To every rule there is an exception.

Furthermore, the matter of determining whether or not a certain matter is legally before the ecclesiastical assembly is not an incidental, unimportant matter. It is not, as is often avered, a mere technical thing and when the ecclesiastical assemblies prolong debate on those matters they are not simply "wrangling over technicalities" or engaged in "mental gymnastics" for the sake of "oratorical exercise" but there is usually a vital principle involved in the discussion. After all, to bring a matter before an ecclesiastical assembly in the proper, orderly way or not to do so involves more than compliance with or violation of some legal code. It may be granted that in some instances a violation of the legal procedure may be due to ignorance but it must not be overlooked that wilful and intelligent violation often results from a wrong spiritual attitude toward the matter in question; a sense of conscious guilt and so an evil maneuver attempting to bar or gain treatment of a matter through legally wrong practices. From this point of view the legal aspect of a case may be more important than the case itself. History in our own churches, and that not so long ago that we cannot remember, has borne this out and so it is well to have a set of concise and well defined rules which express what constitutes legality and in the light of which most matters can be readily judged.

Obviously, Classis East felt the need of this in 1944 for at that time a committee was appointed to study the matter and give advice to the Classis. Before me I have a copy of that committee's report and although I do not at present know what the Classis did with this report, I will acquaint the reader with parts of this report. The committee calls itself, "A Committee for the formulation of a set of Rules for judging clearly the legality of Communications sent to Classis." In its study it expresses two basic principles that will guide them in the formulation of these rules. They are: "1. The nature of Classis as an Ecclesiastical body, and 2. The nature of the relation individuals sustain to the Classis." As to the first of these, the committee states that "Classis differs from the consistory in the fact that its powers and courses of action are agreed upon by free and mutual consent and that, therefore, also its decisions and its relations to other persons are by such mutual consent." Just how this particular distinction affects the legality of communications sent to the



body is not clear nor is it explained in the committee's report. Concerning No. 2 above, the committee distinguishes between those "persons related to the Classis who have an inherent right toward it by virtue of the fact that Classis is composed of persons who represent them, is supported by them and is responsible to them, (i.e., members of the denomination) and those "persons who stand in no inherent relation to the Classis," (i.e. those who are not members of the denomination, outsiders). It is the reasoning of the committee that the same rules cannot apply to both of these groups.

Concerning non-members, the committee suggest that they may desire to approach or address the Classis with regard to matters that may concern such things as: Quote — "(1) the negotiations concerning operation-materials, etc., (2) negotiations regarding civic morals or charities, etc., (3) treatment of doctrinal questions with unrelated church groups, etc." The right to do so in this case, according to the advice of the committee, shall be limited by one consideration, namely, whether the Classis will grant him or them this courtesy. If a person outside of our churches wishes to address or petition Classis, his legal right to be heard shall be decided by the assembly. They can refuse or grant to him this privilege.

According to the report of the committee, this same rule applies to those who have been members of our churches but have withdrawn such membership. We quote the report:

"In the case of a person withdrawing from the control of his consistory, such a person shall be regarded as having lost all inherent connection and right with the Classis and hence can be heard only if the assembly grants him the courtesy. Then the procedure shall be as follows: (a) The communication shall have been in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least five days. (b) The Stated Clerk shall state the purport of the communication. (c) The president shall apply the criterion given in C. O. 30, 31 and invoke the rule therefore. (d) In case of doubt remaining after the president has ruled, the objector may move to have it read and the meeting shall decide whether to read it or not. (e) And finally, if it is decided to read, the assembly shall decide by vote whether the material warrants treatment."

Then, regarding members of our churches who address a communication to the Classis, the committee advises the following considerations as rules for determining the legality of the communication. We quote:

"a) Whether the consistory testifies that the communication is a matter that could not be treated conclusively at the consistory, though it has followed the legal process at that consistory.

"b) Whether the consistory testifies that it has received a copy, which is indeed a matter of courtesy and justice, but also inherently related to the question whether it could be finished at the local consistory.

"c) Whether the consistory, in case it has not received a copy, waives its claim because it is confident of its knowledge of the material."

In addition to all this (with which we do not express full agreement) the committee also suggests that a communication may be declared illegal, ruled out of order, if it contains language that is indecent, abusive, defamatory to one's character, etc.

In conclusion we wish to make the following suggestions:

1. In addition to the foregoing we feel that an ecclesiastical assembly should have the right to refuse and declare illegal any communication which, as to form or content, is unreasonably vague, disorderly or long. It should be returned to its author(s) for revision. Since this is difficult to enforce without rules, it may be well to incorporate certain limitations with regard to this in a set of rules for future use.

2. To expedite the determination of the legal question, the following suggestion:

a) Each Classis or Synod have an agenda prepared in advance by its Stated Clerk.

b) In the event there is doubt in the mind of the Stated Clerk with respect to the legality of a given matter, this matter be referred to the Classical or Synodical Committees (the latter no longer existant), which committees be empowered to carry out the necessary investigation to determine such legality (in certain instances in the recent past such preliminary investigation would have been very beneficial) and serve the assembly with the pre-advice.

G.V.D.B.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

(Continued from page 11)

deliver them. And the result was that they perished in their misery.

With this terrible history of the past generations of his people before his eye, the prophet turns to the oppressed and afflicted church of his own day, to her bondmen and bondwomen, to her prisoners in the pit, he says to them, Ask ye of the Lord rain, that is, as humbling yourselves under His mighty hand, as putting all your confidence in Him, let Him be all your salvation, Him the only fountain of all good and who alone can save. And you penitnant ones, prisoners of hope, asking you shall receive, showers of rain, copious blessing from above. And put not your confidence in the diviners and their idols, who prophecy to you of rain and prosperity and who cry, Peace, Peace, when there is not peace. For your very present suffering prove that they speak vanity, have seen a lie and tell false dreams and that they comfort in vain and that therefore their prophecies will never be fulfilled. So it was in the past with them and so it is now and so it will ever be with them.

G.M.O.

## ALL AROUND US

*God is not Deformed.*

Under the above title L. Nelson Bell, executive editor of *Christianity Today*, writes in the September 2, 1957 issue of that religious periodical

There is something striking in what Mr. Bell wrote on this subject and that is, that in contrast to much that is written today in religious papers which presents God in such light that He appears to be deformed, Mr. Bell attempts to give us a well-rounded conception of God. The author insists that "those who are so overwhelmed by the love of God and all of its implications that they overlook other attributes which are equally true and impelling," have a God Who is deformed. We can only be pleased with what the author says here and it is entirely in harmony with the truth we have always been taught, namely, that God is all His attributes, and, all His attributes are one in Him.

However, when we read all that the author has to say on this subject we were inclined to place a question mark behind the above title. For it became plain to us that Mr. Bell fell into the very error concerning the conception of God that he warns his readers against. I am going to quote his entire article and you see if you can detect the fallacy I believe I discovered when I read his writing. Here follows his article:

"Can man hope to have an adequate concept of God? Certainly we can never hope to understand comprehensively all of his perfections and attributes for we are finite. Nevertheless God has not left himself without a witness. It is both our privilege and duty to learn that which he has been pleased to reveal about himself.

"We know only that which God has been pleased to reveal, and for sinful man that is overwhelmingly adequate.

"To contemplate the attributes of God staggers the imagination, yet he has revealed himself for the very purpose that we might, although limited by the flesh, know him and glorify his name and distinguish between that which is true and false.

"God has made it possible for us to know him through his general revelation in nature. Romans 1:20 says, 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.' He reveals himself also in history and conscience.

"He has revealed himself in his Son of whom we read in Colossians 2:8, 9: 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.'

"God reveals himself in his written Word. The apostle

Paul writing to Timothy says, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto good works.'

"In these various ways God's marvelous attributes are revealed, being exercised by him in his works of creation, providence and redemption.

"Why then the necessity of affirming, in a spirit of deepest reverence, that God is not deformed? Because in each generation, and particularly in our own, God is often presented in only one aspect of his personality or by only one attribute to the exclusion or depreciation of others. This narrow presentation causes God to be seen as though he were deformed; his glorious person is disclosed out of focus.

"There are those who are so overwhelmed by the love of God and all of its implications that they overlook other attributes which are equally true and impelling. The depth and height and breadth of the love of God can never be exhausted, for he is the epitome of love and all that it implies.

"He is also the God of holiness and justice. The Bible which tells us that God is love also affirms that he is a consuming fire. Therefore, to stress the love of God to the exclusion of his perfections in holiness and justice is to give a distorted picture.

"The Cross of Jesus Christ reveals the love of God. But it reveals far more. The depths of sin, the magnitude of its offense against a holy God and the price necessary to free man from its guilt and penalty, all are revealed by the Cross. We see combined in one sublime act the love, truth, holiness, righteousness, mercy, faithfulness, justice, and knowledge of God, and having said this, all of its implications have not been exhausted. Let us never forget that in this glorious act of redemption and propitiation we see combined many aspects of the God with whom we have to do.

"God is the God of infinite and absolute perfection. Being infinite he is free from all possible limitation. Being absolute he is an eternal self-existent person who is the voluntary cause of all that is, has been or ever will exist. He is 'the same yesterday, today and forever' and he is 'without variableness or shadow of turning.'

"One may hear the seemingly wise statement: 'God is too good to damn anyone,' and from this premise the deduction that therefore all men will some day be saved regardless of what they do about Christ, God's provision for their need. Paul, in Romans, writes: 'Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off.' The crux of the matter is that sin must be judged and God in his infinite love and justice has done something about it, sending his Son through whom man may be freed from the guilt and penalty of sin and restored to fellowship with Him now and forever.

"If we would know God and the attributes whereby he is known we have but to turn to Holy Scripture. In both Old and New Testaments we find the same God. Some would distinguish between the 'God of the Old Testament' and the 'God of the New,' but they are the same. To discard the one for the other is to be guilty of a selective prejudice that leads to grave error.

"For instance, in Isaiah we read: 'Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.' But the same God, speaking in the same book also says: 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sin be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

"We find the Lord Jesus Christ uttering this scathing denunciation: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' This same Christ also says: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

"The apostle Paul denounces sin and the unrepentant sinner but offers pardon and peace to all who will turn to Christ in full repentance. The writer of the Epistle to Hebrews affirms God's revelation through the prophets and the Son and presents a picture of escape and eternal salvation to those who believe.

"Peter tells of the patience and longsuffering of a holy God unwilling that any souls be lost, but also of the day of impending judgment from which none who have rejected Christ shall escape.

"No, God is not deformed. He is revealed to us in the perfections of his glorious attributes. It is his will that we should see him and believe in him for who he is and what he is.

"We who are capable of love, feeling, knowing, righteous indignation, kindness, mercy and a sense of right and justice, should realize that in him all of these things are found in absolute perfection. He who knows no limitations of time, space or circumstance deals with mankind in perfect love and also perfect justice. He who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity, has nonetheless made perfect provision for sin and the sinner. In all of this the perfection and absoluteness of his attributes are revealed to man.

"No, God is not deformed. He is perfection, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and love."

As we intimated above we are in agreement with the author of the above quotation when he asserts that God is the God of infinite and absolute perfection, and that, being infinite, he is free from all possible limitation. We agree when

he declares that being absolute God is an eternal self-existent person who is the voluntary cause of all that is, has been or ever will exist. We agree with him when he denounces the attempt to make separation between the attributes of God such as his attributes of love and justice so that the one attribute negates the other. This is all as it should be. God is not deformed, and he is exceeding wrathful overagainst every attempt to conceive of and present him differently than he has revealed himself to be.

But now notice where the writer of the above quotation falls into the very error he intends to warn against.

First of all, he evidently believes that God makes salvation possible for all men and is unwilling that any souls be lost. Writes he, "Peter tells of the patience and longsuffering of a holy God unwilling that any souls be lost." He no doubt has in mind here the passage in II Peter 3:9. I claim that this is a distortion of the truth of God's sovereignty in election and reprobation. Mr. Bell does not apparently reckon with this truth, and therefore has a deformed presentation of the God of the Scriptures.

Secondly, in close connection with the preceding, he evidently believes that the rejection of Christ is the sole cause for the damnation of the lost. This also is not the truth. Again, he does not reckon with the Scriptural presentation of God's sovereignty in election and reprobation. And he fails also to reckon with the truth that man is naturally depraved and lost due to the original sin of Adam. And when you mutilate God's truth you deform God.

And finally, in close connection with the immediately preceding, he evidently believes that salvation is conditioned by our repentance and believing on Christ. This too is a denial of the truth that God is the sole cause and worker of our salvation from beginning to end. And to deny this is also to present God quite differently than he reveals himself to be in the Holy Scriptures.

It should be plain to Mr. Bell and all others addicted to his view of salvation as he presents it in the quoted article that you have a distorted view of the God of the Scriptures. Now it is true that God is not deformed no matter what men may make of him. But it is likewise true that many today under the guise of speaking the truth nevertheless give a presentation of God that is grossly deformed.

M.S.

#### UNSHAKEN FAITH AMID DANGER

The Lord is most righteous, the Lord loves the right,  
The evil He hates and will surely requite;  
The wicked His anger will drive from their place,  
The upright in rapture shall gaze on His face.

Psalm 11:3

## Feature Articles for the Standard Bearer in 1958

Subject, date and Writer	Rubric and writer replaced
January 1— The Parable of the Ten Virgins C. Hanko	Voice of our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
February 1— The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven R. Veldman	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
March 1— The Symbolism of Metals in the Old Testament H. Hanko	Contending for the Faith H. Veldman
April 1— The Jesuits G. Van Baren	In His Fear J. A. Heys
May 1— The Quiet and Peaceable Life of I Tim. 2:2 G. Lanting	All Around Us M. Schipper
June 1— Revelation Through Dreams B. Woudenberg	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers
July 1— The Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament A. Mulder	Day of Shadows G. M. Ophoff
August 1— Revelation through Visions H. Hanko	Voice of our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
September 1— Jesus' Baptism by John R. Veldman	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
October 1— The Living Creatures of Ezekiel 1 and 10 C. Hanko	Contending for the Faith H. Veldman
November 1— One's Part Taken out of the Book of Life. Rev. 22:19 G. Lanting	In His Fear J. A. Heys
December 1— Making Friends E. Emmanuel	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers

### THE SYMBOLISM OF COLORS IN SCRIPTURE

(Continued from page 18)

Of the exemplary wife it is said in Prov. 31:21: "All her households are clothed with scarlet." It also indicates blood and bloodthirstiness. Therefore it, too, is used of sin. "Though your sins be as scarlet . . ." In this case scarlet is red accentuated. Scarlet along with white in the garment of

the high priests denotes, that the latter is not only the servant of the God of love, but also of the God of wrath. In Rev. 17 we see the great whore, Babylon, the Antichristian worldpower, sitting "upon a scarlet colored beast" and she is arrayed in "purple and scarlet." The reference is to her worldly wealth and beauty and royalty, but as well to her thirst for blood, for she is drunken with the blood of the saints and is related ethically to the "great red dragon."

"Purple" has much the same meaning in Scripture. It is the color of royalty and gorgeous apparel. It, too, is used much in connection with the tabernacle. To prepare the latter Israel had to bring offerings of gold and silver, brass and blue, purple and scarlet. Ex. 25:4. Moses was ordered to make the ten curtains "of fine linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet." Ex. 26:1. The color was prominent as well in the garments of the priests, the ephod, the girdle and breastplate of judgment. It has always been the color of royalty. When the Lord was mocked in His royal office "they clothed Him with purple," a soiled, faded, ludicrous robe, no doubt, but intended as a caricature of the regal toga. It is also the color of riches and splendor. Rev. 18:16, 17.

The symbolic significance of "green" is not easily determined. It is used almost exclusively as the color of vegetation. It does not symbolize jealousy. Perhaps it is the color of hope and life, because of its association with plant life and the period to which we look forward in the bleak and barren winter.

To our knowledge "blue" is not found in the book of Revelation. It would seem that its basic denotation is that of divine faithfulness. Perhaps that is the message of comfort brought to us by the blue firmament as it spans this earthly creation like a gorgeous and reassuring canopy from horizon to horizon.

R. Veldman

### THE PERFECT LAW OF GOD

Jehovah's perfect law  
 Restores the soul again;  
 His testimony sure  
 Gives wisdom unto men;  
 The precepts of the Lord are right,  
 And fill the heart with great delight. e

The Lord's command are pure,  
 They light and joy restore;  
 Jehovah's fear is clean,  
 Enduring evermore;  
 His statutes, let the world confess,  
 Are wholly truth and righteousness.

Psalms 19:1, 2