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MEDITATION

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

"The just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2:4b

"The just shall live by faith."

This is the ever-recurring testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation. It is the Word of the living God that penetrates into the awful night of our present darkness, flooding the soul of the believer with light and life. It is the reassuring witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts working peace and hope and victory.

The just man shall *live*. He shall have life through faith.

* * * *

God gives this promise of life in the midst of death.

Our present existence is very really only a continual death. Conscious of that fact, the apostle Paul cried out, "I die every day." One reason why we are not more fully aware of this fact is that we have never known any other condition but death. Sin and death held sway over us when we entered this world, and they have held us in bondage ever since. We cannot even form a mental picture of what this world would be without sin and death. Ever since our first parents transgressed by eating of the forbidden tree in paradise the sentence of death was placed upon a fallen human race. One generation after another enters in a world where death has dominion. We spend our days within the prison house of death.

Scripture speaks of the fear of death that holds us in bondage all our lives. A slight pain raises forebodings of a sick-bed, fears of a dread disease, a grim picture of an operation or a newly dug grave. Dangers actually lurk everywhere, threatening to destroy us.

Yet this is but a small aspect of the power of death that ravages a mortal man. We are conceived and born in sin, even as children of wrath. The curse of God is upon us all

our days. This is not a mere threat which might probably be carried out in the hereafter, in hell, but which we might still escape. This curse is upon us even now. For the soul that sins must die. He who sins becomes a slave to sin, under the righteous judgment of God. He becomes ever deeper enmeshed in a net from which there is no escape. His end is eternal destruction, for the Lord's verdict is: "My soul has no delight in him. Depart from Me, ye worker of iniquity."

No one realizes this but the sinner who has been made conscious of his sin and guilt in the sight of the Most High. He knows that no sin, be it ever so small, ever escapes the eye of the righteous Judge of heaven and earth. He hides his face in shame and contrition as he realizes how depraved he is before Him, how leprous, how altogether worthy of condemnation. The author of Psalm ninety expresses it perfectly when he cries: "In Thy wrath our spirits languish, sinful 'neath Thy searching eye; all our days are passed in anguish, in Thy wrath we pine and die."

In that desperately hopeless night of sin and death God proclaims the glad tidings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: "The just shall *live*."

The text, no doubt, refers to *eternal life*. How shall we describe it? This we know, it is the very opposite of the death, of which we just spoke. Death is separation from God, life is fellowship with Him. Death is the torment of the wrath of God against sin, life is the blessed experience of His perfect approval. Death is the dark anguish of God's hatred, life is the glorious communion of His love. Death is described to us as a weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched; life is described as the wedding feast, in which we sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Life is fellowship with God in Jesus Christ. We shall see Him face to face, and we shall know as we are known. We shall be guests at His table. We shall drink of the streams of life that flow from the throne. We shall be satisfied with His righteousness forever.

Life is, moreover, the eternal experience of divine approval. Of the wicked God says: My soul has no delight in him. But He blesses His people as sons and daughters in

His house. He bestows upon them the inheritance that He has prepared particularly for them. They are blessed forever.

That life we shall experience in perfection in heaven. But we also share in it already in this present time. The Spirit transforms us into new creatures. We have the life of Christ within us. The Spirit declares with our spirit that we are sons of God. And He assures us that, since we are sons, we are also heirs. We shall never die; for he that believeth in Christ, though he be dead, yet shall he live. And we shall be forever with the Lord.

Only Almighty God can give us that life. Just as the Almighty created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, calling the things that were not as though they were, so He now calls the dead sinner out of death into life. The second wonder is even greater than the first, for He changes children of Satan into sons of the living God. Just as the Savior once stood at the grave of Lazarus, saying, "Lazarus, come forth," so also He causes the dead to hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live. And again the second wonder is so much greater than the first, for Lazarus came back into an earthly existence, while we are given a new and heavenly life that abides forever. The Word of God is mighty and efficacious. It is the power of God unto salvation that comes to us through the Gospel.

* * * *

You will notice that it is the *just man* that shall live. Not every one is given this assurance. Nor does every one have the right to this assurance. Also the prophet Isaiah makes the distinction between the just and the unjust, declaring, "Say unto the righteous that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat of the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

The promise is very personal. The just — that man shall live.

The just man is one who is perfectly righteous according to the verdict of the holy and righteous Judge of heaven and earth. The Lord Himself is the eternal Judge. He sits upon His judgment seat and judges every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. Every deed we perform, every word we speak, every thought that flashes through our minds, and every impulse that arises within us is known perfectly to Him who judges righteously. Before Him our vain and foolish excuses mean nothing. His verdict falls according to strictest justice. In that great day when the Son of man appears with the clouds of the heavens, every rational creature will stand in judgment before Him to carry away His final sentence of eternal death or eternal life.

But, be not deceived, for God also judges the sons of men even now, every moment of our lives. He knows our every thought, and word, and deed. He declares guilty or not

guilty, just or unjust. He makes the guilty inexpressibly miserable by giving them over to death. He declares the righteous free from sin and guilt, and gives them a blessed foretaste of their eternal peace and joy.

The just He blesses with life, even everlasting life.

But that only accentuates the question: Who is that just one whom God declares righteous?

He is not the man that appeals to his own works. Jesus warns us that in the day of judgment there will be many who will say, "Lord, Lord, have I not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." We know the experience of the rich, young ruler, who sought Jesus. He confessed that he had scrupulously kept all the things written in the law, even to the very letter since his early youth, but he was still burdened with the question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" For God's law is not a mere code of precepts governing our external behavior. God is not satisfied with a mere appearance of obedience. God's law demands love. It requires: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. It demands: Thou shalt do so in thy actions, words, thoughts, and the very impulses of thy heart, always. That man shall live that does these things.

But who is able? Well may we ask: Who, then, can be saved? For we find in ourselves the very opposite. Not that we love God a little, at certain times, and that we sometimes fall short. No, we hate God. Our very nature is hateful. We always hate God and always manifest that hatred against the neighbor. We cannot love Him. Even our pretense of loving God and our neighbor is only pure selfishness, and therefore, a mere show, which is nothing short of hatred. The inclinations of our hearts are only evil continually.

Who, then, is the just man? Can you or I stand in that judgment uncondemned?

There is only one who is just. And that is our Lord Jesus Christ. He came into our flesh and entered under our law some nineteen hundred years ago. He loved the Lord with His whole being, even though it meant for Him that He would be cast into the anguish of eternal hell. He was obedient unto death, bearing the burden of God's wrath against sin.

He is our righteousness. He laid down His life for His sheep. He conquered over death and the grave. He is now in heaven where He reigns in power. He knows His sheep. He calls them by name. They hear His voice, for His Spirit is working within them, so that they follow Him. They are free from the bondage of sin, free to serve God according to the love of God that has been shed abroad in their hearts. They do love Him, and it is their joy to do His will. Therein they manifest that they are righteous in Christ Jesus.

"That man shall live," saith our God, for he is just.

* * * *

But the just shall live *by faith*.

That is the only possible answer to the age-old question: "What must I do to be saved?"

There was once a father who had a son that was possessed with an evil spirit. It was a pitiful case, for the demon was out to destroy him. It was a picture of the sinner who is sold under the bondage of sin and death. This father had brought his son to the disciples, but they were unable to help him. Then he saw Jesus approaching, and rushing to him he knelt before Him, crying, "If Thou canst do anything have compassion on us, and help us." You know the answer of Jesus: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth!"

Or again, there was the jailor at Philippi, who for one moment hung, as it were, over the brink of eternal hell, as he was about to kill himself with his sword. He had been terror stricken by the earthquake that opened the prison doors and loosed the bonds of the prisoners that were his special charge that night. A moment later, when he discovered that his prisoners Paul and Silas had not escaped, he comes to them with the earnest petition: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Salvation from everlasting death unto life, that suddenly became to him the all-important question. And again the answer was given: Believe! "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

It is as simple as that. Nothing else is necessary. All else is worse than vain. For all our works are but as so much unrighteousness!

Yet that is also the humanly impossible!

Faith is not of us, it is the gift of God, wrought by His Word. It is the wonder whereby the blinded eye is made to see, the deaf ear is made to hear, and the stubborn will is broken unto humble submission. Already the consciousness of sin and guilt is the evidence of the wonder of grace working within us. He who cries for mercy already believes in God, acknowledges His justice, seeks His favor. He who turns to Christ as the only possible source of our salvation already has the power of faith operating within him. He has heard the voice of Jesus, saying: "Come unto Me, and live."

In amazement we discover that we do believe. We cry out: "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief." Thus we also experience that "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins. And sinners washed beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."

That is the experience of the believer, not once, but repeatedly. Every day we are brought face to face with our sin and guilt to seek and to find our salvation outside of ourselves, only in Christ.

The just shall live by faith!

How wondrous are the ways of God, unfathomed and unknown!

C.H.

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EDITORIALS

As to Being Protestant Reformed

The last two paragraphs of the letter of the Christian Reformed Church to the schismatics I must still bring to the attention of our readers.

For this purpose I quote them here once more:

"It is our considered judgment that in as much as both your denomination and ours subscribe to the Word of God and to the Three Forms of Unity, unification of our churches could be effected:

"a. If you will agree that the Three Points are neither Arminian nor Pelagian; that in the light of the official interpretation given by our Synod of 1959, the objection that the Three Points are in conflict with Scripture and the Forms of Unity is not valid, and that you will agree not to agitate against official interpretations.

"b. If we do not require submission in the sense of demanding total agreement with the Three Points we recognize and bear with scruples which you may have, in the expectation that we together may come eventually to a better understanding of the truth, and not bar those who have certain misgivings or divergent interpretations as long as they refrain from propaganda for their interpretations.

"As to the method effecting such a union we suggest that:

"a. If this is to be worked out on a denominational basis, a committee of your church be appointed to confer with a committee of our church, or,

"b. If this is to be worked out on a local basis, this is to be left to the individual consistories and classes in which such attempts towards union would be made."

Well, there you have it.

The door is open to come back to the Christian Reformed Church. At least, it is far enough open for the schismatics to squeeze through.

By this decision they are made to stand in a very peculiar and, I would say, practically hopeless position.

I understand that a special synod is called by the schismatics for the latter part of October of this year 1960. One can readily understand what will be the main, if not the only, item on the agenda of this synod. It is the question whether or not they will join the Christian Reformed Church.

If they decide in the negative, they will crumble apart. Several of their ministers have already left and joined the Christian Reformed Church: Van Weelden, De Boer, and Cammenga of Rock Valley. Others will, no doubt, follow, not only of the ministers but also of their people. The letter of the Christian Reformed Synod to the schismatics already suggests this possibility: "if this is to be worked out on a local basis, this is to be left to the individual consistories and classes."

But if they decide at this special synod not to remain by themselves and to join the Christian Reformed Church, it will also be but a small remnant that so joins the Christian Reformed Church, for there still are several of the schismatics, at least of the people, that know the history of 1924 and will never go back to the Christian Reformed Church.

But the fact remains that the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church opened the door to the schismatics.

It is true, the door is open conditionally, but the schismatics like conditions, whether doctrinal or church-political, and it is my opinion that they can easily fulfill the conditions mentioned in the quoted paragraphs from the letter of the Christian Reformed Synod.

The first condition is that they, i.e. the schismatics, must admit that the Three Points are not Arminian or Pelagian. This condition is rather superfluous, for in the communication of the schismatics to the Christian Reformed Church they already stated: "We no longer wish to be responsible for the charge of Arminianism and Pelagianism in the adoption of the Three Points which we have against you as Christian Reformed Church in the past." And, therefore, this first condition has already been fulfilled. They, therefore, accept the theory that God is gracious in the preaching of the gospel to every one that hears the gospel! They also subscribe to the error that the natural man can do much good! They do not consider these errors Arminian and Pelagian. Hence, they can easily fulfill this first condition.

The second condition is really like the first. It is that they admit that the Three Points are not in conflict with Scripture and the Forms of Unity. This condition, too, they easily fulfill. If the Three Points are not Arminian or Pelagian they must be in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions. For, mark you well, they teach something about grace and about natural man. They teach that the preaching of the gospel is grace for all or, briefly, they teach general grace. And they teach that the natural man can do much good. Now, if this is not Arminian and Pelagian, the only possible alternative is that it must be Reformed and Scriptural. Hence, it ought not to be difficult for the schismatics to subscribe to this second condition.

The third condition ought to be easy also: they promise that they will not agitate "against official interpretations." I ask: why should they? If they agree that the Three Points and their interpretations are not Arminian or Pelagian, but are based on Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, what is there to agitate against? When, in 1924, I was placed before the same condition so that I would not be deposed from the office of minister if I only promised to keep still and not to agitate against the Three Points in the churches, my answer was that I could not promise anything of the kind for if I preached one sermon in my own church and to my own congregation I would surely contradict the Three Points even though I should not even mention them. But for me that was impossible because I was convinced that the

Three Points were not in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, that, in other words they were Arminian and Pelagian. But the schismatics do not think that they are Arminian and Pelagian. In fact, they already confess that they are sorry that they ever called them thus. They certainly can also fulfill the second condition and say that the objection that the Three Points are not in conflict with Scripture and the Forms of Unity. Why in the world, then, should they agitate against them?

The fundamental trouble with the schismatics is, of course, that they are not Protestant Reformed. They, evidently, never were and never will be.

Let me, for the sake of clarity, put the whole matter in a nutshell as follows:

1. Schismatics say:
 - a. The Three Points are not Arminian and Pelagian.
 - b. They are not in conflict with Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity.
 - c. Hence, we can readily promise that we will not agitate against them and against their interpretations.
2. Protestant Reformed say:
 - a. The Three Points are Arminian and Pelagian.
 - b. They are in conflict with Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity.
 - c. Hence, we will always agitate against them as we hope to do against all false doctrine.

But there is still more in the letter of the Christian Reformed Synod to the schismatics. If they fulfill the above mentioned conditions then the Synod promises them:

1. That they will not require of them submission to the Three Points in the sense of demanding total agreement with them.
2. That they will bear with scruples which they, i.e. the schismatics, may have.

Perhaps it is my fault, but I confess that I do not understand this.

First the schismatics must express that the Three Points are not Pelagian and Arminian. I know that this is a negative expression, but as I explained above, the clear implication is that they are Reformed. Then they must admit that the objection against the Three Points as if they were in conflict with Scripture and the Forms of Unity is not valid. Also this is a negative expression. But again the clear implication is that the Three Points are in harmony with Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity. Then, finally, they must promise that they will not agitate against the Three Points and their interpretations.

I ask: what else does the Synod demand but total agreement with the Three Points?

And again, I ask: what scruples can anyone still have against the Three Points after he has first declared that they are Reformed, and that they are in full harmony with Scripture and the Confessions?

I confess: to me this is impossible.

The Three Points are the truth and what is more they express an important truth that concerns the heart of Scripture and the Reformed faith; or they are the lie. Hence, one must needs be in total agreement with the Three Points or he must wholly and wholeheartedly reject them. There is to me no halfway ground between the truth and the lie.

Perhaps, someone considers me too radical, but I claim that the truth is radical. There is no fellowship between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between the truth and the lie. To me the Three Points are darkness; the truth of God's sovereign grace that is for the elect alone and the doctrine of the total depravity of the natural man are light. And this is the reason why we will and must always agitate against the Three Points and why we must teach our Protestant Reformed people to do the same thing.

Hence, I cannot understand why the letter of the Christian Reformed Synod to the schismatics can state under the same heading and in the same paragraph that we must not "bar those who have some misgivings or divergent interpretations as long as they refrain from propaganda for their interpretations."

I claim that, as long as anyone has any misgivings or any divergent interpretations of the Three Points, he may never join the Christian Reformed Church even though he has to stand all alone, for the simple reason that the Three Points touch the very heart of Scripture and of the Reformed faith.

That this is true is evident from the fact that, in 1924, the Christian Reformed Church deposed faithful ministers, of whom they themselves said that they were Reformed, together with their consistories, from their office.

And what about making propaganda against the Three Points? Must one simply swallow his misgivings and divergent interpretations?

That, to my mind, is a psychological and spiritual impossibility.

And herewith I close this discussion.

H.H.

A S T O B O O K S

Sterven . . . en dan? (Dying . . . and then), by Rev. B. Telder. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands.

In this book the author attempts to prove that the people of God, when they die, do not immediately go to heaven but will enter into glory only at the time of the resurrection from the dead, or in other words at the second coming of Christ.

Personally, I do not think that this is a very good book. My reason for this is not so much that it deprives the people of God of their comfort at the time of their death, for I agree with the author that all our comfort must be based only on the Word of God, and if the Bible teaches that the children of God do not enter into glory immediately after

death but only at the second coming of Christ we must accept this. But my main objection to the book is exactly that the author does not prove his view from the Scriptures and what is worse, twists those portions of Scripture that speak rather clearly of the fact that the intermediate state, the state between death and resurrection, is a state of glory in heaven, in such a way that they fit into his own conception.

Of this I wish to furnish an example or two.

On the cross Jesus spoke the well-known words: "today thou shalt be with Me in paradise," addressed to one of the two murderers that were crucified with Him. How does Telder explain these words? After he has referred to the first paradise and the tree of life that was in the midst of the garden, he writes: "In this way more light is also shed on the promise of Jesus to His fellow-victim on the cross: 'Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise.' This malefactor had asked Him: 'Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' Thereupon the promise was given him: In thy death thou mayest be with Me there where for all that believe on Me as the Lord of life, I will manifest my royal power. Also that realm of the dead is My realm, paradise, because I, as the tree of life, am there.

"Of course, the Lord Jesus did not mean by the words: 'today with Me in paradise' this afternoon thou comest with Me in heavenly glory; today thou comest with Me in heaven. For it would not be till 40 days later that Jesus would ascend to heaven. He would as the Son of man first of all be three days 'in the heart of the earth' (Matt. 12:40). And, true, the prophecy had assured Him that God would not forsake Him in the realm of the dead, and that there He would not see corruption, nevertheless, during three days He would be with the dead."

In other words, when the Lord promised the malefactor that he would be in paradise, He simply meant to say that he would be in the realm of the dead, where is no knowledge or consciousness of anything at all. But why then the words "with Me"? Do they simply mean: "thou shalt be dead as I will be dead"? And did not Jesus say in His crossword that, although His body was in the grave, His human spirit was with the Father? Was not His human spirit alive then while the rest of His nature was in the grave?

I could quote much more but let this be enough as far as Telder's interpretation of Scripture is concerned.

But I must call attention also to the author's interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism question 57. There we read: "What comfort doth the resurrection of the body afford thee? That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head; but also that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and be made like unto the glorious body of Christ."

It is especially to the first part of this answer that we call attention: "my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head."

Now Telder, in his book, writes more than once about this question of the Catechism. He, evidently, does not quite know what to do with it. But on p. 143 he suggests that we ought to read this answer of the Heidelberg as follows: "That all that die in the Lord may not only commit their spirit in the hands of the Lord but also may know that in their death they shall not be separated from Christ, etc."

This is, of course, no explanation of question and answer 57, and the author knows that, too. By all means he wants to avoid the truth, that immediately after death the soul of the believer enters into heavenly glory. This is the reason for his paraphrase of answer 57 of the Catechism.

But it is evident that, if he does not agree with the Catechism, he ought to hand in a gravamen in the proper way.

I have one important question: what does Telder mean by the spirit of man in distinction from his soul? Again and again he emphasizes that the whole man dies and the whole man goes into the grave. But what, then, is the spirit? And where is that spirit after death? What does it mean that at death the believer commends his spirit in the hands of his heavenly Father?

H.H.

Millennial Studies; by George L. Murray. Published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$2.95.

This book is a study, as the title indicates, of the various millennial theories. The author must have nothing of premillennialism. It enters into the various Scriptural passages to which the dispensationalist appeals to defend his view and offers his own interpretation. Hence, the book is quite thorough and convincing. No premillennialist or any one that is more or less inclined to the premillennial view can afford to ignore this book. I do not hesitate to say that, in my opinion, it is one of the best books that, in recent years, has come off the press on this subject.

When the author discusses the "rapture" which, by the way, he calls a "sacrilegious and unscriptural view," he can hardly refrain from becoming sarcastic. And I do not blame him.

I cannot agree with his view of the great tribulation as mentioned in Matthew 24. I agree that the Lord is speaking here also and primarily of the destruction of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70. But many parts of that chapter cannot possibly refer to that destruction. I prefer to think of the destruction of Jerusalem and the accompanying tribulation as a type of the tribulation in the last days.

Heartily recommended.

H.H.

Calvin's Commentaries, republished by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Eerdmans is publishing a new edition of *Calvin's Commentaries* in a new form. So far I received two volumes. The first on the gospel according to John, chapters 1-10; which is translated by T. H. L. Parker; price \$4.50. The

second is on the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, translated by John W. Fraser; price \$5.00.

No one will expect me to make a thorough study of commentaries in a review. Besides, I am well acquainted with Calvin's Commentaries, a complete set of which I have in my own library. And so I perused these volumes sent to me by Eerdmans. And then I find that it is true what Murray writes on the front flap of the cover of the commentary of John: "This translation will have to be accorded the tribute of outstanding merit. The breaking up of Calvin's longer sentences into shorter sentences is skilfully done, with the result that Calvin's thought is adequately conveyed and the English reader is furnished with greater clarity and pointedness of expression."

Heartily recommended.

H.H.

Divine Election by G. C. Berkhouwer. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Price \$4.50.

This book is a translation from the Dutch: *De Verkiezing Gods* by Hugo Bekker. A review as well as an elaborate discussion and criticism may be found in *The Standard Bearer*, vols. 32 and 33. I will not repeat what I then wrote, seeing that I am still of the same opinion I expressed then.

I may quote from a review of this book that occurs in "Torch and Trumpet" written by Rushdoony: "Berkhouwer, as this reviewer has pointed out elsewhere (*Westminster Theological Journal*, May 1960, page 174 f.) tends markedly to anthropocentric and subjectivist thinking which is inimical to orthodox faith. As a result he brings to his studies not only an extensive learning, but an air of confusion exercised with more ability than most of his contemporaries. This is not a study of divine election as such, but, as the book jacket testifies, an argument against the orthodox or 'traditional' doctrine of election and the presentation of a novel doctrine thereof."

H.H.

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PART TWO

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Babylon the Bride of Antichrist

Revelation 17:1-6

1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:
2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Chapters 17 and 18 of the book of Revelation present us with a description of the great harlot and of her fall. It is of the utmost significance that we obtain as clear a conception of this picture, of the appearance and the essential character of this harlot, as possible. In the first place, this is necessary for the clear and definite understanding of the rest of the book of Revelation. But, in the second place, this clear conception of Babylon and her essential significance is also necessary for a practical reason. The voice comes to the people of God in the eighteenth chapter, "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," a voice which ultimately may signify an irresistible, effectual call into everlasting glory, the final deliverance of the church of Christ, when the days shall be shortened, but which undoubtedly bears the practical significance that the people of God may never have fellowship with this Babylon in the world. And in order to go out of her and refuse to have fellowship with her we must be able to discern her also among the many movements of our own day. And the clear understanding of the character and manifestation of Babylon, the great harlot, is of extreme practical importance. At the same time, however, we may as well confess that this is one of the most difficult passages of the entire book of Revelation to under-

stand, a passage which for that very reason has found many interpreters and has been favored with as many different interpretations. By far the most efficient method would be that of treating the entire portion in just one chapter, so that you might immediately have a clear conception of the whole. But because of the abundance of material, this is a practical impossibility. We cannot treat chapters 17 and 18 in one chapter. And therefore we shall have to divide our material, and gradually explain these two chapters, carefully reviewing what we had before, in the former exposition of this book, so that finally we may obtain a clear conception of the whole. And therefore we start with verses 1 to 6 of chapter 17.

By way of introduction, I must still caution you against the possibility of introducing an imaginary and false time element into these two chapters that speak of the fall of Babylon. We are so naturally and easily inclined to picture to our mind the events that are recorded and the realization of the various prophecies in this book as occurring in the same order in which they are revealed in the book of Revelation. More than once we have warned you against such a conception of the book which we are discussing. But the same caution is called for again in this particular connection. You must not picture the course of events thus, that what is revealed in chapters 17 and 18 chronologically follows the events pictured in chapter 16 for this is evidently not the case. As we have remarked in the previous chapter, after chapter 16 there is no history any more. All has been finished. The seven vials have been poured out. Antichrist has been at battle with Gog and Magog on Armageddon. And they have been in the winepress of the wrath of God. And therefore, history has come to an end. There is no Babylon any more. For also of its destruction we read in connection with the seven vials. Nor shall she ever receive a chance to develop herself anew. And for this very evident reason, which must be plain to us all, it is an impossibility to conceive of the events pictured in the two chapters we must now discuss as chronologically following those pictured in chapter 16. There is but one possibility, and that is to conceive of these two chapters as presenting a more detailed picture of something that we have already been told in broad outline before. In fact, it presents us with a detailed portraiture of Babylon and her fall, of the battle of Armageddon, and of the last attempt of Satan to deceive the nations that are called Gog and Magog in Scripture and that live at the four corners of the earth, and, finally, a description of the beautiful new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from God Almighty.

Of Babylon and her destruction we have read before. Essentially we have met her in chapter 11, where she still appears as the outward holy city, but where her very name is designated as being identical with that of Sodom and Gomorrah, where the Lord was crucified. Jerusalem no doubt appears in that chapter as the city that essentially is Babylonian in character and persecutes the witnesses of Jesus. Again,

we read of her destruction already in chapter 14, verse 8, where it is announced by the angel as imminent, when he cries, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of her fornication." And in our previous discourse, in connection with the pouring out of the seventh vial, we also met with her destruction. For there it was said: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." It is, of course, that same Babylon of which we meet a description rather in detail in the words of the present chapter and of the passage we are discussing now.

In the second place, it may be interesting to review some of the interpretations that have been presented of this great harlot. In doing so we shall find that interpreters generally have struggled to overcome the difficulty that this Babylon is pictured both as a woman and as a city, but have but ill succeeded in interpreting it. There are interpretations which have it that this Babylon is nothing else than the city of Rome as it existed at the time of John—the mighty capital of the powerful Roman Empire at that time, the city that indeed became guilty of the blood of many of the children of God that held the testimony of Jesus. This interpretation they base on verse 9, where we read that the seven heads of the beast on which the harlot sitteth are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. The city of Rome is famous for its being built on seven hills. And these are indicated in the verse that we just cited. There are others who claim that in this woman we must see the power of the papacy as finding its center in the papal see, and therefore, again in the city of Rome. The Romish Church through the papacy especially rules over the kings of the earth. She spoke words of blasphemy indeed, and made kings and nations drunk with the wine of her spiritual fornications. She persecuted the church and the saints of Christ Jesus, and her hands are red with the blood of the saints. In all these respects she surely answers the description given of her in the text. And therefore, we must surely think of the Roman Catholic Church of all ages, according to these interpretations. Still others find in this Babylon nothing but a picture of the false church as she has apostatized from Jesus Christ and from the truth of the Word of God and become a servant of Satan and Antichrist, the counterfeit church, or counterfeit Christianity in general. And there are even those that find in Babylon the picture of the world-city as we know it today, so that London and Paris and New York and Chicago and many other large towns are individual examples of this general picture that is called Babylon in our passage. These world-cities, so they say, are the great centers of religion and philosophy, of science and art, of commerce and industry. And they have their influence for evil felt all over the known world. Thus they present the picture of the harlot that commits fornication with all the nations of the earth.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

God's People Made to Serve With Rigor

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. — Genesis 15:13, 14

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph . . .

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.

Exodus 1:8, 11

The Book of Exodus opens amid the roaring flames that heated the brickkilns of Egypt. Blood mixed with tears and sweat, and tinted the new mortar under the cruel lashes of the taskmasters. Slowly the walls of Pithom and Raamses rose from the desert floor, troves for the treasures of Egypt. They were made by the groans and anguished cries of a people sorely oppressed. This was the work of slaves — and the slaves were the children of Israel, the members of God's chosen nation. We look on in amazement and ask — Why? — Why such grievous affliction? — Why was it even necessary for Israel to tarry in Egypt?

To this latter question, Joseph already had given an answer. He told his brothers, "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." There was a famine, ordained by God, covering the face of the earth. God had sent Joseph beforehand to make preparations by putting in storage of the bounties of Egypt. Thus many thousands of people were being saved from death; and thus also the children of Israel were brought to abide under the care of their brother amid the plenty of Egypt. But yet, this answer by itself does not satisfy us. Surely God could have made some other provisions for Israel whereby they might have stayed in Canaan. The food could have been sent to them by camel; or, at least, they could have returned to Canaan as soon as the famine was over. It was evidently the will of the Lord that Israel should remain in Egypt for an extended stay. This much was implied when God spoke to Jacob on the way, "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation."

A deeper reason for Israel's extended sojourn in Egypt we may find by examining the preceding history of Jacob's children. For many years already they had been associating and intermingling with the Canaanitish peoples of the land. The result was that they were falling deeper and deeper into sin; witness the massacre of Shechem, and the sins of Judah with Tamar, to say nothing of the countless iniquities that Joseph as a boy had faithfully reported to his father. The distinctiveness of the family of Israel as a people dedicated

unto God was swiftly disappearing. Given a generation or two more among the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, it would have been completely gone. It was necessary for the survival of Israel as a distinctive nation that they should be removed to a portion of the earth where they could dwell alone, until such a time as the Canaanitish people had filled their cup of iniquity and could be destroyed. For this the land of Goshen in Egypt was suited, and God provided that they might dwell there. In a sense it was a chastisement for their sins and a banishment from the promised land; but at the same time it was a deliverance from the countless temptations which they were not yet strong enough to bear.

But there was also another reason why Israel was sent into Egypt; perhaps it was the most important reason of all. Already many years before God had made it known unto Abraham. "Know of a surety," He said to Abraham, "that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." God was planning to deliver His people out of bondage. He would reveal Himself as Jehovah, the God Who is ever faithful to His promises, by judging the oppressors of His people, by delivering His people with many miraculous wonders out of the power of their enemies, by feeding them with bread from heaven, by giving to them the revelation of His commandments, and generally by making them partakers of many glorious, typical blessings. God was planning to reveal His Gospel more clearly than ever before through many marvelous demonstrations of His grace and power. For this the scene was being set when God sent His people into Egypt.

For a time, even after the death of Joseph, the life of the children of Israel was peaceful and quiet. Joseph's work and influence had been very great; the Egyptians continued to show their appreciation for what he had done in their attitude toward his family. True, the Egyptians did not seek to associate with the Israelites, for they were shepherds and the Egyptians considered that a disgrace. But the children of Israel were left unmolested to dwell amid the fertility of Goshen. Their sheep were well fed, and they had opportunity to learn about farming and many other trades from the highly civilized Egyptians. They prospered, and the Lord multiplied their number so that they became very great.

This very ease of life, however, eventually became for them a temptation in itself. The children of Israel became attached to the land of Egypt. Life was pleasant and they enjoyed Egypt's rare and delicious foods, its fish, its cucumbers and melons, its garlic and leeks. Seldom did they think anymore of the promised land of Canaan as something to be desired. They had little longing to return. Joseph's coffin was still with them, but its testimony they neglected. In effect, they disdained the covenant promises of God because of their love for the fleshpots of Egypt.

But God looked down from heaven and saw the com-

placency of His people. He also knew what should be the cure. He set a new king on the throne of Egypt "which knew not Joseph." It was not that this king did not know about Joseph, who he was and what he had done. Joseph's renown was too great to be forgotten even after several hundred years. But this king did not care. He felt no real appreciation for Joseph and no obligation to his heirs. He looked upon the Israelites as aliens, intruders in his land. He hated them and determined that they should be destroyed. He had been given over unto a reprobate mind by God.

The new Pharaoh called together his people and counseled them thus, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." With these words we gain an insight into the character of Pharaoh; he was a man of extreme jealousy. This gave rise to endless confusion and contradiction within him. On the one hand, he was extremely envious of the prosperity of the Israelites. They had evidently become much stronger than the Egyptians were themselves. This Pharaoh could not bear. It touched his national pride. But, on the other hand, Pharaoh also realized how much the prosperity of Israel contributed to the wellbeing of Egypt. The Israelites were strong and willing workers. Should they choose to leave the land it would be an irreplaceable loss. Basically, however, Pharaoh was motivated by a hatred for Israel's God. It was well known in Egypt that Israel's strength was due to the greatness of its God. The driving ambition of Pharaoh's heart was to prove that he could dominate over Israel and its God. In his wicked ambition, Pharaoh became a fool.

The folly of Pharaoh soon became evident in his plan of action. He set taskmasters over the Israelites to afflict them, forcing them to work for the Egyptians. Had Pharaoh been a wise and discerning man, he never would have followed this course. He would have seen that, as long as the Israelites were left in peace, they were losing all desire to leave the land. They were a quiet and submissive people who readily obeyed the proper authorities. Moreover, while working willingly, they were contributing much more to the Egyptian economy than they ever would under force. But God's goal was the opposite of Pharaoh's, and, as always, He used the folly of the wicked to bring it to pass. Under the oppression of the Egyptians, the children of Israel began to look once again at the promise received through their fathers that they would be delivered from this land. Their earthly prosperity being threatened, they looked more and more to the deeper covenant joy which they had in the presence of their God. God used Pharaoh to bring His chosen people unto a gradual conversion of life. In this way they were blessed and grew stronger than ever before.

The more Pharaoh saw his goal receding, the more he became determined in his folly. The Israelites had been assigned the task of building Pithom and Raamses, treasure

cities for Egypt. In this work the Egyptians forced them harder and harder. The lives of the children of Israel became bitter under the rigor of their bondage. They labored from morning til evening under the burdens of brick and mortar and in the most menial tasks of the field. It only served to thwart the plans of Pharaoh and to realize the will of God. Israel grew and multiplied as never before.

Finally Pharaoh became desperate. The glory of Egypt was dimming rapidly before the growing strength of Israel. Drastic measures had to be taken. He issued an order that seemed certain to cut short the growing strength of Israel. He summoned the two women, Shiphrah and Puah, who were in charge of the Hebrew midwives, and charged them to slay all of the male children at birth. The plot was meant to be a secret one. All of the midwives of Israel were to be commanded to watch carefully when attending a birth to see immediately whether the child was male or female. If it were a female child, it might be allowed to live; but if it were a male child, it was to be stifled before the parents even knew whether it lived. In this way the strength of the Hebrews would be curtailed while the women would remain to perform the work. Supposedly these measures would be stopped as soon as the strength of Israel was sufficiently reduced.

What Pharaoh failed to figure was the faith of the Hebrew midwives. They believed in God and would not willingly take part in the destruction of His people. Moreover, the Hebrew women were strong and healthy, usually requiring very little assistance in delivery. When summoned to a home, the midwives merely lingered on the way until after the child was born. Once the parents knew that the child lived, it was no longer required that the child be slain.

It was not long before Pharaoh learned that his command was not having effect. In a fit of anger, he summoned Shiphrah and Puah and accused them, "Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?" The women merely explained the fact, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them."

The wickedness of Pharaoh would not be stemmed. Casting all pretense of secrecy aside, he issued this inhuman command, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." It was Satan declaring open war against the church.

Israel's life in Egypt had become very bitter. They labored in bondage with persecution and pain. Not only did they suffer, but the lives of their children and of their nation were being threatened. But behind it was the will of their God. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). He was turning the hearts of Israel back to Him again. Once again the children of Israel looked upon the coffin of Joseph and with joy remembered its testimony of faith, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I John 2:15-17

There is a fundamental and principal difference between the church and the world. The whole world lies in darkness; she lies in the Evil one. But the church is a different people. They are the children of God, the "little children"!

Concerning these we might see in our former two articles that they are peculiarly addressable. And they are addressable on a threefold count. They are addressed as the "children," "little children," because their sins are forgiven for Christ's Name's sake, and because therein they know God as their loving Father. They know the greatness of the central benefit of redemption, so that they may stand in a new relationship to God. They are justified and know God by virtue of having an advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. They are also addressable as "fathers" for they know Christ, as the one who is from the beginning. They see the deeper and eternal background of the redemption in Christ Jesus. They know that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh. Therefore, they are addressable and admonishable. Again they are addressable as the "young men" who are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. They are strong as the militant Church in the world, fighting the good fight, because the word of God dwells in them, and thus they overcome the Wicked one, the Devil and his whole dominion!

They are addressable!

But they are also addressed — and *admonished*!

In these verses 15-17 we read the following: "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone love the world the love of the Father is not in him. Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not out of the Father, but is out of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth (the doer) of the will of God abideth forever.*"

This admonition follows from the fact that these "little children," "fathers," "young men" are such that their sins are forgiven, and they know the Son of God, who came into the flesh as their Saviour, and because they are strong and can and must win the victory, day by day, in the midst of an evil world.

The question is: What is the meaning of the term "world" in the text which we are here discussing?

The term is employed six times in the text. And in each case it must have the same meaning and refer to the same object which must not be loved but hated. It refers, of course, to all that is not "out of the Father," and, therefore, cannot be loved by those who are born out of the Father.

But what is this *world*?

There are three different terms in Scripture in the Greek language which are translated world. Firstly, there is the term which can also be translated "age." This present evil age, evil world. It looks at the time in which we live from the viewpoint of time, and the development of the human race and evil under the wrath of God. It is this "age" in distinction from the "age" to come. See Gal. 1:4, and especially Eph. 2:2 which speaks of the "age" of this world (*kosmos*); when we walked according to the age of this world. Then there is too the term which refers to the earth, the world, as it is the inhabited world. We hear this term in our very popular word *ecumenical*, meaning the entire inhabited world, where history is made and recorded. This term we read in Heb. 1:6: "... When he brought the first-begotten into the *world*." And, thirdly, we have the term "*kosmos*," such as we see in our term cosmology, cosmetics, etc. And this latter term, the term *kosmos* (world), is employed six times in this text.

Kosmos is the world as a well-arranged whole, the entire universe, heaven and earth as it came forth from the hand of God, and brought forth by the Word of his power, the Logos.

And, we may add, that this term *kosmos* is used both in a good sense and in a bad sense in Scripture; sometimes it refers to the good creation of God, the object of God's love (John 3:16), and sometimes it refers to all that God hates, and what He forbids us to love, since it is not out of the Father but is contrary to his holy will.

And thus is the case here in our text.

The term *kosmos* has a very evil sense here in I John 2:15-17.

Let us try to understand this just a bit.

How is it possible that this term *Kosmos* can have such a meaning that seems mutually to exclude the other?

The answer to this question must be sought in the fact that we must not think of the seeming contradiction in the terms of *nature* and *grace*; we must not think that the creation is as such evil and that there must be another creation coming, destroying this creation. We must think of the scheme of *sin* and *grace*! Both *sin* and *grace* operate in the one creation of God. There is the prince of this world, the devil, and his dominion over all things in sin, as well as the dominion of the Prince of Peace, the mighty God who came to save this *kosmos* from sin and death.

Sin and grace, therefore, in one *Kosmos*.

And now the meaning of the term *kosmos* is determined exactly by the viewpoint of the *Kosmos*, whether that is from the viewpoint of sin or of grace! The wicked and the children of God have all things in common except grace!

And here in I John 2:15-17 the viewpoint is exactly and emphatically that of sin, wrath, the curse, the dominion of Satan as he rules in the hearts of all evil men, and subjects all things under sin in this *Kosmos*!

And from this viewpoint all that is in the *kosmos* is not out of the Father, but is out of the *kosmos*.

When you look at "all things" in this world from the viewpoint of the dominion of the prince of this world, you will notice that there are three things which are *representative* of all. They are the spiritual ethical root from which all the manifestations of "all that is in the world" proceed. And there is no exception to this rule.

They are: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life!

These arise out of the hearts of men who are not the little children, who are not born of God. These do not fit with those whose sins are forgiven, who have confessed and do confess their sins, sins of lust of the flesh and of the eyes. This is all from below, and does not have its origin in God, his grace, nor is it prescribed by the law as the expression of his will.

What are lusts? They are the intense and directed desires of man as these are contrary to God's holy will. These desires are the very motive and starting point of all sin. They start in the flesh, that is to say, they have their starting-point in the ethically depraved nature on the heart, whence are the issues of life. They have their start in that flesh which *cannot* subject itself to the law of God, and in which there dwells no good at all. Out of the heart come evil thoughts, envy, adultery, fornication and all the things that make a man corrupt and ethically common. Matt. 15:19.

Lust of the flesh. And these lusts of the *flesh* reveal themselves. Lust of the eyes. Think of Eve in Paradise. When lust had conceived, she *looked* at the tree. Think of David upon the house-top when he saw Bathsheba. Or think of the word of Jesus: He that looketh at a woman to *desire* her. It is not for nought that we are told that if our eye offend us we are to pluck it out and cast it from us. It is ever the lust of the eyes, in pictures — television — that the world portrays its lust; she does not only do this but has a delight in those who do it. Think of the modern theater, the modern, shameless dress on the streets, especially of the women. It is based on the root: lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes. But such is also the case with the sin of all idolatry, covetousness. It is not for nought that Paul adds the admonition in I Tim. 2:9: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety . . . but, as becometh women professing godliness, with good works."

And these lusts of the "flesh" find their highest expression in the lust of a certain pride of this present world of things, riches, honor, achievement, power. It is being rich in worldly things, and not being rich in God, as is so graphically portrayed in the parable of the rich farmer — the fool whose soul was required of him, but who was not rich in God. This is fundamentally idolatry, God is not in all their thoughts. Such is the entire world in its life, its politics, its

"cold" war and hot wars, its business and industry, its art and culture, its education and philosophy, its ethics and entire conduct. It is nothing but this: all that is in the world is not out of God. It is out of the world. And this world has, indeed, natural light in so doing, but it keeps even this down in unrighteousness, even in things natural and civil, and therefore becomes inexcusable before God.

Here is the antithesis. He that is not for Christ is against him, and, he that does not gather, scattereth. It is either — or. Here is no "common grace" by which the natural man, though depraved by nature, is improved so that he is not as evil as he would otherwise be. Here it is stated: The entire *kosmos* lies in the evil one (I John 5:19). And such is also the experience of man. And in this very evil world the church must be victorious with the word of God dwelling in her heart and life. She must be strong in the confession of the forgiveness of sins and of her knowledge of the heavenly Father; she must ever know him more and more, who is the eternal Son of God and thus walk holy as He is holy.

The scheme here is *sin* and *grace*.

And they who walk in the former, the world with all its lust perishes, is passing away, is constantly the opposite of that which abides. There is nowhere anything that is abiding and stable in the world. Their songs, their philosophies, their education, their joys, their riches and achievements, their power and glory, it all vanishes as the mist before the morning sun.

But there are some who abide. They are those who do the "will of God." They believe in the Son. They confess their sins and cling to Christ the Head of the church. And they live the life of the battling and fighting "young men," the militant church in the world, conquering in the strength of God, the strength of those in whom the Word of God dwells.

It is the battle cry. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. It is ever a needed cry, also for us as parents as well as for us the children.

This is the straight and narrow way that leads to life.

Few there be that find it, but for those who do find it and walk upon it, the victory is certain and they abide forever!

G.L.

But the good shall live before Thee,
 Planted in Thy dwelling-place,
 Fruitful trees and ever verdant,
 Nourished by Thy boundless grace.
 In His goodness to the righteous
 God His righteousness displays;
 God my rock, my strength and refuge,
 Just and true are all His ways.

IN HIS FEAR

The Freedom of "Bigotry"

(3)

The reason why the man who will not help elect a Roman Catholic president for these United States of America should not be called a bigot is that the Roman Catholic Church, to which this president would be obliged to be loyal, denies all the rest of the faiths and religions in our land their freedom.

This must not be overlooked.

We hear so much about the fact that the religious issue should not be dragged into this political campaign and election. It is not as simple as all that. This issue was never raised when nominees with other faiths ran for the office of president. We do well to ask then as to just exactly why it should be raised now. And the answer is that it is the peculiar stand of this Roman Catholic Church that there should be no separation between church and state, that the Roman Catholic faith is the only faith that has a right to exist, and all others must be kept de facto until they wither away and die out with the death of its members.

Last time we showed this from several quotations of books used in the Roman Catholic schools and colleges. We would suggest for some interesting reading the article on page 8 of the October 27, 1958 *Christianity Today* entitled, "If the U.S. Becomes 51% Catholic." The quotations we gave last time may be found quoted there with a commentary on their significance. There you will also find this final quotation, "Suppose . . . that the Constitutional obstacles to prosecution of non-Catholics have been legitimately removed and they themselves have become numerically insignificant: What then would be the proper course of action for a Catholic State? Apparently, the latter State could logically tolerate only such religious activities as were confined to the members of the dissenting group. It could not permit them to carry on general propaganda nor accord their organizations certain privileges that had formerly been extended to all religious corporations, for example, exemption from taxation." This, mind you, is taught at the college level in the text book, *Catholic Principles of Politics*, by Ryan and Boland. Speaking of constitutional obstacles being legitimately removed — and I suppose that means, first of all, getting a Roman Catholic president to work for this goal — it becomes evident what goal the Roman Catholic Church has in mind. Regardless of what Senator Kennedy may now say about his loyalty, or lack of it, to his church, his church has very definite aims also about our country. And it must have, for one of its doctrines is that the Pope is the only rightful head of the state as well as of the church.

Are we, are all other churches to be subjected to taxation upon our church buildings, parsonages and schools? What a tremendous load this will be for a nonprofit organization! What a higher budget will be required of us, and how much of our pay check will not be available to finance the cause of God's kingdom here below. And that is only one item. No propaganda means no schools for our children, no seminaries to train ministers, no mission activity, in fact no freedom of religion.

Let us understand that *this* position of the Roman Catholic Church makes the religion of one of the candidates for the office of president of the United States a real issue. And that is not bigotry then when one, fearful of losing the freedom of religion guaranteed us by the same Constitution which the Roman Catholic Church — to put it mildly — desires to have changed, votes against a candidate who, as a member of that church, is obliged to work for that end.

For the third time we say, this is not meant for political propaganda. And we are not writing these things to gather votes for a candidate to whose church doctrines we certainly cannot ascribe. We will proceed to prove that this is the case, that is, that we are not making political propaganda and that we are interested only in walking in His fear in these matters.

Were we politically interested in these articles, we would surely urge you to be sure and go out and cast a vote against this threat to the Church of Christ and either to vote for the other candidate or else stay home and do not vote at all. We do no such thing!

Well, we do no such thing with one important exception. We strongly admonish approximately half of our readers not to vote at all. Knowing that the Democratic Party far outnumbers the Republican Party and that to advise some of our readers not to vote at all is to give the supporters of Senator Kennedy a large advantage, we do so nevertheless.

Why?

Because the Fear of the Lord demands it, and, as we wrote before, God and the Church always come before the State. We ought to obey God rather than man. And therefore, not concerned about consequences personally, politically or nationally, we point all our women readers to the Word of God which in clear and simple language forbids them to vote at all in this national election. O, indeed, the flesh of the members of God's Church cries out and insists that now above all these women must vote to make sure that we do not get a Roman Catholic President. Many who did not take the time before, and were not interested in these matters, will now consider it their solemn duty before God to vote this time. And sad to say, many church leaders will lead their flocks in the wrong direction and admonish them to vote against this tide of Roman Catholic subjection and rule.

But turn a moment to a few passages from Holy Writ.

Take first of all that well-known instruction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy in I Timothy 2:11-13, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." We would have you note, first of all, that Paul writes, "nor to usurp authority over the man." And in the second place, let us note the reason for all this, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." That word "nor" is important because it indicates that Paul is speaking of a separate matter distinct from teaching when he speaks of usurping or exercising authority over the man. He does not say, in other words, But I suffer not a woman to teach *and* to usurp authority over the man. That could mean that through teaching she would usurp authority over the man. That is true. In that way a woman can indeed usurp the position of the man, relegate him to the background and exercise rule over him. But by saying "nor to usurp authority over the man" Paul makes a distinctly new thought. Even those who do not teach are forbidden to usurp authority over the man, and usurping authority over him in any way and by any means is strictly forbidden.

There are arguments raised against this stand, to be sure. Some will argue that this means that the woman shall not exercise authority over the man in the church, but in the state she may do so. And indeed, we are told that this may very well be the case this year. It is estimated that some two million more women will be voting in our national election than there will be men. The women, then, have it in their power to decide who will be our next president, and the men will have to like it and submit to the wishes of the women. But is it true that this text refers only to the church? Paul's reason for forbidding the women to teach or to usurp authority is that the man was first formed and then the woman. This is not some relationship in the church but in society. And Sarah is commended by the Spirit in Holy Writ in I Peter 3:6 for obeying Abraham and for calling and considering him to be her lord. Peter in the first part of this chapter tells the women to be subject to their own husbands. This is not something that they must observe simply in their church life. This applies to every phase of their life. And Paul makes a point of it to Timothy that Eve was first in the transgression when she heeded not the lordship of her husband and took it upon herself to answer the devil instead of referring him to Adam. Whether we like to admit it or not, God created the woman in a position of subjection to man. She was created for man and not man for her.

This does not mean that he may do with her as he pleases. He is her lord, but he has God over him as his Lord. It means as Paul writes in Ephesians 5:23 that the husband is the head of the wife, and that means that God gives him the right to rule her in love. It means that she can show love to him only by submitting to that rule.

Then again the argument is raised that the woman will vote even as her husband will. She will only underscore his vote and not militate against it. Does that change things? She may not be exercising authority over her husband in that she does not go contrary to his wishes, but she has assumed the right to rule over other men and has made herself equal to her husband. This position Scripture denies her. Be she unmarried or married, she never becomes man's equal in the sphere of authority. Men may give her that right and that place, but God never does. God did not even create them at the same time, as He did male and female among the animals. Adam was first created and then Eve. And after the fall God gave express instructions to the woman in Genesis 3:16. We read, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." If you please, the woman is not simply told that her desire shall be unto her husband, but she is expressly told that he shall rule over her. That is much broader than simply in regard to conception and bringing forth of children. It refers to her whole life.

And the woman who has no husband is not by virtue of that fact either the equal of man, nor is she superior to him in the field of authority, so that the unmarried women may rule married and single men. If God has ordained, and He has, that the married woman be subject to man and that he rule her, the unmarried, who in that respect live an abnormal life, does not by virtue of this abnormal or exceptional position receive the God-given right to usurp the authority of man. Paul says to Timothy, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." He is not speaking of husbands and wives here but of men and women in general.

We have more to say on this and will, D.V., continue next time. Therefore look up in His fear such passages as I Corinthians 14:34, Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18, I Peter 3:1-5, I Corinthians 11:3-9 to mention a few. They deny woman this right, and nowhere in Holy Writ can you find a text that positively demands or even advocates it. In His fear the women will refrain from doing evil and will leave the whole cause of His kingdom to God in the confidence that He will cause all things to work together for His Church's good.

J.A.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid of Hope Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. G. Korhorn in the passing away of her mother,

MRS. ELLA KORHORN

May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with the assurance that He doeth all things well.

Rev. H. Hanko, President
Mrs. J. Kalsbeek, Secretary

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

We will now continue with our quotation from Philip Schaff as he writes on "The New Mysticism," Vol. VI, pages 236-242.

"German mysticism had a distinct individuality of its own. On occasion, its leaders quoted Augustine's *Confessions* and other works, Dionysius the Areopagite, Bernard and Thomas Aquinas, but they did not have the habit of referring back to human authorities as had the Schoolmen, bulwarking every theological statement by patristic quotations, or statements taken from Aristotle. The movement arose like a root out of a dry ground at a time where it might have been least expected to rise. Its field was the territory along the Rhine where the heretical sects had had representation. It was a fresh outburst of piety, an earnest seeking after God by other paths than the religious externalism fostered by sacerdotal prescriptions and scholastic dialectics. The mystics led the people back from the clangor and tinkling of ecclesiastical symbolisms to the refreshing springs of water which spring up into everlasting life.

Compared with the mysticism of the earlier Middle Ages and the French quietism of the seventeenth century, represented by Madame Guyon, Fenelon and their predecessor the Spaniard Miguel de Molinos, German mysticism likewise has its own distinctive features. The religion of Bernard expressed itself in passionate and rapturous love for Jesus. Madame Guyon and Fenelon set up as the goal of religion a state of disinterested love, which was to be reached chiefly by prayer, an end which Bernard felt it scarcely possible to reach in this world.

The mystics along the Rhine agreed with all genuine mystics in striving after the direct union of the soul with God. They sought, as did Eckart, the loss of our being in the ocean of the Godhead, or with Tauler the undisturbed peace of the soul, or with Ruysbroeck the impact of the divine nature upon our nature at its innermost point, kindling with divine love as fire kindles. With this aspiration after the complete apprehension of God, they combined a practical tendency. Their silent devotion and meditation were not final exercises. They were moved by warm human sympathies, and looked with almost reverential regard upon the

usual pursuits and toil of men. They approached close to the idea that in the faithful devotion to daily tasks man may realize the highest type of religious experience.

By preaching, by writing and circulating devotional works, and especially by their own examples, they made known the secret and the peace of the inner life. In the regions along the lower Rhine, the movement manifested itself also in the care of the sick, and notably in schools for the education of the young. These schools proved to be preparatory for the German Reformation by training a body of men of wider outlook and larger sympathies than the mediaeval convent was adapted to rear.

For the understanding of the spirit and meaning of German mysticism, no help is so close at hand as the comparison between it and mediaeval scholasticism. This religious movement was the antithesis of the theology of the Schoolmen; Eckart and Tauler of Thomas Aquinas, the German Theology of the endless argumentation of Duns Scotus, the *Imitation of Christ* of the cumbersome exhaustiveness of Albertus Magnus. Roger Bacon had felt revulsion from the hairsplitting casuistries of the Schoolmen, and given expression to it before Eckart began his activity at Cologne. Scholasticism had trodden a beaten and dusty highway. The German mystics walked in secluded and shady pathways. For a catalogue of dogmatic maxims they substituted the quiet expressions of filial devotion and assurance. The speculative element is still prominent in Eckart, but it is not indulged for the sake of establishing doctrinal rectitude, but for the nurture of inward experience of God's operations in the soul. Godliness with these men was not a system of careful definitions, it was a state of spiritual communion; not an elaborate construction of speculative thought, but simple faith and walk with God. Not processes of logic but the insight of devotion was their guide. As Loofs has well said, German mysticism emphasized above all dogmas and all external works the necessity of the new birth.

It also had its dangers. Socrates had urged men not to rest hopes upon the Delphian oracle, but to listen to the voice in their own bosoms. The mystics, in seeking to hear the voice of God speaking in their own hearts, ran peril of magnifying individualism to the disparagement of what was common to all and of mistaking states of the overwrought imagination for revelations from God.

Although the German mystical writers have not been quoted in the acts of councils or by popes as have been the theologies of the Schoolmen, they represented, if we follow the testimonies of Luther and Melancthon, an important stage in the religious development of the German people, and it is certainly most significant that the Reformation broke out on the soil where the mystics lived and wrought, and their piety took deep root. They have a perennial life for souls who, seeking devotional companionship, continue to go back to the leaders of that remarkable pietistic movement.

The leading features of the mysticism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may be summed up in the following propositions.

1. Its appeals were addressed to laymen as well as to clerics.

2. The mystics emphasized instruction and preaching, and, if we except Suso, withdrew the emphasis which had been laid upon the traditional ascetic regulations of the Church. They did not commend buffetings of the body. The distance between Peter Damiani and Tauler is world-wide.

3. They used the New Testament more than they used the Old Testament, and the words of Christ took the place of the Canticles in their interpretations of the mind of God. The *German Theology* quotes scarcely a single passage which is not found in the New Testament, and the *Imitation of Christ* opens with the quotation of words spoken by our Lord. Eckart and Tauler dwell upon passages of the New Testament, and Rhysbroeck evolves the fulness of his teaching from Matthew 25:6, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

4. In the place of the Church, with its sacraments and priesthood as a saving institution, is put Christ himself as the mediator between the soul and God, and he is offered as within the reach of all.

5. A pure life is taught to be a necessary accompaniment of the higher religious experience, and daily exemplification is demanded of that humility which the Gospel teaches.

6. Another notable feature was their use of the vernacular in sermon and treatise. The mystics are among the very earliest masters of German and Dutch prose. In the Introduction to his second edition of the *German Theology*, Luther emphasized this aspect of their activity when he said, "I thank God that I have heard and find my God in the German tongue as neither I nor they (the adherents of the old way) have found Him in the Latin and Hebrew tongues." In this regard also the mystics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were precursors of the evangelical movement of the sixteenth century. Their practice was in plain conflict with the judgment of that German bishop who declared that the German language was too barbarous a tongue to be a proper vehicle of religious truth.

The religious movement represented by German and Dutch mysticism is an encouraging illustration that God's Spirit may be working effectually in remote and unthought-of places and at times when the fabric of the Church seems to be hopelessly undermined with formalism, clerical corruption and hierarchical arrogance and worldliness. It was so at a later day when, in the little and remote Moravian town of Herrnhut, God was preparing the weak things of the world, and the things which were apparently foolish, to confound the dead orthodoxy of German Protestantism and to lead the whole Protestant Church into the way of preach-

ing the Gospel in all the world. No organized body survived the mystics along the Rhine, but their example and writings continue to encourage piety and simple faith toward God within the pale of the Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

A classification of the German mystics on the basis of speculative and practical tendencies has been attempted, but it cannot be strictly carried out. In Eckart and Ruysbroeck, the speculative element was in the ascendant; in Tauler, the devotional; in Suso, the emotional; in Groote and other men of the Lowlands, the practical." — end of quote from Philip Schaff.

False Mysticism is that conception which claims an immediate communication of the Divine knowledge and of Divine life from God to the soul as independently of the Scriptures and of the use of the ordinary means of grace. This Mysticism must not be confounded with the doctrine of spiritual illumination as held by the Church of God and according to the Word of God. No Christian would deny the truth of this spiritual illumination by the Holy Spirit. The mere outward presentation of the truth as contained in the Scriptures cannot profit any man to his salvation. One may be acquainted with all the truths of the Word of God, and yet be nothing more than a tinkling cymbal, as held before us in I Cor. 13. The natural man, we read in the Word of God, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned and they are foolishness unto him. Saving knowledge of the truths of the Word of God can be the fruit only of an inner, supernatural and irresistible operation of the Spirit of God within the hearts and minds of the children of men. There is surely a mystical bond connecting the child of God with the living God of his salvation as revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. This, however, is surely not to be regarded as identical with False Mysticism. They differ especially in two things. First, they differ as to their object. The object of the inward teaching of the Spirit is to enable us to discern the truth and excellence of what is already objectively revealed in the Bible. The illumination claimed by the Mystics communicates truth independently of its objective revelation. It is not intended to enable us to appreciate what we already know, but to communicate new knowledge. However, in the second place, the doctrines of spiritual illumination and of Mysticism differ not only in the object, but also in the manner in which the object is to be attained and experienced. The guidance of the Spirit is experienced in the way of prayer and by the diligent use of the appointed means of grace; the intuitions of the Mystic are sought in the neglect of all means, in the suppression of all activity inward and outward, and in a passive waiting for the influx of God into the soul. And so the effect of spiritual illumination is that the Word of God dwells in us in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, whereas what dwells in the mind of the Mystic is his own imagination. False Mysticism is pure subjectivism, and as unstable as the mind of man itself.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 9. Who teach: That Christ has in no place prayed that believers should infallibly continue in faith. For they contradict Christ himself, who says: "I have prayed for thee (Simon), that thy faith fail not," Luke 22:32; and the Evangelist John, who declares, that Christ has not prayed for the Apostles only, but also for those who through their word would believe: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name," and: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one," John 17:11, 15, 20.

As far as the translation is concerned, we have the following remarks. In the first place, the opening sentence should be rendered a bit more literally and directly as follows: "That Christ has nowhere prayed for the believers' infallible perseverance in faith." And, in the second place, here again the Scriptural citations should be quoted consistently from the King James Version.

The Arminian heresy is as inconsistent as it is many-sided in its attacks upon the truth of Scripture and our Reformed confessions. And the error rejected in this final article of our *Canons* is a clear illustration thereof. On the one hand, the Arminians refer to Christ's intercession for His people as being proof that the falling away of the saints is possible. They say that the very presupposition of such a prayer for the perseverance of the believers is that their fall from grace is a very real possibility. And when the defenders of the faith contradict this argument effectively, these same Arminians will come back, as in this article, with the claim that Christ never prayed for the believers' infallible perseverance in faith. And thus there seems to be no end to these Arminian arguments. The mere fact that our fathers in this fifth chapter of the *Canons* were satisfied to stop with nine articles of rejection does not mean that these nine are exhaustive. No, one could undoubtedly cite and reject more such Arminian errors. But these were deemed at that time some of their more important attacks upon the truth; and to refute these was deemed sufficient. However, all these arguments and the refutation of them will not in themselves convince a single Arminian of the truth. I think the Rev. T. Bos makes a proper observation in this connection when he writes: "One can never satisfy the unbelieving opponents. The deepest ground of their

contradiction of the truth, then, is not that they find the Reformed doctrine unscriptural; but it is enmity of heart against the doctrine of Scripture, which runs contrary to the self-righteous and proud nature of man." In other words, the matter is spiritual and concerns not merely the mind, but the heart. He who principally loves the truth of God's Word will see and understand that truth when it is expounded to him, will reject the error, and will gladly embrace that truth even when it necessitates letting go of errors which he has long accepted as truth. But he who principally hates the truth will continue to find all kinds of objections and arguments against it, no matter how inconsistent and illogical and unscriptural such arguments may be. Intent he is upon gainsaying the truth of God at all costs.

Thus it is in this case too. When the Arminian comes with the objection that the very presupposition of Christ's intercession is the possibility of the falling away of the saints, and that otherwise it would be unnecessary for Christ to pray for them, the Reformed believer has a ready answer; and that answer is effective too, beyond a shadow of a doubt. It is the answer of Article 8 of the first section of this chapter. He answers: "Precisely: the presupposition of the intercession of Christ for His saints is indeed not only the *possibility* of the falling away of the saints, but it is the very real fact that *with respect to themselves* this falling away would undoubtedly take place. The Arminian is correct; in fact, we go a step farther. The fall of the saints is *inevitable* as far as they themselves are concerned. *BUT* the merit, *intercession*, and preservation of Christ cannot be rendered ineffectual. And therefore, the falling away of the saints, while inevitable as far as they themselves are concerned, and while in that sense presupposed in the very intercession of Christ, is utterly impossible because of that very intercession of Christ."

But is the Arminian now satisfied by this explanation of the matter? By no means! Now he begins to tamper with that intercession of Christ itself, and he claims that even Christ has never prayed for the believers' infallible perseverance in faith. And one almost throws up his hands in despair at such an argument, not only because there seems to be no end to the Arminian objections, but also because it is such an obvious contradiction of Holy Writ.

What, we may ask, first of all, is the intention of this objection? Surely, the Arminian is aware of the fact that Christ intercedes for His people. And he is also aware of the fact that Christ intercedes for the perseverance of His people. And so he does not mean to deny that intercession as such, nor to deny that Christ prays for the perseverance of believers. No, that would be too obvious. What he means evidently to contradict is that Christ prays absolutely, flatly, unconditionally for the perseverance of the believers. The emphasis therefore falls upon the word "infallibly." If the Arminian can get this point across, he has once more succeeded to destroy the whole doctrine of perseverance. Our fathers based the perseverance of the saints upon this inter-

cession of Christ in part, as is plain in *Canons* V, A, 8. But if the Arminian must accept the surety of that intercession and admit that this intercession cannot be rendered ineffectual, then he will be compelled to accept the doctrine of perseverance. Hence, he seeks to rob also this intercession of our Lord of its certainty and efficacy. And to do this he must alter the content and the character of that intercession. He must deny that Christ ever prayed for the infallible perseverance of believers in their faith, and he must introduce the cancer of conditionality into that intercession itself. Just as he makes the preservation of the saints conditional, so he now must make Christ's intercession a prayer for conditional preservation. You will remember that the Arminian indeed taught a conditional perseverance already in the Fifth Article of the Remonstrance. Among other things, that article teaches that "Jesus Christ assists them (the saints) through his Spirit in all temptations, extends to them his hand, *and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire his help, and are not inactive*, keeps them from falling . . ." Now when this doctrine is applied to Christ's intercession, two results follow. In the first place, the Arminian applies this to the *fact* of Christ's intercession. The result then is the teaching that Christ will intercede for the saints (and thus assist them and keep them from falling) on condition that they are ready for the conflict, desire his intercession, and are not inactive. If, on the other hand, they do not desire that intercession, do not ask for it, are not ready for the conflict, and are inactive, then Christ will not intercede. And in the second place, the Arminian would apply this doctrine to the *content* of Christ's intercession, and maintain that what Christ prays for is not the infallible and unconditional preservation of His people in their faith, but a fallible and conditional perseverance. He prays, in other words, that they may be kept in their faith provided they show a willingness to persevere and a readiness for the conflict and the activity of fighting faith's battle. In this way the intercessory prayer of Christ is made thoroughly conditional and rendered ineffectual. For the crucial situation when the believer himself does not fight the battle of faith, is not ready for the conflict, and does not desire Christ's help—for that crucial situation there is no intercession of Christ in the first place. And as far as the everyday, continuing battle of faith is concerned, the order of things, according to the Arminian is not that Christ's intercessory prayer is first and our faith and readiness for the conflict second and resultant, but just the reverse.

Understand well the implication of this error. It means that as far as the sinful, weak, imperfect, fallible saint is concerned, that intercession of Christ is absolutely useless. To begin with, the whole effect of that intercession of Christ is dependent not on Christ's merit and intercession, not on the certainty of Christ's being heard by the Father, but on you and me. And, what is to me the most terrifying aspect of this error, the Arminian has no hope, no help, no comfort, in this intercessory prayer of Christ in that most crucial and

dark moment in the Christian's life when he temporarily falls so deeply that the exercise of faith is interrupted, the conscience is grievously wounded, and he loses for a time the sense of God's favor. What then? What hope is there for such a saint at such a time outside of Christ's intercessory prayer for his infallible perseverance? Absolutely none! All the Arminian can say in effect to such a saint is: "Sorry, but you must lift yourself up by your own bootstraps."

No, the perfect intercession of Christ, Who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and Who is surely heard of the Father, and Who receives all He asks, is the only answer, the solution, to the weakness of the saints, who would undoubtedly fall as far as they themselves are concerned. And the content of that intercession, as well as the act of intercession itself, is absolutely unconditional. Christ intercedes with the Father that the believers may infallibly persevere in faith.

The first proof from Scripture, Luke 22:32, cites the concrete example of an individual saint, the disciple Peter. He was in exactly such a crucial situation as that cited above. He felt mighty at this time in himself, as Simon. He was not ready for the conflict at all, though he thought he was. He did not desire Christ's help whatsoever; in fact, he spurned it. When the moment of conflict arrived, he **was not active** whatsoever; in fact, he succumbed without a fight. What would become of his faith at such a time? How could one in that frame of mind ever survive? How, once he had so dismally fallen, could he be restored to the favor of God? You say, "He could repent and return"? No, he lacked the power. He had become inactive in the fight of faith. As far as he was concerned, he had reached the point of no return. There was but one course left: he could only sink deeper and deeper in that horrible denial. But Christ interceded. And He did so unconditionally, even when Peter cared not for that intercession, saw no need of it, and even when Peter showed no readiness for the conflict whatsoever. Moreover, that intercession was exactly adapted to Peter's need of the moment. It was unqualified, unlimited, unconditional: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And this intercession, answered perfectly by the Father even as it was perfectly offered by the Lord Jesus, accounts for the fact that the fallen Peter went out and wept bitterly, repented, acknowledged his sin, and was restored.

And the second example, taken from the beautiful high-priestly prayer of our Lord in John 17, immediately prevents the objection that this was true of Peter only, not of all believers. For there, as the article points out, Christ prays not only for His disciples, but for those who would believe through their word. And His prayer is again unlimited, unqualified, unconditional both as to its act and as to its content: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name." And again: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." This prayer of our Lord, perfectly offered, and perfectly based upon His perfect merits, is perfectly heard by the Father. Our infallible perseverance in faith is an assured fact. H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Mission Order

(Continued)

Art. 51, D.K.O.

During the early years of the present century, the struggle continued unabated over the question, "Who has jurisdiction in the calling and sending of the missionary?" The debate revolved about the theory of "*centralization*" (synod and classes may exercise this right) versus the theory of "*decentralization*" (this right belongs only to consistories). Our readers will recall that the Mission Orders adopted in 1898 and 1902 both stood definitely on the basis of centralization but that against that position various protests were registered so that the matter was constantly brought to the attention of the synod.

We now come to 1910. In that year the synod adopted the third Mission Order which was short lived for although the order itself stood on the principle of centralization, the same synod that adopted it repudiated that principle in action taken at a later session. From Rev. De Korne's writing we quote the following features of this Mission Order.

"Article II states: The execution of the mission program of the church is in the hands of five delegates who, with their alternates, are appointed by synod.

"Article IV provides that the Board receives its orders from synod, but in matters for which the synod has not made any provision, the Board is authorized to act according to its best judgment.

"Article V provides that synod determines where the ministers of the Word are to labor and how. Synod also is to determine the question of extension or retrenchment of our mission work, and determine the number of workers."

This Mission Order contained a total of twenty-five articles. In only two of these articles was there any reference to the local church. Article IV made provisions for offerings for missions to be taken in the churches and Article XI insisted that ordained missionaries must be called, ordained, and sent out by the local church.

De Korne writes again, "In the Acts of 1910 the article which recorded the adoption of the new Mission Order was numbered 43. Article 44, thus the one immediately following, records a conviction of the same synod showing dissatisfaction with the Mission Order just adopted. In spite of the plain provision of Article XI, attention was called to an overture of Classis Grand Rapids East asking the synod to decide 'to have missionaries called by a local church.' Synod decided to do this and adopted as its policy a fairly long document which pointed out the necessity of a complete new Mission Order built up *entirely* on the basis of the principle

just adopted, namely, 'missionaries to be called by a local church.'

"This document stated that synod wanted the call to be issued by the local church not merely *in name*, so as to make the calling church a sort of instrument of the missionary committee in guaranteeing the ministerial status of the missionary, but *actually* so that the calling church can maintain living contact with its mission field.

"It was decided that the Mission Order adopted by the Synod of 1910 should be effective for only two years and these two years were to be a period of transition to a new regime.

"Again a committee was appointed to draw up a new Mission Order for consideration at the next Synod."

From all this it is evident that the matter was far from being settled. The differences of opinion concerning this matter could not be dissolved by synodical legislation. The pendulum kept swinging back and forth with both sides vigorously attempting to sustain their position.

During the next two years there was considerable stir in the churches about this matter. Five classes (out of a total of twelve) overtured the synod to return to the principle of 1908, namely, centralization. One classis overtured synod to abide by the second decision of 1910, namely, decentralization. Two classes submitted questions, one challenging the 1908 position and one challenging the position of 1910. Before the Synod of 1912 treated any mission reports, it adopted, upon the advice of various committees on missions, the following resolution or principle:

"*The calling and sending out of missionary ministers shall be done by a local congregation, but in case circumstances require it, the calling and sending out may be done by the churches combined in a manner to be determined by these churches themselves and in conformity with synodical and classical stipulations.*"

It appears that on the basis of this compromise the Synod of 1912 drew up a Mission Order that recognized both the principle of centralization and decentralization. Concerning the first it declared that each congregation is obliged to obey the missionary commission of our Lord by sending out one or more ordained missionaries to the heathen; and that missionary calls shall proceed from the local congregation or from a group of local congregations. It further provided that not only the appointment of a missionary, but also the regulation of his work and responsibility for all the details of the post are to proceed from the calling church or churches in consultation with the mission delegates appointed by the classes. It even provided that the educational, medical and industrial features of the work can be managed by a local church or group of churches if this church or group of churches takes responsibility for the entire post.

On the other side the same Order provided that since

educational, medical, and industrial missions, because of their general significance for the entire missionary enterprise, can more properly be administered by the churches working together, they shall be supported from the general mission fund and administered by the mission delegates appointed by synod.

This Mission Order remained in force for twenty-seven years. Although some of its provisions were challenged and minor changes were made, there was no major revision until 1939 when the present Order for Missions was drawn up.

It is of interest to note that even though the Mission Order of 1912 contained principles of decentralization, these were not followed during the ensuing years. The practices of centralization continued even though a change had been enacted in policy. This brought forth complaints in 1922 that the Mission Order was not being applied since, with the exception of the calling and sending of the missionaries and their helpers, all the work was being done by the Board. Synod took this matter under advisement and two years later expressed that it was simply impossible to comply with the letter of the Mission Order. Its answer to the Board of Missions was that they should take account of the principle expressed in the Mission Order as far as circumstances permit.

We regret that we do not have a copy of the 1939 Mission Order. It appears that the Synod finally reverted to the original position of 1898, namely, that of centralization and thus brought the Mission Order into conformity with the practice of the church and there the matter rested.

In our churches, the local churches are responsible for mission activity insofar as each congregation is able to engage in this work. In this respect we stand on the principle of decentralization or the Order of 1912. Our denominational mission work is regulated by a synodical Mission Board in conjunction with the calling church. Article 7 of the Mission Board's Constitution specifies the relation between this Board and the calling church. It states:

"All matters of finances connected with the missionary and his work, belong solely under the jurisdiction of the mission committee. However, the matter of field of labor and the method of labor, insofar as not determined by the synod, shall be under the jurisdiction of the mission committee and the calling church jointly."

"The field of labor and the time of labor to be devoted to the field, as well as the method to be employed shall be determined by the calling church in conjunction with, and upon the advice of the mission committee. However, in no case shall a field of labor or a method be determined without the majority approval of the committee."

"The missionary shall send a copy of his bi-monthly report to the calling church."

"A missionary receiving and accepting a call to another field of labor than the one he occupies as missionary, shall

under all circumstances give both the calling church, and the mission committee two months' notice before he leaves his field of labor."

"The place of residence of the missionary shall be determined by the mission committee in conjunction with the calling church, and upon advice of the mission committee only."

Language in Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Article 52, D.K.O.

"Inasmuch as different languages are spoken in the churches, the necessary translations shall be made in the ecclesiastical assemblies, and in the publication of recommendations, instructions and decisions."

This article did not appear in the original Church Order of Dort. It originated in 1914 in the Christian Reformed Church because of the bi-lingual situation that existed at that time. Today the provisions of this article have virtually become obsolete. They are no longer needed since the language of our forefathers is no longer used. Our churches have become a one-language-speaking church. Very seldom is it necessary to translate a report, instruction or decision into English. Where, however, this is necessary, it should also be done. This is what the Church Order requires and it certainly is a demand within reason.

G.V.d.B.

Announcement

The Eastern Ladies' League meeting will be held October 20 at First Protestant Reformed Church at 8:00 P. M. Rev. M. Schipper will be the speaker. We urge all ladies to come and enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship together.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, Vice Secretary

ACTS OF SYNOD — 1960

Have you purchased your copy of the 1960 Acts of Synod? In some congregations less than one out of ten families do! Other congregations order them 100%.

Get yours from the clerk or minister of your church. If they have no more copies, send \$1.00 to undersigned and one will be mailed to you immediately.

Going! Going! But not yet gone! We still have a small supply and some consistories have a few on consignment so get yours now. Back numbers up to 1954 are also available at the same price, \$1.00.

Stated Clerk of Synod
REV. G. VANDEN BERG
9402 So. 53rd Court
Oak Lawn, Illinois

ALL AROUND US

Meeting of a Classis West

The Classis West of the churches that left us in 1953 has recently met. In the latest issue of the *Reformed Guardian* there is a brief report of this Classis, which report contains some interesting and important decisions. The meeting was held in Manhattan, Montana on the first Wednesday of September. Some of the decisions of this Classis are worth noting and commenting upon.

There was, in the first place, a letter from the Church in Lynden, Washington informing the Classis that they were not sending delegates and that the congregation was in the process of disbanding, their last services having been held on the 4th of September. The congregation informed Classis that they were joining the Third Christian Reformed Church of Lynden.

There was also a letter from one of the ministers of their group. The editor of the *Reformed Guardian* writes:

"Another disheartening letter was treated by Classis. It was from the Rev. S. T. Cammenga, formerly minister at Rock Valley, Iowa. It reads as follows: "Esteemed Brethren:

"Since it is my conviction that it is my duty under the present church situation to seek admission to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, I herewith inform you so, thus terminating my work in the Protestant Reformed Denomination . . .

"In order to apply to the September 20 meeting of Classis Sioux Center, it will be necessary for me to have a testimonial from Classis West attesting to my having been a minister in good and regular standing to date.

"Will the Classis kindly grant me such a testimonial at this time?

"Fraternally
"Rev. S. Cammenga"

The editor reports that "Classis could do little in view of the notice but to grant the Credential requested and recognize the step which the Rev. S. Cammenga has taken." He concludes with his own comment, "The fact remains however, that with our present shortage of ministers the number is again reduced by one. The congregation is left shepherdless at a time of crisis. All this will have an impact on our churches."

In connection with this, the following notice appears in *The Banner* of September 16, 1960:

"Classis Sioux Center in its fall session will examine the Candidates . . .

"On the following day, the Classis will consider the request of Rev. S. T. Cammenga of the Protestant Reformed Church of Rock Valley, Iowa,

to be admitted to the classis and denomination and eligible for call under Art. 9 (C.O.). A colloquium doctum and/or an examination of Rev. Cammenga together with the candidates will take place according to the following schedule."

Thus, another minister from their group joins the ever-growing list of those who have left them to return to the Christian Reformed Church. It would seem, however, that it is not true that Classis "could do little in view of the notice but to grant the Credential request and recognize the step which Rev. S. Cammenga has taken." Certainly Classis would have the right to refuse to grant this request on the basis of the fact that Rev. Cammenga had forsaken his flock and left them for another denomination. But this was undoubtedly impossible for them in view of the fact that their Synod had already principally committed themselves to the matter of returning to the Christian Reformed Church.

Another important decision was taken with respect to an overture of Rev. M. Gritters. The overture reads:

"The time has come that we seriously consider reuniting with the Christian Reformed Church, in fact, the time has come that we apply to the next Synod to implement the cessation of our churches."

To this overture were attached grounds and a request for an early Synod to deal with the matter. This overture was not accepted by the Consistory of Bellflower since the motion for adoption ended in a tie vote. But Rev. Gritters circulated his document among all the consistories as a private overture, with the result that several consistories had answers on the Classis. Chino suggested that the overture was premature since their Synod had not yet acted upon the last letter of the Christian Reformed Church, although they favored an early Synod; Hull responded favorably to the overture and also informed Classis that they had had a congregational meeting in which the whole matter of reunion had been discussed. The matter, in as far as it pertained to their own congregation, was tabled in the light of the coming Classis.

The following decision was taken by Classis West:

"1. That in view of the documents before us, Classis seek for an early Synod, in accordance with the regulations for same in Rules of Order for Synod to consider the letter of the Christian Reformed Church in answer to our letter of 1960, to give its recommendations and present these to the consistories for their reactions.

"2. That Classis request such a Synod to be held on the last Wednesday of October at the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, or if that is not feasible, at a later date this fall.

"3. That Classis vote for delegates to this session of Synod at this meeting."

Classis also decided to ask the Legal Study Committee appointed to study legal matters and the use of the name Protestant Reformed to report if possible to this early Synod.

There are some personal comments attached to this decision by the editor. They read in part:

"That these decisions are unusual goes without saying. That our churches are facing a crisis is also evident to everyone. It is also evident that it becomes increasingly serious when such events, as are recorded here take place. While we do not have the space to comment elaborately upon these matters we would make the following brief observations:

"1. As far as we personally are concerned we decry the haste, the call for speed and hurry

"2. As far as our personal judgment of the whole matter is concerned, we believe that the decision of our last Synod, that the proper basis for unity is to be found in adherence to the Scriptures and the Three Forms of Unity, is a good decision, is correct and should be maintained

"3. In view of the divergent opinions it becomes increasingly evident that a strong and clear decision will have to be made with respect to the question posed by the answer of the Christian Reformed Church to us. Since the matter comes first to Synod this will have to be a Synodical decision first of all. But it will ultimately be an answer which each consistory and each congregation will have to give. Personally we hope that our churches will be sufficiently strong to take a position, reiterating the stand of last year, not out of stubbornness, but out of conviction that there must be freedom within the boundaries of the Confessions, freedom to believe, freedom to confess, freedom to preach, all these, of course, within the limits of Scripture and the Confessions. We should not be satisfied with a freedom to be silent.

"4. But it is also evident that a decision will have to be taken, and that soon, so that the air may be cleared, and the course of our churches made clearly evident, so that everyone may know the direction in which we are going. It became clear we believe, at the meeting of Classis West that such a clear course was not evident to all and perhaps not even to a majority, and clarity we must have."

In reading all this material, there are several remarks that come to mind.

In the first place, the whole matter of the treatment of the overture of Rev. Gritters was wrong. Church politically, that overture had no place on the Classis. An overture cannot come to a Classis without approval of the Consistory. If a Consistory refuses to send an overture through to the higher ecclesiastical body, the only course of action that is left is that the individual protest the actions of his Consistory and take the matter to Classis in this way.

This error is compounded by the fact that Rev. Gritters circulated the overture which he had drawn up as his own throughout the Consistories residing in the Classis. This is clearly in opposition to Article 31 of the Church Order, and shows his refusal to submit to the decisions of his own Consistory. He militated against this decision and became guilty of propaganda and schism. That Classis did accept this overture and treat it as a grave error.

In the second place, the impetus for returning to the Christian Reformed Church is increasing. Certainly, all these actions on the part of those who have left us indicate that the Lord has justified our action as churches in bringing the issues of 1953 to a head and condemning the views of a general and conditional promise. The Lord has given to us—let it be said in humility and thankfulness—the grace to carry on as Protestant Reformed Churches in our Theological School, our Mission work, our Christian Schools, our radio broadcasting, and above all, our preaching. While those who left us for an institutional life of their own are going backwards, and that with increasing speed.

In the third place, many of the people that left with their leaders are confused, troubled and even angry at recent developments. There is considerable division among them on these important issues. The only course of action that remains for them is to follow their leaders in going backwards, or to return to us to carry on the cause of Christ's kingdom with us.

Finally, although it is probably expecting too much, certainly moral honesty before God and His church requires of them that they surrender the name "Protestant Reformed Churches" to us and frankly admit that they have no claim either to this name or to the property.

Kidnapping Defended

Under this title a brief article appeared in the September issue of *Eternity* which was also commented upon in *Christianity Today*. The whole subject has some bearing also on the coming election in our country. The article reads:

"The 'legal kidnapping' of three children of a Presbyterian father in Medellin, Colombia, which was instigated by a Catholic priest has been upheld by Roman Catholic officials in that country.

"Police seized the three children of Juan Osorio in April with an official warrant issued by the Juvenile Court judge and initiated by Msge. Tulio Botero-Salazar and the Archdiocesan Tribunal. The Church based the order on its teaching that its authority over baptized children takes preference over the rights of the parents and that a Catholic government is bound to protect baptized children when their parents 'apostatize.'

"The Osorio children were baptized in infancy by the Roman Catholic Church. The father, a widower, was converted three years ago and now is a Presbyterian.

"Father Francisco A. Duque explained: 'The children . . . received the sacrament of baptism at the direct request of their father, before he abandoned the Catholic faith and committed the crime of heresy by joining a Protestant sect . . . This means that the above mentioned children are subjects of the Catholic Church and are under its jurisdiction in everything related to their moral and religious education . . .

"In a matter so serious as the Catholic education

of children in which nothing less than eternal salvation is at stake, responsibility may not be evaded by the capricious will of parents . . .

"An argument from history . . . During the pontificate of Pope Pius XI a child of Jewish parents was sick unto death. He was secretly baptized by a Christian servant of the parents. The child did not die, but recovered completely, and the matter was made known to the competent ecclesiastical authority. When the truth of the fact was established, Pope Pius XI, in order that this baptized child might not be perverted but educated in the Catholic faith, took him under his care, not permitting him to live with his parents, but educating him in a catechistical school which he had in Rome. In spite of the attacks of the enemies of the Church, the Holy Father upheld the educational right of the Church."

"And so the crime of kidnapping, universally condemned by civilized nations, is justified by the Roman Catholic hierarchy."

Missions Restricted

In *The Banner* of September 3, 1960, the following news item appears coming over the EPS news service:

"All Christian missionaries have been ordered by the government of Equatoria, the most southern province of the Sudan, to close down their bookshops and any other business-connected enterprises they operate.

"The move was the latest in a long series of restrictive measures imposed on missionaries by the government in a campaign for the 'complete Islamisation of the Sudan.'"

H. Hanko

CONTRIBUTIONS

"Politics, Church and Danish Women"

While reading the local newspaper down here in the Southwest, the undersigned read an article which he felt would no doubt be good material for *The Standard Bearer*. With this in mind this article was written and mailed along with the newspaper clipping to the editor.

It concerns a Mrs. Bodil Koch, director of ecclesiastical affairs for the Danish Government. This article points out with praise the typical trend of the times to give women an equal place with men in all spheres of life, even the ministry.

Denmark, a little nation of 4½ million, first granted women suffrage in 1908, 12 years earlier than in the United States. Since then women have come a long way??? in Denmark.

"I don't believe the Danish Government would dare not to have at least one woman minister," said the 57-year-old Mrs. Koch. She was appointed church minister in 1953. Her

job is the enforcement of all constitutional provisions concerning the church in a country which is about 95% Lutheran.

"My one fierce struggle," she smiled, "was to see that one of the bishops ordained a woman. Our law permits women to be clergymen. I won."

Mrs. Koch was officially invited to visit Red China. She was impressed with the seriousness of communist youth. Said Mrs. Koch, "In Denmark our youth are happy with a motor-scooter and a television set."

One wonders if Mrs. Koch, who holds a degree in theology from the University of Copenhagen, knows very much about the Bible. If she does perhaps she will remember Deborah, the 4th judge of Israel, who ruled during a time of apostasy. Deborah deplored the fact that men could not be found to lead the nation of Israel (Judges, ch. 4, vss. 6-9).

With Mrs. Koch, far from deploring the fact that men sometimes shirk their duty, she fiercely struggles to claim an equal right to govern alongside of the men.

Perhaps in time to come Mrs. Koch may be rewarded beyond her wildest dreams. She might even find women given absolutely equal rights. Might even be that women will be privileged to dig ditches alongside the men as they now do in that Utopia — Soviet Russia.

Tucson, Arizona

Vernon Graeser

If My people would obey Me,
Gladly walking in My ways,
Soon would I, their foes subduing,
Fill their lips with songs of praise.

All the haters of Jehovah
Shall His clemency implore,
And the days of those that love Him
Shall endure for evermore.

Yea, with wheat the very finest
I their hunger will supply,
Bid the very rocks yield honey
That shall fully satisfy.

DEVOUT PRAYERS AND PLEAS

In mercy turn and look on me,
Thy servant true, Thy chosen one;
Let me Thy great salvation see,
And strengthen me my course to run.

Some token of Thy love bestow,
Which they who hate me now may see;
Let all, O Lord, be brought to know
That Thou dost help and comfort me.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

"All the saints salute thee . . ." PHIL. 4:21

October 5, 1960

Creston called Rev. G. Vanden Berg of Oak Lawn, Ill., from a trio which included the Revs. A. Mulder and H. Hanko.

Rev. H. Hanko declined the call extended to him by our Grand Haven church.

The following report was received above the signature of Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk of Classis West: Classis West met Wednesday, Sept. 21, in Doon, Ia. The March meeting will be held, D.V. in South Holland. This meeting of Classis West was a lengthy meeting, lasting until 11 o'clock in the evening. Matters of a disagreeable nature, such as discipline cases, which serve to focus attention upon the fact that the church is imperfect in the midst of the world, took a considerable amount of our time. However, the enforcement of Christian discipline constitutes one of the marks of the true church in the midst of the world.

We are happy to report that Candidate J. Kortering successfully passed his classical examination. The Synodical delegates of Classis East, Revs. Lanting, Mulder and R. Veldman were present to attend this examination. Our missionary, Rev. G. Lubbers, was also present. We also understand that Candidate Kortering was to be ordained the following evening in the congregation of Hull, Iowa.

The matter of Classical appointments took considerable time. Redlands' Church requested Classis to relieve its minister of these appointments as much as possible. When the far western ministers are absent from their congregations for three Sundays they are absent at least four full weeks, so that catechisms and leading society meetings is halted, or must be done by the Elders. Classis considered this request of Redlands and appointed Revs. Veldman and Harbach to two Sundays in succession. A schedule was drawn up, subject to change, depending upon the decision of Classis East in respect to our request that they supply Randolph in its vacancy. The Classical committee has power to revise the schedule in such case, and if Pella needs help if and when the missionary is called elsewhere. The schedule for our South Dakota churches is as follows: G. Van Baren — Oct. 2, 9, 16; J. A. Heys — Oct. 30, Nov. 6, 13; J. Kortering — Dec. 4, 11, 18; H. H. Kuiper — Jan. 8, 15; B. Woudenberg — Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5; G. Vanden Berg — Feb. 12, 19; R. C. Harbach — March 5, 12; H. Veldman — March 19, 26.

The South Dakota churches were represented at our meeting for the first time and were cordially welcomed by the chairman of the day, Rev. G. Vanden Berg. A wonderful spirit prevailed throughout the entire meeting. At 11 o'clock in the evening Rev. J. A. Heys closed our gathering with prayer.

Rev. J. Kortering's installation service was held in the Hull Community Building Thursday evening, Sept. 22. Rev. G. Van Baren preached the sermon which was based on the passage in John 10 depicting the shepherding office of Christ, under the general theme, "I Am The Good Shepherd." Rev. B. Woudenberg read the form for installation. The following Sunday morning Rev. Kortering preached his inaugural sermon on the text of Isaiah 40:9, 10. His theme was, "Zion Called to Proclaim Glad Tidings." The evening service featured a sermon on Col. 3:16, under the theme, "An Exhortation to Heed the Word." It was a joyous occasion for the congregation in Hull, and was shared with the parents of Rev. and Mrs. Kortering who motored from Michigan to witness the event. A reception, welcoming their new pastor, was held Sept. 16, in the Community Building. At their arrival in Hull, Candidate Kortering and his wife were pleased to find their furniture arranged, the parsonage in readiness, even to a well stocked refrigerator.

South Holland and Oak Lawn's Association for Prot. Ref. Education, through the Board, addressed a letter to the membership of their churches regarding the building of their own school. The letter gave the information that suitable land has been obtained, complete building plans have been approved, 20% of the needed funds for building a school has been received, and that it had been unanimously decided at the last Association meeting to go ahead! The Board hopes to begin building this fall so that the school may be ready for operation at the beginning of the 1961 school year.

The R.F.P.A. Annual meeting was held in Southwest Church Sept. 29. Rev. H. Hanko, of Hope Church, spoke on the subject, "The Standard Bearer and Doctrine." The secretary reported that 1260 copies of the last *Standard Bearer* were printed, and the subscription changes resulted in an increase of 23. New board members elected were G. E. Bylsma, A. Docter, T. Engelsma and C. Kuiper.

Rev. and Mrs. G. Vos celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary Sept. 7. Hudsonville's congregation responded to an invitation of the consistory to come out to the church to help the parsonage-family celebrate the occasion. That even resulted in the following bulletin notice on the next Sunday: "Both Mrs. Vos and myself want to thank the congregation for your many congratulations, in person and by letter, and also for that program you organized in our honor last Wednesday night, as also for the princely gift you gave us. May God bless us together unto the praise of His glorious name."

The Church's counterpart of the world's internecine cannibalism is indicated in the warning found in Galatians 5:15. But surely this sin is not found among us, or is it?

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.