

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation — "Mary—Rabboni"

Editorial — The Nature of the Atonement: Limited or General?

Days or Periods

The I.C.C.C.

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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When you hear anyone laughing or jeering at a limited atonement, you may tell him this: General atonement is like a great wide bridge with only half an arch; it does not go across the stream, it only professes to go half-way; it does not secure the salvation of anybody.

— C.H. Spurgeon

MEDITATION—

"Mary - Rabboni"

by Rev. J. Kortering

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."
John 20:16

"Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping".
Hot tears flowed from the caverns of her wretched soul.

It had been a long night.

Very early, while it was yet dark, Mary and the other women plodded their way to the sepulchre. Love brought them there. Wicked men with cruel nails had pierced Jesus' hands and feet. His side had been torn by a sword. By contrast, these women intended to anoint His bruised body for burial. The Sabbath had prevented them from coming earlier. Now, as soon as

possible, they came laden with spices and linen. Hopefully this act of love would be a sweet balm for their bleeding hearts.

Alas, even this was denied them!

The group of women traversed the familiar path. As they approached the tomb the haze of dawn illuminated the garden. Already from some distance they noticed that the stone was rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. At this point Mary Magdalene, relying upon womanly intuition, drew an immediate conclusion, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre,

and we know not where they have laid him." With this shocking evidence emblazoned upon her weary brain, Mary reversed her steps and raced back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples. Peter and John responded to her plea to come to the tomb and investigate. Before long Mary returned to the tomb, alone.

Mary wept! Nothing seemed to comfort her. Not even the presence of the angels aroused her from her stupefied sorrow. "Woman, why weepest thou?" There could be only one answer, "They have taken away the Lord."

Till Jesus came and called her by name!

Mary!

The floodgates of her soul were opened. With outstretched arms she ran to embrace Him; her only cry was, "Rabboni".

What a joy it is to meet the living Lord.

Mary had become closely attached to Jesus. Even though it is quite impossible for us to construct the story of her life, we do learn from Scripture that Jesus had cast out of her seven devils. This alone speaks volumes concerning the deliverance Jesus had brought her. The life of every person possessed of devils, was marked by misery in one of its deepest forms. We have such accounts in the Bible. The devils would cause young or old to be cast into the fire, would throw them down on the ground and foam would come from their contorted mouths; sometimes they would follow people and bellow out insulting cries. Others who were demon possessed dwelt unclothed by the deserted tombs and would haunt passers-by. Jesus had cast seven devils out of Mary.

When Mary had experienced this deliverance by the hand of Jesus, nothing could separate her from Him. Repeatedly we read how Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome, and Joanna along with others, followed Jesus about and ministered unto Him. Mary Magdalene was part of that faithful band. Her affinity to Christ however, was not merely in the fact that Jesus had delivered her from the clutch of the devil, but she emphatically loved to drink of the water of life freely by which one never thirsts again. The tie of *faith* bound her to her Lord.

This bond of faith carried her through all the dark hours of the cross. She must have heard early Friday morning that Jesus had been taken bound into Caiaphas' house. It may well be that the disciples told the women after "the Shepherd was taken and the sheep were scattered". Along with the faithful band that loved Him, Mary too had been troubled with the happenings of the day. She saw how Jesus was beaten by the soldiers. She witnessed the perversion of justice as the leaders of the Jews aroused the people to cry for the release of Barabbas rather than Jesus. She saw the hypocrisy of Pilate as he washed his hands. She followed Jesus as He walked the *via dolorosa* from the Praetorium to Golgotha. She heard Him say, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, weep for yourselves and for your children". The hammer blows echoed within the chambers of her mind; she could never forget them. Standing a little way off, she saw the blood

that flowed from Calvary. She beheld the anguish and suffering of the Son of God in our flesh. She, too, stood silently through the three hours of darkness. She heard Him speak, though she could not understand, for as yet the mystery of godliness was not revealed. She watched as Joseph and Nicodemus took down His body. She marked the place where they laid Him, not taking the pains to discern whether His body was prepared for burial. Slowly they trudged into Jerusalem to wait for the Sabbath.

Now she was back. . . and He was gone!

Someone had stolen His body. What an agonizing thought.

The tears flowed.

Jesus knows our every sorrow, and He cares. Of all His disciples and followers, Jesus appeared first to Mary. Some were perplexed over the empty tomb, some believed, some doubted, but only one wept, that was Mary. Jesus came first to her.

"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?"

What a powerful question when asked by the living Lord! It must have been that here, too, Mary's eyes were holden that she imagined that Jesus was the gardener. She looked at Jesus but did not know Him. What the eye could not now see, nevertheless was true. Mary stood in the presence of Jesus who arose from the dead. Long ago Christ has prayed through the mouth of David, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." Now He had given His back to the smiters, and His tongue had held its peace before the mockers. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter for He had given His body to be nailed to the cross. He had prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do". He knew that He would enter into the darkness of hell, for in Gethsemane the very thought flushed from His body bloody sweat. He suffered the just wrath of God against the sins of His own. It was the only way for Him to enter into glory. On that day He walked willingly.

He died in victory. As the Son of God in our flesh, death had no power over Him except He willingly gave Himself to death. As soon as He knew that His work of redemption was finished, He called upon death to claim Him and so to bring His body to the grave in order that also there He might remove the curse forever. That curse had to be removed from every sphere of our existence. Christ bore the wrath of God so that we might never have to suffer an ounce of wrath. He was condemned so that we might be acquitted. He gave His body to be bruised in order that we might be healed from all our diseases. He descended into hell so that we might pass through death unscathed. He went into the tomb in order that the chains of the grave might be snapped and the way opened for our bodies to pass from death into life.

As our Lord He prepared this way for us. Jesus arose!

Early in the first day of the week, while the keepers slept, while the tomb was sealed, Jesus went through the grave. His body was changed, for it was sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption. It was sown

a natural body, but raised a spiritual body. It was sown in weakness, but raised in power. To show this to all who cared, the angels came down from heaven and rolled away the stone. The chamber of death was opened for spectators. There one angel sat at the head, one at the feet where Jesus had lain. Between them rested the evidence that Jesus has arisen from the dead, the grave clothes still wound as it were around a body, but empty. Jesus had gone from physical death unto physical life. In His resurrected body, He was now ready for His place of glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus did not return to this life, He went beyond the grave to the place of life everlasting. He arose in a body prepared for heaven.

This Mary had to see and learn.

The living Lord said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, Mary answered, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Jesus had a simple answer, "Mary".

That call penetrated through her dulled ears, through her troubled mind and pierced her heart. That voice she now could easily identify, that was the voice of Jesus!

I can only imagine that that call was one of loving rebuke. Did Jesus shout out in sharp criticism, "Mary!" No, He loved her. Did He say, "Mary" sarcastically? No, He loved her. Was His voice rent in anger? No, He loved her. Jesus calls firm and yet tenderly, "Mary!"

On hearing her name, Mary suddenly turned to Jesus and would openly embrace Him. Oh! her Lord was back again. What a wonderful miracle had taken place, He was dead, but now He is alive. "Now again I can dwell with Him, I can lovingly attend to His needs". Mary with one sweeping embrace ran up to Jesus. "Rabboni", that is, "My master".

But, wait.

"Touch me not for I am not yet ascended unto my Father and your Father and to my God and your God."

You see, Mary had carnal thoughts, she had much to learn. She imagined Jesus had come *back* to this earth, she had to learn that He had gone on to the other side of death, He must needs ascend into heaven and there be embraced by His own.

Are you standing outside the tomb, weeping?

You understand what I mean. How often have you in the midst of life forgotten or failed to believe that Jesus is truly alive and rules over our lives? Mary forgot the resurrection!

That is easy to do. When you carried a loved one to the grave, you wept, but did you weep as those who have no hope? So you are in the hospital, are you rebelling? Your son is gone to battle, are you writhing in fearful pain and sleepless nights? As a child of God you are concerned for the welfare of the church, do you resign the future in fearful dismay?

If you do, you are weeping outside the tomb. You don't see the living Lord!

He calls you by name right now. Do you hear Him? He who is Lord over death, has conquered the devil and all his hosts. He has satisfied the righteous demands of our God and has received all power to dwell in us now and overrule our lives. He calls us into the consciousness of this covenant life.

Don't make the mistake Mary did. You hear him call your name? Don't imagine He calls you to a comfortable life here; listen, "Take up thy cross and follow me". Don't imagine that the living Lord calls to bring peace here, "I came not to bring peace, but the sword". Don't imagine you will become rich in the things of this world, "It is harder for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." Don't imagine that He promises you untainted bliss and prosperous days all your life, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all".

Remember, He *arose*!

He is the Lord and Master over all things now, not to establish a kingdom in this sphere of life. No, He arose beyond the pale of death, to ascend unto our Father in heaven and there to establish Father's house of many mansions. As our Lord, He directs all things to bring us to that glory of life everlasting.

Ye troubled ones, ye sorrowing ones bowing alongside Mary before the empty tomb. Our Lord is alive. Listen, He calls you by name!

What better response can we make, "Rabboni".

My Lord! My Master!

Say that and we have an inner peace, no matter what the outward circumstances may be.

For Jesus is *Lord*! He lives!

EDITORIAL NOTE:

In this issue our faithful news editor, Mr. J. M. Faber, presents the second in a series of pictures of our churches. Doon's is, of course, not a new church building; in fact, it may very well be the oldest building in the denomination. If memory serves me correctly, it was the home of a Baptist congregation before it became the Doon Protestant Reformed Church. But our news editor is attempting to acquaint the readers with our various churches by way of pictures.

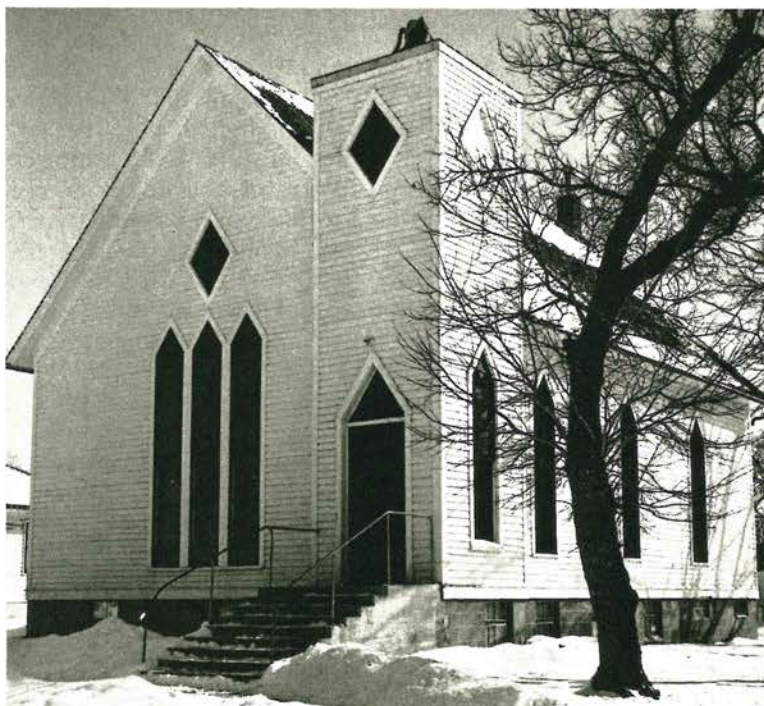
This all began, however, with a plan to present pictures of the various new church buildings in the denomination.

But Mr. Faber cannot present these pictures unless he receives them.

Hence, who is next? Loveland? Lynden? Hope? Redlands??

Incidentally, our news editor heads the one department in our magazine that is strictly dependent on others for its material. He can hardly manufacture church news. And his continual problem is that the news is not sent to him very regularly. Pastors or clerks, please cooperate! Send the news regularly; and send a picture of your church together with some pertinent information.

H.C.H.



This is the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa. The village of Doon is tucked in the northwest corner of the state, 20 miles from the South Dakota border on the west, and 20 miles from that of Minnesota on the north. The church was organized with eleven families in 1926, and today numbers some 26 families comprising 121 souls. Doon and Hull, their neighbor 10 miles distant, maintain a Prot. Ref. School Society and hope to have their own Christian Grammar School soon, to be built on property already purchased in Doon. In another joint venture, with

Edgerton and Hull, Doon is active in The Reformed Action Society which publishes and mails The Reformed Witness Pamphlet to the extent of 3,000 a month. The highlight of this year for the congregation of Doon is the 1966 Synod which is scheduled to meet in their church. The Consistory and Catering Committee are busy (excitedly) making plans for this event, and are quite confident that the bare trees in the picture will have leafed out, and the snow will have melted away, so that the delegates to Synod may expect a warm welcome in June.

J.M.F.

EDITORIAL—

The Nature of the Atonement— Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

THE CONFESSIONS ON SUBSTITUTION (continued)

(Note: In the last issue I began to discuss the second main element in the nature of the atonement, namely, that it is vicarious. At present the aim is to show that this element of substitution is the current teaching of our confessions.)

In Lord's Day VI the Heidelberg Catechism continues to discuss the requirements of the mediator-substitute. And while it does not directly concern itself with the truth of substitution, yet it should be noted that also here

the Catechism proceeds on the assumption that the necessity of such a substitute has been established (Lord's Day V). Hence, in Question and Answer 16, in treating the question why the mediator must be very man and also perfectly righteous, the Catechism lays down the principle that only man can substitute for man and speaks of the inability of one who is himself a sinner satisfying "for others." The same idea is indirectly taught in the seventeenth answer in the expression "and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life."

There are many such references in the Heidelberg Catechism in a similar vein, which either directly teach or presuppose the doctrine of substitution as established in Lord's Day V. True faith, according to Question and Answer 21, has as one of its elements an assured confidence "that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given of God, merely of grace, *only for the sake of Christ's merits.*" Lord's Day XII speaks of Christ as "our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us. . . ." In speaking of the profit of Christ's holy conception and nativity, the Catechism emphasizes that as our Mediator, He "with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God, my sins. . ." (Qu. and Ans. 36) In explaining the confession "He suffered" the Catechism instructs us that Christ "sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind;" and in this same connection speaks of "the only propitiatory sacrifice" whereby He redeemed our body and soul from everlasting damnation and obtained for us the favor of God, righteousness and eternal life. (Lord's Day XV) Again, in Question and Answer 39, in discussing the meaning of the crucifixion, the Catechism instructs us "that he took on him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God." Question and Answer 40 speaks not only of satisfaction, but of satisfaction "for our sins," through the death of the Son of God. Question and Answer 42 also proceeds from this truth of substitution: "Since then *Christ died for us*, why must we also die?" And, in answer, it is very plain that this death of Christ was so fully substitutionary that "Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins. . . ." This could never be, except on the basis that Christ satisfied *in our stead*, vicariously. The hope of Christ's return to judge the quick and the dead is of this comfort: "That. . . . I look for the very same person, *who before offered himself for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me*, to come as judge from heaven. . . ." (Question and Answer 52) The faith of the forgiveness of sins is "That God, *for the sake of Christ's satisfaction*, will no more remember my sins. . . . but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ. . . ." (Question and Answer 56)

In the chapter on justification by faith (Lord's Day XXIII) the truth of substitution and of complete satisfaction through substitution is very plainly spelled out in the following language: ". . . . God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me, the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me. . . ." Christ, therefore, is so completely our substitute that it is just as if we had ourselves accomplished what He accomplished in our stead. This is the plain teaching of Question and Answer 60. This same truth of substitution is at the basis of the following expression in Question and Answer 61: ". . . but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, is my righteous-

ness before God. . . ." And, mark well, this does not *become* true by faith, but it is received and applied "to myself" by faith. This must always be remembered. Christ is in the *objective* sense of the word the substitute, before God, for those for whom He died. This fact as such has nothing to do with our faith. Subjectively, of course, it is received and applied by faith; but the very possibility of this personal appropriation and application lies in the objective fact of Christ's being our substitute. He is not our substitute because we acknowledge Him and accept Him as such, but we can and do acknowledge Him and receive His benefits by faith only because He *was* our substitute nineteen hundred years ago at the cross.

As might be expected, this truth finds repeated expression in the Catechism's exposition of the sacraments.

In discussing the meaning and significance of the sacraments in general, the Catechism already maintains the truth of the vicarious character of Christ's atonement twice. In Question and Answer 66 this truth is taught indirectly when we are instructed that through the sacraments God more fully declares and seals to us the promise of the gospel, namely, "that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, *for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ*, accomplished on the cross." But this truth is directly taught in Question and Answer 67, which reads as follows:

Q. 67. Are both word and sacraments, then ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?

A. Yes, indeed; for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.

Let me remind you again that this "for us" can never be understood in any other way than in the sense of objective substitution. It indeed means "for our benefit," but it can mean this only because it means "in our stead" or "as our substitute." This must be maintained in the light of Lord's Day V, where we are first taught that we must make satisfaction either by ourselves or by another, and then taught that we cannot make satisfaction by ourselves and therefore need another, the Mediator-substitute.

In harmony with the above, the Catechism in its explanation of the sacrament of baptism speaks of "the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross." (Question and Answer 70) Likewise, in the Catechism's discussion of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we find similar expressions which point to this truth of substitution. One of the promises connected with the Lord's Supper is: "that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me," (Qu. and A. 75) And in the seventy-ninth answer we find this expression: "and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God."

Finally, we may point to the fact that, according to

the Catechism, this truth of substitution lies at the basis of the prayer for forgiveness in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer (cf. Question and Answer 126): "... be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us poor sinners, our transgressions, nor that depravity, which always cleaves to us." This is plainly an appeal to the vicarious atonement of Christ, therefore.

When we turn to the Belgic Confession, we find the same truth expressed. This is true of Article XX, which speaks of the fact that God "sent his Son to assume that nature, in which the disobedience was committed, to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death," and then speaks of the fact that God manifested His justice against His Son, "when he laid our iniquities upon him." And Article XXI, which speaks of Christ's satisfaction as our only High Priest is full of references to the fact that this satisfaction was made by way of substitution:

We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec; and that he hath presented himself in our behalf before the Father, to appease his wrath by his full satisfaction, by offering himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out his precious blood to purge away our sins; as the prophets had foretold. For it is written: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and numbered with the transgressors. . . . and suffered, the just for the unjust, as well in his body as in his soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that his sweat became like unto drops of blood falling on the ground. He called out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and hath suffered all this for the remission of our sins.

The Canons of Dordrecht very explicitly teach this vicarious nature of the atonement in Article 2:

Since therefore we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons, or to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, he hath been pleased in his infinite mercy to give his only begotten Son, for our surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that he might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

One could not very well be more explicit than this. Notice that the Canons are not satisfied with the phrase "for us" and the phrase "on our behalf." They emphasize that "for us" means "in our stead" and that "on our behalf" can only be possible on the basis of this "in our stead." This explicitness of the Canons was necessitated by the deviousness of the Arminians. They had to be "pinned down," so to speak, to a doctrine of the atonement which included very plainly the elements of satisfaction and substitution, so that it might become plain that they really denied the Scriptural doctrine of atonement and so that it might be clear that they had no place in the Reformed communion. Here, therefore, we have one of the most precise expressions of the element of substitution to be found in our Reformed confessions.

Finally, I must call your attention to the repeated

expressions in the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper which point to this same element of the vicariousness of the atonement. Already in the first part of self-examination the Form speaks as follows: "considering that the wrath of God against sin is so great, that (rather than it should go unpunished) he hath punished the same in his beloved Son Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross." Do not forget that this clearly implies substitution; for the clear implication here is that God, so to speak, had the choice, instead of punishing sin in us, either to let it go unpunished or to punish it in His beloved Son. The former (letting it go unpunished) was impossible for His justice' sake; the latter (punishing it in His Son) means that Jesus Christ took our place under the wrath of God.

This same truth is implied in the second part of true self-examination, which speaks of the believer's faith "that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed and freely given him as his own, yea, so perfectly, as if he had satisfied in his own person for all his sins, and fulfilled all righteousness." We must certainly not imagine that this is just an empty expression used to emphasize very strongly the perfectness of the imputation of righteousness. Then it could only constitute preposterous injustice. This imputation that is so perfect that it is as if I had satisfied in my own person for all my sins takes place in full harmony with the strict justice of God, which means that Christ *took my place* under the wrath of God.

Thirdly, this element of vicariousness is directly taught in the first paragraph concerning the meaning of the Lord's Supper:

First. That we are confidently persuaded in our hearts, that our Lord Jesus Christ (according to the promises made to our forefathers in the Old Testament) was sent of the Father into the world; that he assumed our flesh and blood; *that he bore for us* the wrath of God (under which we should have perished everlastingly) from the beginning of his incarnation, to the end of his life upon earth; that he hath fulfilled, *for us*, all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness; especially, when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of him the bloody sweat in the garden, *where he was bound that we might be freed* from our sins; that *he afterwards suffered innumerable reproaches, that we might never be confounded; that he was innocently condemned to death, that we might be acquitted* at the judgment-seat of God; yea, that he suffered his blessed body to be nailed on the cross — *that he might fix thereon the handwriting of our sins; and hath also taken upon himself the curse due to us.* (italics mine, H.C.H.)

In all of the italicized expressions above the truth of substitution is clearly taught.

Hence, the conclusion, as far as our confessions are concerned, is this, that the truth of substitution, like that of satisfaction, is the current teaching of all our Reformed confessions. In fact, it is inseparable from the doctrine of satisfaction.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

JONATHAN'S SECOND VICTORY

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

I Samuel 14:6

To Saul, it had come to seem terribly important that he with his forces should begin to move against the garrison of the Philistines which were encamped at Michmash. Time was of essential importance; not another moment of it could be wasted; it had become an obsession with him. For seven days Saul had waited for Samuel to come and sacrifice for him at Gilgal as he had promised to do; and they had been wasted days in fact. Saul had not used them to exercise and drill his men in preparation for battle. He had not gone to walk among his men with words of encouragement and assurance. All through those seven days he had sat silently by himself, deep in gloomy thought, inwardly paralyzed with fear. And the results were to be seen all around him. The morale of his men was broken; their hearts were tasting the bitter pangs of fright also. To find hiding places among rocks and bushes was their only concern; desertion was running rampant; few doubted but that the situation was hopeless. And yet Saul couldn't come to believe that; after all he was king and it couldn't end this way, in utter disaster. Gradually, day after day, his mind had begun to set itself upon that sacrifice which Samuel was going to offer as holding the critical key to his situation. More and more he had come to think and feel and fully expect that at the moment that sacrifice was offered something would happen to break the power of the Philistines and suddenly their army would begin to melt away before him as the Ammonites had at Jabesh. Oh, how he remembered that day at Jabesh; and why couldn't it happen again for him here with the Philistines? It just had to! Early on that seventh day, he was up waiting for Samuel; and when Samuel wasn't right there, he felt bitterly disappointed. When noon came and still Samuel had not appeared, it seemed little short of treachery. Didn't Samuel realize the criticalness of the situation. Obsessed as he was, Saul could wait no longer. He determined to sacrifice himself, and he did so without delay. Then Samuel had come, he warned Saul of the fatal consequences of this his impulsive action, and he left. Now Saul was free to go ahead with his battle; nothing hindered him any longer. But what was he going to do, his few men against that mass of the Philistines. He still had not the least idea. He needed time, time to think, time to find some plan of action. And so, so as not to appear completely inactive, he decided to number his troops. It was perhaps the most foolish thing he could have done under the circumstances. Now reality stared him in the face: only six hundred

men remained faithful any longer behind him. But yet it seemed to help. Now he knew he could do nothing.

The fact of the matter was that the makings of a king just were not Saul's possession. He could dream, he always had, of how someday he would sally forth at the head of a large army to lead them valiantly into battle until everyone acclaimed his greatness. Dreams came easy for him. And he could act too, he could act by impulse as he had done at Jabesh, and he could act from a position of overwhelming strength; but, when it came down to difficult situations which took careful planning and courage to see through, then action was impossible for him. Careful planning was beyond him, and unfavorable odds paralyzed him. Wisdom, discretion, and courage, the true making of a king, Saul just did not have. And yet, that in itself need not have mattered had he possessed the one thing more important than anything else in Israel—faith in Jehovah Israel's God; but that he didn't have either. He had not had it before he had become king, not even the pretense of it. Now he did have the pretense. Through his anointing and ordination by Samuel, Saul for the first time had committed himself to religion—at least, that is, he had come to look upon the worship of Jehovah as a sort of magical rite which he could go through so as to insure his success in the royal office; but true faith, that spiritual act of clinging in complete trust to the mercy of Jehovah, that he did not have. And so at Gibeah, Saul found himself helpless. Days again went past while the Philistines did what they pleased in the land; but Saul made not one move against them. All he could feel was hopeless fear destroying his every incentive.

Once again, it was Jonathan that brought this stalemate to its conclusion. Jonathan was different from his father. He possessed that one thing which Saul so sorely lacked—faith; he believed with all of his heart in the greatness and mercy of Israel's God. Beyond that, we have no indication to think that his abilities were any great deal more than those of his father. Surely he did not possess those abilities of leadership which his friend David later evinced. But that didn't really matter. The faith of Jonathan was sufficient to cause his life to glow unto this day as an example of a man who lived by the power of faith. When the Scriptures said to him, "One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you," (Joshua 23:10) he believed it, and accordingly he took action. Without a

word of explanation to anyone, not even to his father, he called his armour-bearer to him and said, "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of those uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." We can only conclude that this armor-bearer of Jonathan was of equal spiritual caliber with his master. He made no objection to Jonathan's plan, apparently so utterly foolish, but silently the two men stole out of the camp together. They had decided to place their lives in the hand of the Lord, and from this decision they now would not waver.

The camp of the Philistines was to be found some miles away from the place where the remnant of Saul's army was gathered. It was on a hill which went under the name of Michmash and could actually be seen by the men of Saul in spite of the distance between them. The land was hilly and covered with thick forest except for those places where rough, rocky crags jutted out from among the trees. Between the two armies, there was a deep valley that had to be crossed over.

For Jonathan and his armor-bearer to cross through this valley without being observed was not difficult because of the cover of trees. In fact, being as few as they were, they might well have come almost to the very edge of the Philistines' camp without exposing themselves. But the plan of Jonathan was at the same time both far more daring and far more clever than this. Jutting out from this hill of Michmash were two rocky pillars reaching out far above the trees and attached to the hillside by narrow, rocky ridges. So spectacular were these two pillars that they had even been given names, Bozes and Seneh respectively. Upon the one of these rocky pillars, the Philistines had evidently placed a watch to look out for the approach of Israel's army, while Jonathan's plan was to approach the camp of the Philistines by passing over the other. The advantage of this was that they would be exposing themselves to the Philistines watchmen on the other rock while close enough to talk to them but far enough away to be safe from their weapons.

What Jonathan wanted very badly was to know the reaction of the Philistines to his presence before he actually advanced into their camp. This was for a double reason. First, in accord with the faith in which he was proceeding, he had asked the Lord to mold the reply of the Philistines to the discovery of his presence in such a way that it would form a sign for him as to whether or not he should proceed. If the Philistines upon seeing him should urge him to come up to them to do battle, he should do so, confident of the Lord's blessing; but if they threatened to come down to fight with him, he should desist. Behind this, there was, in the second place, an understanding of the working of God. From the day of Moses on, the method by which Jehovah weakened Israel's enemies was to strike fear deeply into their hearts, and the challenge the Philistines gave to him would reflect whether this was now happening. If the Philistines were confident and self-assured, they would be eager for battle and upon seeing him would offer to come down and do battle where he stood. On the other hand, however, if they were fear-

ful and troubled inside, they would tell him that he must come up and fight them amid their established fortifications.

As it was, Jonathan's hopes were not very far from reality. The Philistines were not so sure and confident as Saul and his men might have expected. They had long ago learned that victory against the children of Israel was not something that could be taken for granted no matter what odds might appear to be in their favor. After all, how often had not Samson all by himself left their greatest forces in shameful defeat. And could they forget that battle at Mizpeh where they were turned back by nothing more than a storm while the Israelites never as much as raised a sword. And now, just a short time ago, one of their well-disciplined garrisons had been completely destroyed by Jonathan and his band of motley men. They never knew, some times they could sally forth into Israel without a bit of opposition, while at other times they would be struck down in inglorious defeat as though by a bolt from heaven. There were forces at work there in Israel which they just did not understand. And now they could feel that uncertainty creeping up within them again, that foreboding that things were not going to be going their way.

Thus when the watch of the Philistines saw Jonathan and his armor-bearer climbing up over the rock opposite them, a nervous fear suddenly took hold of them. If there were two that dared to expose themselves so boldly against the horizon, it must be that the forest below them was teaming with troops. Their challenge to Jonathan, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing," was meant to have the sound of scorn, but in actuality it only exposed their uncertainty. To Jonathan it was as a voice from heaven urging him on. Quickly, he and his armor-bearer advanced along their rocky crag toward the camp of the Philistines, while the watchmen of the Philistines cried out their frightened alarm. From the camp of the Philistines anxious soldiers poured forth to meet the forces of Israel on the hillside below Jonathan's rocky crag, while a few of the most daring advanced gingerly out on the ridge to meet Jonathan and his armor-bearer. The ridge was narrow and only one could approach them at a time; but one by one they came and were quickly handled. Jonathan grasping them would throw them down, and his armor-bearer administering the death blow would roll them from the ridge into the trees below them where the rest of the Philistines were futilely hunting for the rest of the men of Israel. For them it was as a nightmare, hunt as they might they could not find an enemy while down through the trees from the ridge above the bodies of their comrades came rolling, until all of twenty of their bodies lay before them. It drove them to the point of hot frenzy until at last they began to strike out at every figure they met crawling through the bushes. Soon the whole hillside of Michmash was a churning mass of humanity, Philistine against Philistine, destroying themselves in the blindness of hot rage and fear and anger. Israel's God had heard the prayer of Jonathan and had answered it.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

Days or Periods

by Rev. H. Veldman

Concluding our discussion of the question whether the "days" of Genesis 1 are periods or days of twenty four hours, we wish to ask the question: "What does the Scripture reveal to us concerning this work of God?" And we may certainly say that the Word of God does not leave us in the dark in regard to this truth.

In our preceding article we already called attention to the fourth commandment. And because this commandment is incorporated in the Heidelberg Catechism, one of our confessions, the significance of this should be apparent. This means that our confessions maintain the truth that the days of creation are ordinary of twenty-four hours. And to this we may add that our confessions nowhere speak any other language. This means that the concordistic theory may not be taught in any Christian school. Fact is, teachers, as well as ministers of the gospel, are bound to the Reformed confessions. And they have no right to teach anything that militates against these confessions. The proper procedure to which they are committed is clear. Let them voice their objections to the proper authorities, but they certainly have no right to militate against the confessions publicly in their classes.

Now we again ask the question: "What do the Scriptures reveal to us concerning this truth?" And then we observe, in the first place, that there are passages in the Word of God which speak to us of God's omnipotence in the work of creation. We read in Isaiah 40:26-28: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding." What a majestic utterance! What a far cry from the theory of evolutionism, or of theistic evolution, which would have us believe that the Lord did create the "original lump", but that, for the rest, creation developed of itself. Here we read that the Lord calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, and that it is He Who brings out their host by number. And in Amos 4:13 attention is also directed to this Divine omnipotence, and we read: "For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his

thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name." What a far cry this is from the evolutionistic or concordistic conception of the origin of the world!

Secondly, there are the passages which point to God's exaltation above the works of His hands as the great and infinite God. We read in Ps. 90:2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." In Ps. 102:25-27 we read: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." And in Acts 17:24-25 we read: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

Thirdly, we may refer to passages that speak of the wisdom of God in the work of creation. Is. 40:12-14 reads as follows: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding?" What a majestic passage this is, extolling the greatness of our God! Compare with this the conception that thousands and millions of years were required in the forming of the heavens and the earth and all the things that are therein! And what shall we say of this passage, Jer. 10:12-16: "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is

falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The Lord of hosts is his name." Of significance is also the passage of John 1:1-3, and we quote: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." It is true that, according to verse 14 of this chapter, this Word is our Lord Jesus Christ. But this only emphasizes that our Lord Jesus Christ is none other than the eternal Son of God. And the text declares emphatically that all things were made by Him, and that without Him was not anything made that was made. So, all things owe their existence to the almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Fourthly, God's sovereignty and purpose in creation are also held before us in the inspired Word of God. Isaiah speaks of this in Is. 43:7: "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." And in verse 15 we read: "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King." And in Romans 1:25 the apostle Paul declares: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

Beautiful is this passage from the Word of God, Col. 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

In addition to the Scriptural passages already quoted, many more passages can be quoted. How majestic is this passage, Nehemiah 9:6: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." What a passage this is! God is the Lord alone; He made heaven and the heaven of heavens, and all their host; He made the earth, and all things that are in the earth; He also preserveth them all. Surely, nothing is left here to the creature; God alone is the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe and all the things that are in that universe. What a far cry this is from the modern evolutionistic or concordistic theory of the origin of the world! And what a far cry from this text is the space-crazed man of our modern day and age, as he proudly speaks of the Great Society which he hopes to accomplish and realize!

Of the Divine Creator of the heavens and the earth, the prophet, Isaiah, speaks in Is. 42:5: "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth bread unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein." Please note that we read here that it is the Lord that created

the heavens and the earth, and that which cometh out of the earth. How sublime and majestic is the language of the Word of God! Isaiah also mentions this truth in chapter 45. This chapter begins with an introductory reference to Cyrus, the emperor of Persia, who believed in dualism, a god of evil and a god of good. Centuries before his appearance, he is told that he is the Lord's anointed, and he is also told, in verse 7, that it is the Lord who forms the light and creates the darkness, Who makes peace and creates evil. And in verse 18 of this chapter we read: "For, thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else."

Familiar, of course, is Scripture's reference to this Divine work of creation in Ps. 33:6-9: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For, he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." This does not sound like the concordistic theory, does it, that the days of Genesis 1 were periods extending over thousands and thousands of years? Here the creation of all things is ascribed to the word of the Lord and the breath of His mouth.

This same presentation of the Lord's almighty and creative power is also held before us in the New Testament. Turning to the New Testament, the apostle Paul declares in Col. 1:16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." In Hebrews 11:3 we read: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Is it any wonder that the wicked world, devoid of faith, does not understand this tremendous and sublime truth of the Word of God? It is only through faith that one understands that the worlds were framed by the word of the Lord! But, having faith, and therefore united with the living Creator of the heavens and the earth, one must hold to the truth of the Word of God, that the Lord is the almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth. And in Rev. 4:11 and 10:6 we read: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. . . . And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

What, now, is the conclusion which we may and must draw from Scripture's account of creation, in Genesis 1 and throughout the Word of the Lord? Surely this: if the concordistic theory of periods be correct, Scripture is in error. The Word of God does not teach the theory that the days of Genesis 1 extended over thou-

sands and millions of years. One cannot harmonize the concordistic theory with the language of the Word of God. But, if Scripture be in error, then we have no infallible Word of God. And if the Word of God be in error in its account of creation, it may be in error throughout. Who, then, will determine what is truth

and what is error? And, if we have no infallible Word of God, we have nothing. Only the Word of the Lord is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. However, thanks be to God that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God. That Word is surely a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path.

IN HIS FEAR—

TRANQUILITY IN THE VALLEY

by Rev. J. A. Heys

To be declared to be in good health is for a short span of time encouraging and as a rule considered to be good news.

We say "for a short span of time" because ulcers develop with an undesirable speed. Heart attacks fell men who were pronounced only a few days ago to be in perfect health. Cardiograms indicate that no heart attack has taken place in the past but are no indication that one will not occur in the very near future. They reveal that at the moment the heart is performing its work in a regular manner, but give no promise for the future. Cancer often grows with phenomenal speed and makes itself known in such a sudden and terrifying way. We can be healthy today and feel in good spirits, only to be felled tomorrow with a little invisible virus that had been lurking in our bodies unknown and unnoticed while we felt good and expected no incapacitating distress. As the world says it, "Here today. Gone tomorrow".

Clinics have their value. Periodic examinations are not to be dismissed as worthless. X-ray and blood tests are not just so much foolishness. Our bodies are a precious possession; and it is our calling to take as good care of them as we possibly can. Medicines and remedies are not to be rejected as mere carnal, material, worldly matters. Hezekiah was advised by no one less than God's prophet to take a cluster of figs and place it upon his boil. Jesus condemned no one who came crying for relief from physical miseries and afflictions. Jesus called not one of them carnal and worldly-minded. The psalmist declares, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15.

And yet, our whole life is spent in the valley where the shadow of death is cast. David tells us that in his shepherd's Psalm. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." If, therefore, it is not one distress that we experience, it is another. "The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they

be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Psalm 90:10. For, indeed, we are in the valley where the shadow of death is cast. We see that shadow every day. We cannot fail to know that death is near because of that shadow. We are not on the mountain top where the sunlight strikes us in all its beauty and with the force of its light. We are not on the plain where the sun high in the heavens warms us and we can bask in its sunlight. We are in the valley, and the sun is behind the mountain peak of our sin and guilt before God.

Our sins rise up against us prevailing day by day. A huge mass of evil is between us and our God. To that mass the whole human race is adding every moment of every day! And the wages of sin is death! O, we are still alive. We are born into this world and have physical, natural life for a brief span of years. We eat and drink and are somewhat merry. We plan and hope and build and dream. And it seems sometimes as though we have built for eternity and that our dreams are coming true. Although a new deal had to be replaced with a new frontier, we are ready to speak of a great society and dare to dream that somehow, somehow we can get rid of that miserable shadow without removing the mountain. But every morning that we awaken, there it is, because the mountain is still there. And no human effort can remove that mountain. Literally with our huge earth-moving equipment we seem to be able to remove mountains, but this mountain of the load of our guilt and sin we can only build higher and higher without any hope of removing one pebble from it. It reaches up to the very heavens, and therefore the sun is never seen *above* it. Since man was driven out of paradise the human race has not seen that sun but only the shadow of death. And it may very well be called Death Valley, for all born in it also die in it.

It makes little difference then, whether one is told that one has ulcers or not, a bad heart or a normal heart, hardening of the arteries or not, a good set of lungs and kidneys or diseased organs. We say "little difference" because there is a difference but it lasts

for such a little while before the death represented by that shadow is upon us. We may seem to have escaped its clutches for the moment only to be overwhelmed by it from an entirely unexpected quarter.

What shall we say of all these things?

Shall we take a gloomy and pessimistic attitude? Shall we become careless and even wreckless, since we cannot escape this enemy anyway? Shall we live in fear and terror counting our days in some morbid despair and hopeless anxiety? Shall we go to the one extreme and eat, drink and be merry to get out of this life as much as we can yet; or shall we sit down and wait for that death in some gloomy satisfaction that it is coming soon?

Neither one. Not as children of God. Both of these are wicked. All of these are carnal and acts of unbelief. We shall fear; but it shall be the fear of the Lord and not the fear of death. Listen to the Psalmist, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. . . .” Surely then he does not fear that death. He is not afraid that death is going to rob him of all that which is precious and valuable. He is not even afraid that death will take life away from him. He finds comfort in the valley and tranquility for his soul. Pain, agony, woe and distress may come over his body. Yea, these things are going to be his lot sooner or later. That shadow will not let him forget that! But his soul is tranquil. His thoughts are undisturbed. By faith he sees the light and is sure of dwelling forever in the light. For he adds, “. . . for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” He speaks of comfort. He reveals a tranquil soul while yet in the valley where the shadow of death is cast.

In His fear, we fear no evil.

It makes a world of difference whether we fear God or whether we do not fear Him. It makes all the difference between fear of evil and tranquility of soul, peace of mind, and confidence that we shall one day be in the light. It makes all the difference in the world because that man who fears the Lord has been made to be different by the Lord Whom he fears. The believer has been made by God to be of a different world, to be born with a life from above, to be a peculiar people, a stranger among those who know only the valley, and from this valley enter into the abyss! God is with the man who fears Him. God is IN the man who fears Him. David’s confidence in Death Valley is that God is with him in covenant fellowship and communion.

He is with us today in our human nature. He came to be one of us. For thirty-three and a half years He tabernacled among us in our flesh. With our guilt He went to the cross, and for us He went into hell and the grave. He arose for our justification and now is seated at God’s right hand *in our behalf*. And He is there also in our glorified human nature. He is still the Son of Man. “In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17. But it also behooves Him still to be one of us and to be at God’s right hand in our glorified *human nature*. He did not leave the human race at His

resurrection and ascension. He raised the human nature to a level never achieved or enjoyed by man before that moment. He is with us today still as one of us, even though He has personally attained to higher glory in the human nature than we enjoy at the moment. And He is with His entire host of saints who have been called home out of the valley into the joys of heaven. Some have been lifted up out of Death Valley to dwell in the mansion of glory where the Light always shines and untold and indescribable bliss reigns.

By His Spirit He is with us who still walk through the valley. And by this Spirit He encourages us, blesses us, guides us and keeps us in the faith. “Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20) are the words of this merciful High priest the day He left our valley to ascend to the mountain of God’s glory. And He is with us even unto the end of the world in that Spirit Whom He received to send forth unto His Church.

But He is also with us every step of our earthly way in that He is *not against* us. His thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace. He does not purpose to destroy us but to lift us up out of that valley and to bring us into the glory He enjoys. The evil which we still experience is sent by Him as a good that works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It is evil in that it hurts our flesh. It is evil in that it brings pain and tears, yea even that very death itself which the shadow in the valley predicts and portrays. But it is a good in His hand. It is as the evil-tasting medicine and painful bit of surgery that work for our good health and strength. He is *with* us when He sends these evils to use them for our good.

The whole world situation, the whole set-up in the world today, would look and does look so different through the eyes of faith. That mountain range of sin that causes the shadow of war, brutality, violence and death across the face of the whole earth today looks so different when it is viewed in His fear. Living in Death Valley they threaten to take away all of our joy and peace. There simply is no hope. Since man was placed in that valley when he was cast out of paradise, we simply have not seen the Sun; and all our efforts to get rid of that shadow and to get out of the valley have ended in utter failure. Show me a man who has escaped death! And though we hear men boast of extending life and of his “hope” of conquering it entirely by his science and ingenuity, we will continue to kill ourselves on our highways; thieves and violent men will still go around killing. Yea, in the midst of man’s seemingly greatest achievements in “extending” life and of rescuing from the brink of death, the shadow of utter destruction of all life upon the face of this earth makes that shadow of death so much more real and pushes back that much farther any hope of escape. No, we shall not get out of the valley or escape the death it predicts. After all a shadow is caused by a reality. And death and the curse of God upon the human race and upon this entire world is an unchangeable as well as undeniable reality. You will have to remove the reality in order to get rid of the shadow.

Only in His fear can we and do we see over the mountain and out of the valley to the Light and a king-

dom of life and joy. For the Sun is there. The very fact that there is a shadow not only means that there is the reality of death that casts this shadow, but it also means that there is The Sun on the other side of that reality of death! In fear of death men would like to get rid of that Sun. But they never shall. Instead He shall destroy them with that death. But in *His* fear we see Him as being with us with those thoughts of peace, and we know His promise of life and joy on the other side of the mountain. You see, Christ is exalted to God's right hand, high above us and above that death into which He went for us. And as the psalmist states, "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him" Psalm 103:11. By faith—that is in His fear—we see Him high up in the

heavens at God's right hand, far above that mountain of sin, exalted above that last enemy, which is death. And as we at night see the moon in all its brilliance high above us shining with the light of the sun which is behind the horizon, so in His fear we see Christ with us reflecting the light of God's mercy and love in His precious covenant promises. And our souls are tranquil. Peace like a river floods our souls. All is well. We know the Light is there. We know He is there for us. Look at the moon tonight in reassurance that the sun is still with us. Look in His fear to the Son of God at God's right hand and be tranquil in the knowledge that God is with us in His love, mercy and grace. We will fear no evil. We will see the evil as that which works for our good.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

DISPENSATIONALISM

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The most popular, but not the only, form of Premillennialism is known as Dispensationalism. It is a pseudo-hermeneutical system which claims to be the only correct method of interpreting the Scriptures. Its motto is, "Rightly dividing the Word of truth." In the English-speaking world its origin may be traced back one hundred and thirty-five years to the Plymouth Brethren. It is called Brethrenism, Darbyism (after J. N. Darby) and, in this country, Scofieldianism.

Because of the extremes of this system, we ought to distinguish between Premillennialism and Dispensationalism. For the former is a rather moderate, though erroneous, theory of Christ's return. The latter is a bizarre interpretative arrangement which not only segregates, but trichotomizes the contents of Scripture into sections, labelling them "exclusively for the Jews," or "for the Gentiles," or "for the church of God." We might call it partitioning dispensationalism. The more reasonable Historical Premillennarians hold that there will be one final advent of Christ, at which He will judge and overthrow the Beast, the False Prophet and apostate Christendom, then set up His one thousand year reign, after which occurs the resurrection and judgment of the wicked dead, followed by the ushering in of eternity. But the more extreme Dispensationalists really have three final advents of Christ: one at the Rapture when He (it may be at any moment) comes into our atmosphere to take up the church; another about seven years later in the Revelation of Christ, who then actually comes to earth to reign; and then another after the millennium for the final judgment. Therefore Premillennialism and Dispensationalism are not synonymous terms. Every Dispensationalist is pre-

millennial, but not every Premillennialist is dispensational.

C. I. Scofield, who popularized Dispensationalism with his "Scofield Reference Bible," defines a dispensation as "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." Similarly, the Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary defines a dispensation as "the period during which a particular revelation of God's mind and will has been directly operative on mankind." Further, Scofield has seven dispensations which divide all time, from the creation to the new heaven and new earth. First, there is the Dispensation of Innocence, then Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace and Kingdom. There is no objection to this definition of a dispensation, nor to the dividing of history into seven periods, nor to the fact that each of these periods is marked off by a particular development of the divine purpose and revelation. But although Scofield speaks of the dispensations as revealing the "increasing purpose" of God, he does not make clear what that purpose is. It would appear, however, that it is an earthly kingdom-purpose.

Dispensationalists need make no appeal for their contentions to the word translated *dispensation* in the Bible. For there it does not mean a period of time. In Luke 16:2,3,4, where the word first appears, it is rendered *stewardship*, which has nothing to do with an era. In I Cor. 9:17, Paul wrote, "a dispensation is committed unto me," which cannot mean that an age had been entrusted to him, but that a duty had been directed to him. He reminds that "ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given

me" (Eph. 3:2) and that "I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God" (Col. 1:25), which has reference not to a segment of history, but to the administration of the apostolic office. Then the words "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times" cannot designate the name for the "last of the ordered ages." It simply means that the administration of the fulness of times is headed up in Christ. The King James Version in these places wrongly employs the word *dispensation*, for actually that word never appears in Scripture. The word is stewardship, administration (literally, economy) and signifies not an era, but the administration of the covenant and all things as given by divine commission. The covenant has always been the same, but the dispensation (administration) of the covenant has changed. Therefore it is wrong to speak of this Christian era as "the dispensation (age) of grace," wrong because misleading, seeing that every dispensation (administration) of the covenant was in pure grace.

It is also faulty to speak of a dispensation "as a new test of the natural man," as though God in history deals primarily not with His covenant people, but with the unregenerate. Each separate dispensation reveals man's state of sin, his responsibility for it and his inevitable failure. It all begins with man and ends with man. Scripture reveals the dispensations of history severally beginning with man's misery, continuing with his deliverance and ending with his gratitude!

Some of the partitions this system makes in Scripture are called parentheses. There is a parenthesis between the first two verses in Genesis, chapter one. This parenthetical age saw the universe in a catastrophic state, brought about by a supernatural cataclysmic change involving the fall of angels. The earth, then, for an unknown, indefinitely long period was chaotically waste and desolate. Then there is the "church parenthesis," which intervenes between Pentecost and the Rapture. History, from the time of Abraham at least, always moves along the line of the Jews. But with the baptism of the Spirit, a parenthetical period sets in, bringing "a wholly new thing—the church, which is his (Christ's) body". This church interim had the effect of disannulling ancient Israel. But at the end of this church age there will follow "the regathering of Israel," after which the glorious Davidic, earthly world empire of the Jews will be restored to them. This idea is guilty of creating another parenthesis, namely, the interval of seven years between the rapture and the revelation of Christ coming to the earth. For in that period the nation of the Jews is to be regathered and restored. They had the kingdom once, but lost it in the captivities. Then just before the church-parenthesis set in, the kingdom once more was offered to them, but they rejected it. So the kingdom-age was "postponed" to the closing era of the world. That short seven year period is hardly more than a parenthesis, for God's clock ticks only on kingdom time, not on church time. So because of all these rather disannulling intervals in the chronology of Dispensationalism, we might call it "gap theory" dispensationalism.

This brings us to the crux of the matter. For dis-

pensational error lies not in holding that there are dispensations of time in sacred history. The church has never denied that. The error lies in the fact that the Church is made a mere parenthesis in God's scheme of things, which temporarily obstructs and hinders the main thrust of His purpose. If there were any parenthesis at all in history, which we deny, it would not embrace the *Church*, but *Israel*, as Herman Bavinck neatly points out. From Creation to Abraham, "redemption had a universal" emphasis. But with him and especially through the Mosaic dispensation, "a parenthesis set in, which came to an end in Christ. Then redemptive history resumed the universal character which it had at the beginning." (Quoted in *Prophecy and the Church*, O. T. Allis, p. 298). Dr. Abraham Kuyper also had held the idea of this Israel-parenthesis, rather than the Church-parenthesis. He saw three dispensations, the first extending from Adam to Abraham, being for the most part one of "common grace." The second, from Abraham to Christ, was the parenthetical dispensation, and predominantly one of particular grace. The third, from Christ to the end, is a kind of mixture of special grace and "common grace" shown to man. But although Kuyper's view does save the Church from the Nirvana of a hiatus, it nevertheless makes the Cross of Christ not the center of the whole scheme of redemption, but an emergency measure. For, according to Kuyper, the main line that God took in the first dispensation was creational. The permanent, prevailing entity of the dispensations is the ordinance of Creation. In it, God administered His covenant, largely, according to "common grace." Then followed the temporary interruption of the second and parenthetical dispensation, in which, generally, He administered the covenant according to special grace. But this makes the dispensation of pure grace nothing more than an interlude. Also it implies that God's original creational purposes proved a failure, so that He took emergency measures in Christ, His Cross and the Church. The Cross is made an afterthought. To introduce into biblical history parentheses, postponements or emergencies is to lose sight of the true development of the promise, which happens to be the main thread woven throughout all Scripture and all history. There is nothing wrong in speaking of an Adamic, an Abrahamic or a Christian dispensation. But it is wrong to imply, as Kuyper does, that neither the saints of the Adamic nor of the Abrahamic era were looking for the heavenly city, nor for Christ as Redeemer, but were instead anticipating the restoration of the Adamic paradise. We see no parentheses in history. For history is the revelation and the realization of God's counsel in the midst of the world for the sake of the Church. This being so, God through all time moves steadily, directly, progressively and aggressively toward the final accomplishment of His ultimate goal, which is to dwell eternally with His people in the New Jerusalem. God's counsel never deviates, is never side-tracked nor postponed.

Dispensationalism has yet another gap which appears right in the middle of the verse in Isa. 61:2. Between the comma and the conjunction (!) there is the

chasm of the ages extending from the first advent to the second advent. Jesus, when He read the passage to the Nazareth synagogue, stopped at the comma. The reason is said to be that although prophecy was fulfilled to "the acceptable year of the Lord," that "the day of vengeance" was still future, awaiting the day of judgment. This puts two fundamentally different dispensations in this text, the word "and" in the middle of it up to now covering a period of over nineteen centuries! But this is to ignore the remainder of the

text, "to comfort all that mourn," which exactly characterizes the New Testament dispensation, as does also the expression "the day of vengeance" (the words Jesus omitted). For the latter was fulfilled in Matt. 11:21,23; 23:13-38; 24:2 and 22:7. So Dispensationalists depart from the central line of the Counsel of God. Neither the Scriptures, the Reformed standards nor the Calvinistic churches support the flimsy, fanciful fantasies of these exegetical manipulators.

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Psalm 96:9a

THE COMMUNION PRAYER

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

Having considered the matter of self-examination as it is, the indispensable, spiritual preparation for participation in the Lord's Supper and having seriously pondered the purpose or end unto which this means of grace has been instituted in the church, namely, to commemorate the death of our Lord as the only ground and foundation of our salvation, the church is readied for the solemn act of prayer.

The prayer before communion is necessitated by the fact that "God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him and are thankful for them." (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 116) The church desires and is seeking the spiritual benefits of the table of the Lord in the consciousness that these benefits are not physically affixed to or inherent in the natural elements of the Supper. Her desire is not for bread but for grace. Grace is not in things, but is imparted by the Holy Spirit through the appointed means. The means, therefore, must not only be used, but the use of them must also be proper. The physical act of eating the bread and drinking the wine of the Lord's Supper does not guarantee the reception of the benefits of grace signified in the sacrament. There must be an activity of faith reaching out with fervent longing for the spiritual benefits of Christ's atonement. That faith leads us to the throne of grace where asking it shall be given unto us, seeking we shall find and knowing it shall be opened unto us. (Matthew 7:8)

It must also then be evident to us that the mere outward formality of a prayer before communion is not adequate. The ritual of prayer is not the same as *prayer*. Prayer, our Heidelberg Catechism instructs us, is "that we from the heart pray to the one true God only. . . .and that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery, so that we may humble ourselves in the presence of His divine majesty". (Lord's Day 45)

It is exactly in this spiritual attitude that we must come to the table, for hearts thus disposed God will not reject. We must realize our emptiness and seek GOD, the fullness of all in all. We must know our sin and wretchedness, and believing that Christ has obliterated our guilt we turn to Him for righteousness. We must fully realize our utter inability to acquire any of the true benefits of life, and in the consciousness of our dependence on Him we make our supplications and needs known. To make us fully aware of this the prayer of the communion form is prefixed by the following statement: "That we may obtain all this, let us humble ourselves before God, and with true faith implore His grace." Humble, dependent, seeking, hungering and thirsty children shall surely be fed at His table.

One more thing must be said before we enter into consideration of the communion prayer proper. What we have thus far written must not be construed as though the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ must wait to dispense the blessings of His grace until we are ready and see fit to pray to Him for them. Although it is certainly through prayer and through our humbly and sincerely seeking these blessings that God dispenses them, yet the relation is never such that He is dependent upon us but it is just the opposite. We are always dependent upon Him. The fact, therefore, is that our being in a proper, spiritual disposition in which we are able to pray is already the fruit of His grace in us. We love Him because He first loved us. We seek Him because He has drawn us. We hunger and thirst for the blessings of His communion because He has made us alive in Christ and created by His grace these hunger pangs in our hearts. And all this accentuates the truth that the blessings of salvation signified in the Supper of the Lord are not for one and all without distinction; they are not for all who partake of the external elements of the sacrament either,

but these spiritual blessings are for those and those only who are spiritually disposed to seek God in truth with all their heart. They pray! They alone pray! They pray because they are spiritually disposed and their prayers are heard and through them God imparts the benefits of His grace.

The prayer of the communion form may be divided into three parts. Following the address, "O most merciful God and Father", the first part of the prayer is devoted to a series of petitions in which the blessings of the communion table are sought. Oh, what a high spirituality is requisite to make this prayer. It may not be read by the minister as a matter of *form*. Then it is quite meaningless. Each petition uttered must be the expression of the heart and the sincere desire and longing of each one who prays. Praying is a most serious, spiritual activity and in the exercise of it we may not be hypocritical. We may not pretend to ask for those things we do not in reality desire. Our most merciful God and Father to whom we direct our prayer knows our heart and the secrets within and hypocritical prayers are an abomination to Him. Do we then sincerely mean what we say when we give expression in our prayer before communion to these requests?

1) That God through the Holy Ghost in this supper may work in our hearts.

2) That we may more and more give ourselves up unto Christ.

3) That our hearts may be fed with His body and blood, yea, with Himself as the true heavenly bread.

4) That He may live in us, and we in Him, that thus we may be partakers of God's eternal covenant.

5) That we may be assured that God is our gracious Father, forgiving our sin, providing us with all things necessary for soul and body.

6) That we may have grace to bear the cross cheerfully and to confess Christ.

7) That in all our tribulations we may look up and put our trust and expectation in our Lord Jesus Christ, resting alone in His promise.

It is not our purpose now to discuss each of these petitions, although this could easily be done and it certainly is necessary that each one of us who come to the table of the Lord give careful ponderance to each request before we utter it. We want to make some general observations on this part of the prayer as a whole. Then we notice that the petitions are of two kinds. First of all there are those that ask for the impartation of spiritual gifts. We desire to receive the benefits of Christ's redemptive work. We ask that God will work in our hearts, feeding and nourishing us, forgiving our sins, providing our needs and taking us into the intimate fellowship of His covenant. Now it follows that when this is done this work of God will not leave us unaffected and, therefore, the second series of petitions deal with those needs that arise as a result of the impartation of these gifts. When God works in us by His grace He sets us apart as His peculiar people and we must then give ourselves more and more to Christ. Doing this it is unavoidable that we shall also bear the reproach of His cross and be made to suffer manifold tribulations in this present world that is out

of communion with God and labors militantly against His Cause. The core of these petitions then is that we ask for grace whereby we may faithfully persevere with all patience and longsuffering, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:13, 14)

These two series of petitions may never be separated or divorced from one another. We are inclined to do that. We are quite willing to receive the benefits of the Lord's table as long as these do not interfere with our own carnal "pursuit of life and happiness", and then it is not very long after we have been to the communion table that we reveal our unwillingness to sacrifice for the cause of God and our reluctance to give ourselves in wholehearted dedication to the service of the body of Christ, His church. But this can never be. Without a cross there is no crown. Through much tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God. If the world hated Christ, (and it certainly did) they will hate those that are of Christ, and that hatred will come to manifestation as soon as we begin to live the life of communion with Him and with the body of His people. Communion with God is not something we can pray for and receive only around the communion table. It must be a perpetual experience, a living reality day by day, and it is experienced through fighting the battle of faith and wrestling constantly with our own flesh, the godless world and its prince, Satan.

We observe further the high spiritual tone of this prayer. Nowhere in it do we ask for earthly things except perhaps in the one phrase: "providing us with all things necessary, as well for the body as the soul". But even here it must be observed that it is not a petition for these things, but the prayer is a request for grace that "we may not doubt that our gracious Father will provide these necessities." And then we must not ask that He will assure us that He will give us an abundant life in the great society of this world so that we may wallow in luxury but our prayer is and must always remain a prayer for assurance that our *necessities* will be provided. That is the only assurance we can ever have. God will take care of us as long as He needs us to serve His cause in this world, and then He will take us out of this world. And that is all we need. He does not assure us that He will provide for us until we have realized our own ambitions, attained our own goals, etc. Of course not, because where we have ambitions and goals apart from Him they are carnal and unworthy of attainment. Our sole purpose in life must be HIM, and when that is the case, we may be assured that He will provide what is necessary in order that in body and soul we may attain that goal. When this is our striving we will "no longer live in our sins, but He in us, and we in Him, and thus truly be made partakers of the new and everlasting covenant of grace.

This part of the prayer is followed by a recitation of the prayer which the Lord taught us to pray and which is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer". This is not to be construed as a supplemental addition to

our prayer. This it could never be, for the prayer of our Lord is a perfect and complete entity by itself. Rather, by its insertion here is expressed that it is our desire to be the disciples of the Lord and through His grace we endeavor also in our prayers to be in conformity with His will. We pray as He taught us to pray. We pray now at the communion table in harmony with the underlying principle of His prayer, which is that we must seek the heavenly and spiritual. This is the motivation of our prayer throughout as we ask for the benefits of His table.

The prayer is then concluded with the so-called "Apostolic Confession" preceeded by the petition:

"Strengthen us also by this Holy Supper in the catholic undoubted christian faith." Although the historical origin of this confession or creed is uncertain, our Heidelberg Catechism makes the significant observation that this creed gives expression to "the articles of our christian faith". Thus, by incorporating this into our prayer, we make confession of our faith before God and declare that in this faith we come to His table in the unity of the church of all the ages, and as it is extended throughout the whole world. We are ONE body with ONE head, Christ Jesus, and in the communion of that body we receive the blessings of everlasting life.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

Our Brother's Burden and Our Own

Galatians 6:1-5

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE GREAT SELF-DECEPTION (Chapter 6:3)

The law of Christ must be fulfilled in the church. Except our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes we shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. For Christ did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but he came to fulfill them. When we shall be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect--then shall also the law of Christ be completely and perfectly fulfilled by us!

It is a horrible thing to be deceived by others, and such as deceive us are not blessed in our memory. Deception is the very work of the Devil himself. But words can hardly describe the pity of any one who deceives himself. Pride cometh before the fall. What a pity it is to try to restore a brother overtaken in a fault, and then to find that in God's estimation and judgment your "report card" reads: zero, nothing!

You and I cannot very easily read this third verse of Galatians 6 without being required to ask the question: is Paul speaking of me too? For Paul says "if *anyone* thinketh to be something, being nothing." This is therefore a judgment which allows for no exceptions to the rule. It is the rule by which high and low, men of erudition and the unlearned, rich and poor, of low degree and high degree are all judged by the Judge of heaven and earth. God makes no exceptions to His rule. And that sobering truth is here implied in this sentence of Paul. This makes us all to place our hand in our bosom!

You will ask: how can a man thus think himself to be something? Do you ask? Is it not true that, generally speaking, it is true that the less a man is the more he often thinks himself to be. The Dutch have a proverb "when you make nothing something you cannot

use it". It is a fact, too, that often the great and able man is a humble man. For that is true greatness. How could a creature be great and not humbly bow before God's throne? The great man walks before God. And it is such who are "spiritual" in the congregation who are great. This may mean that there are times when it would be wise "to set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church". (I Cor. 6:4b) These at least are not hampered in their judgment by imaginary greatness.

As to the case in point here "to think to be something when one is nothing", it must be said that Paul is referring contextually to a would-be mender of souls, and to one who, in so doing, has never learned tenderly to bear the burden of the brother. He is such who does not fulfill the law of Christ. Meekness of wisdom is lacking in all that he does. Such are as a would-be nurse who makes two bruises while attempting to bind up one wound.

Whom does anyone fool and deceive when he thus thinks himself to be something when he is nothing?

He deceives himself!

Such a man leads his own mind astray. This is a deception which is quite universal. To be delivered from this deception a man must really be delivered from a great plight. It is a humiliating experience to come to one's self thus and to look one's self squarely in the eye and to say to yourself; man, you are deceiving your own mind! You are not insane but you are deluded and drunk with the wine of your own self-exalted pride and overweening self-importance. You are not spiritually sober and, therefore, you are not in a condition to go to a brother overtaken in a fault to restore him! You are nothing, a mere zero!

Thus speaks Paul when he says: for if any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself!

A GROUND OF BOASTING IN ONE'S OWN WORK
(Chapter 6:4)

God judges a man according to his works. Christ, standing between the seven candle-sticks, says: I know thy works! And by the works a man must judge himself. He must, in so doing, not look merely at the outward deed. He must also look at his inward motives of the heart.

Writes Paul "But let every man prove his own work". He must see whether it can stand the test of the touch-stone of God. It is so hard for us, poor sinners, to do this in a becoming manner. We are very fickle and arbitrary. This is especially true when we must try our *own* work, our own deeds, judgments, commitments; when we must test our own attempts at restoring the brother overtaken in a fault. The most difficult person to be truly honest and frank with is one's self. Such great honesty Jesus portrays in the parable of the Prodigal son, of whom Jesus said "and when he came to himself, he said. . . ." (Luke 15:17)

This prodigal son did not have the difficulty of the Pharisee which Jesus portrays in another parable. This Pharisee did not measure and adjudge of himself in the light of the perfect law of liberty, but he compared himself with those whom he considered far worse than himself. We are told by Paul here that we must not adjudge of our own work by comparing it with the faults of our neighbor. Then we have only a ground for boasting in ourselves and our great accomplishments, because we have done so much better than he, or at least not as badly as he has. That seems to be, without doubt, the sense of the phrase "and not in another". We must so walk and conduct ourselves and so judge ourselves that our work can stand the text of God's work on the basis of its own intrinsic value and worth. And when we have done all these things we are still unprofitable servants. We have only done what we ought to do.

It is far better to mind our own duty than to look at our neighbor's faults. Do not think of your worth and talents as compared with theirs, but see to it that you own work is right. The question for each of us is not, what do others fail to do, but what am I myself really doing. What will my life's work amount to, when measured by what God expects of me? For not my neighbor's faults, but my own honest work shall be the ground of my satisfaction.

"This was Paul's 'glorying' in the face of the slanders by which he was incessantly pursued. It lay in the testimony of his conscience. He lived under the severest self-scrutiny. He knew himself as the man only can who 'knows the fear of the Lord', who places himself every day before the dread tribunal of Jesus Christ. . . . He 'knows nothing, against himself'. But this boast makes him humble. 'By the grace of God' he is enabled to 'have his conversation in the world in holiness and sincerity coming from God'. If he had seemed to claim any credit for himself he at once corrects the thought: 'yet not I', he says, 'but God's grace that was with me. I have my glorying in Christ Jesus in the things pertaining to God, in that which Christ hath wrought in me' (I Cor. 15:10; Rom. 15:16-19)" G.G. Findlay, Epistle to the Galatians.

Thus the boasting in one's own work is not a boasting in the flesh but must needs be a glorying in the Lord in the fruit of a sanctified walk. It is the blessedness of those who "so do" as Jesus taught them! This should be the constant striving in our lives in the midst of the brethren! Thus only will we be truly be bearing our brother's burden by bearing our own burden, and fulfilling the law of Christ.

THE LORD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF OUR WORK
(Chapter 6:5)

Each of us has his own peculiar burden from the Lord. This burden is likened to the burden upon a donkey. It must be borne, carried. Ministers have their duties in distinction from elders; elders have their duties in distinction from deacons. Angels have their duties in distinction from man. Every man and angel has therefore his *own* burden, which fits no one

We cannot so belie our reason as to think that the intention of Almighty God could be frustrated, or that the design of so great a thing as the atonement can by any way whatever be missed. We hold — we are not afraid to say what we believe — that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving 'a multitude which no man can number,' and we believe that as the result of this, every person for whom He died must, beyond the shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin, and stand washed in blood before the Father's throne.

— C.H. Spurgeon

else. This burden, so to speak, belongs with the man in his place in the church.

Presently there comes the day of judgment. Then shall each have to give account of what he has done with his talents and opportunities. The man with one talent as well as the man with five shall be judged. For we all must be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ.

In that great day of judgment God will not judge in a comparative way. He will not ask whether we have done better than our neighbor has performed. He will give an absolute judgment. Therefore our comparing ourselves with others does not profit. God will search out what really is. And according to that he will reward. And that will be thus with each one personally and without any exception to the rule. (Rom. 2:6-11)

This all has meaning for us now when we must restore the erring, bear with the weak, aid the poor, care for the sick, and comfort the dying. It is as so beautifully stated by Findlay "After all, it is the men who have the highest standards for themselves that as a rule are most considerate in their estimate of others. The holiest are the most pitiful. They know best how

to enter into the struggles of a weaker brother. They can appreciate his unsuccessful resistance to temptation; they can discern where and how he failed, and how much of genuine sorrow there is in his remorse. From the fulness of their own experience they can interpret a possibility of better things in what excites contempt in those who judge by appearance and by conventional rules. He who has learned faithfully 'to consider himself' and meekly to 'bear his own burden,' is most fit to do the work of Christ, and to shepherd his tempted and straying sheep. Strict with ourselves, we shall grow wise and gentle in our care for others."

And again we quote from Findlay, "In the Christian conscience the sense of personal and that of social responsibility serve each to stimulate the other. Duty and sympathy, love and law are fused into one. For Christ is all in all; and these two hemispheres of life unite in Him."

Brethren, let us walk in this meekness of wisdom, says Paul.

Presently, there comes a day, when the "good and faithful" servant shall hear from Christ's lips: enter into the joy of thy Lord.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

I. C. C. C.

by Rev. G. Van Baren

For the time being, I intend to allow the matter of the Vatican Council to rest. I still intend to present the ideas of the last decrees promulgated at the last session, but until the present time I have not received a complete copy of these.

There are various "international" councils of churches, in addition to the well-known World Council of Churches. None are as large as this latter, yet they are worthy of our consideration. The question which we also face as churches is the measure of cooperation which is possible between our churches and others which apparently maintain many of the cardinal truths of Scripture. Our Synod faced this concretely last summer when it had to act on an invitation from the I.C.C.C.

The International Council of Christian Churches is an organization, headed by the well-known Dr. Carl McIntire, purporting to be composed of "Bible believing" churches. It numbers in its membership some 100 denominations, most of these rather small compared to the goliaths belonging to the W.C.C.

SYNOD RECEIVES AN INVITATION

We, as one of the "Bible believing" denominations of our land received an invitation (evidently also sent to all "Bible-believing" denominations) to attend the

Sixth Plenary Congress of the I.C.C.C. to meet at Geneva, Switzerland on August 5-11, 1965. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the official Call, which also constitutes an invitation to attend the Sixth Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches. We would be pleased to have observers, visitors, or any who may be led to do so, attend this congress and partake of the blessings of the congress fellowship and to observe the I.C.C.C. in action.

With the applications for membership which the Council has received and which are now being processed, the Council will have over 100 denominations in its constituent membership. We ask your prayers for this meeting of the brethren.

Sincerely yours,
Carl McIntire, President

Our Synod made short work of this bit of business. Without any careful study of the organization, for which there was not time, Synod declined the invitation. Briefly, Synod decided:

Synod decides not to accept the invitation to the Sixth Plenary Congress of the I.C.C.C.
Grounds:

- (1) One third of the churches membership in the I.C.C.C. comes from the Holiness churches.
- (2) Many of the other member denominations are outside the pale of Calvinistic Protestantism.

THE I.C.C.C REPLIES

Because it had been my intent to discuss this organization in these columns, I wrote some time ago to the president of the I.C.C.C. (Carl McIntire) in order to find out what his reaction was to this decision of our Synod. To introduce this discussion of I.C.C.C. I would like to present a copy of the letter of reply.

"Your letter to Dr. McIntire of Sept. 27, 1965 has been received. He has asked me to thank you for your interest and for the questions you have raised. He had expected to answer you personally before now, but his many duties have prevented his doing so.

"Under separate cover we are sending you information concerning the I.C.C.C. The Sixth Plenary Congress Book, which sells for \$3.00, in newsbook size, gives a good survey of the history, purpose and work of the I.C.C.C.

"We do not have a list of our constituent bodies available for distribution. It is not true that 'one third of the churches with membership in the I.C.C.C. comes from the Holiness churches,' but it is true that many of the other member denominations are outside the pale of Calvinistic Protestantism.

"The Bible Presbyterian Church is Calvinistic, as is the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. The St. Thomas Evangelical Church in India with its 30,000 members is Calvinistic, and Bishop Adjuoga of Kenya leads a fundamental Anglican group of some 60,000 members. Other Presbyterian and Baptist groups throughout the world are also Calvinistic. I do not believe that we have ever made a survey of Calvinistic groups within the I.C.C.C.

"The basis for our Christian co-operation is the Bible. While Dr. McIntire and others of us are Presbyterian through and through in our denominations, we also concede that Methodists and other non-Calvinistic bodies are truly "born again" and therefore within the scope of a Council of Churches. When one considers the basis of membership of the NCC/WCC, the National Association of Evangelicals and the World Evangelical Alliance, one also sees the need for the International Council of Christian Churches built upon the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God. The testimony of this Council is needed today more than ever before.

"When the I.C.C.C. was established in Amsterdam in 1948, the organizers believed that they had adopted the 'least common denominator' upon which any Bible-believing Council could be built.

"The Council has very limited functions which are clearly defined in its constitution. It is not a Church, nor does it pretend to do the work of a Church. There is no celebration of the Lord's Supper, as is common in WCC meetings. The Council, as such, does not hold any evangelistic meetings, nor does it do the work of mission societies. It is to hold up the banner of the truth of the infallible Word of God in an age of apostasy and denial of the Faith.

"We trust that this is helpful to you.

"Yours in His Service, Margaret Harden."

HISTORY OF THE I.C.C.C.

The I.C.C.C. was formed first upon a call issued by the American Council of Christian Churches which met in Detroit, Michigan on October 18, 1947. They declared: "The time has come in the providence of our gracious God when a council of Christian churches to bear testimony to 'the faith once delivered unto the saints,' and to represent Bible-believing churches throughout the world should be established."

Shortly after, on August 11-19, 1948, the I.C.C.C. was formed in the city of Amsterdam, The Netherlands when various denominations met in the English Reformed Church (the same church in which the Pilgrim Fathers worshipped while they were in the Netherlands). At this gathering there were 150 participants representing 39 denominations from 26 different nations. The theme of that first "Congress" was: "The Christ of the Scriptures."

It was at this first meeting that a doctrinal statement for this international body was drawn up:

The doctrinal statement was first drafted by representatives of various denominational bodies. It was then discussed in the plenary session in a most gracious brotherly spirit. It was then returned to groups representing five languages for translation -- English, French, Dutch, German and Chinese. Suggestions and alterations were considered and decided upon by each language group. Then a committee brought to the full plenary session the completed document, which was discussed.

Never was there a deliberative assembly where there was a finer or more gracious spirit and manner. All had complete understanding that we were united in what we believed and were desirous of stating our be-

We hold that Christ, when He died, had an object in view, and that object will, most assuredly and beyond a doubt, be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it. If anyone asks us: What did Christ design to do by His death? we answer that question by asking him another: What has Christ done? or: What will Christ do by His death? For we declare that the measure of the effect of Christ's love is the measure of the design of it.

-- C.H. Spurgeon

liefs in a way that would be easily translatable into the various languages and which would protect the testimony from the subtle shades of modernistic interpretation of the hour.

To see the doctrinal statement worked out in this manner with such fellowship of love and labor was indeed a blessing and all who participated thanked God for the privilege. The doctrinal statement was unanimously approved, and men stood and praised God from whom all blessings flow. All the other matters of the congress were worked out in a similar way. (from: 6th Plenary Congress, page 33)

There have been a total of six "congresses" held of the I.C.C.C. The second congress met in August of 1950 in Geneva Switzerland and had 450 participants from 42 denominations. In August of 1954 the third congress met in Philadelphia with 1,500 participants and 54 denominations represented. The fourth congress

was held in Rio-Petropolis, Brazil in August of 1958. This had 500 participants and 62 denominations represented. The fifth congress was held in Amsterdam again on August of 1962. There were 700 participants and 83 denominations present. At the last congress in Geneva last August, 111 denominations were represented. The theme was: "Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life." It was to this last congress that our churches were also invited to send observers or participants.

The above history is intentionally brief. The Council is composed of denominations from around the world. And apparently these denominations are those which subscribe to the basic doctrines of Scripture.

Next time, D.V., I hope to consider the constitution of this organization. For from this can be determined precisely what is the basis for the I.C.C.C. and what its professed goals are.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Board of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School expresses its sympathy to our fellow member Arnold Haveman in the loss of his mother

MRS. CARL HAVEMAN

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

D. Meulenberg, President
D. Lotterman, Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENT

The League of Men's Societies will hold their membership meeting, D.V. April 18, 1966 at 8 o'clock in the First Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. G. Van Baren will speak. Topic: "The Second Coming of Christ."

H. Dykstra, Sec'y

ANNOUNCEMENT

Those who desire to order one of the pictures of the late Rev. H. Hoeksema should do so promptly. Be sure to include your name and address, your \$2.00, and your choice of picture No. 1 or No. 2. Send your order to:

Mr. James Dykstra,
1326 W. Butler Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

EASTERN LADIES LEAGUE

Our Spring meeting will be held, D.V., on Thursday evening, April 14, at 8:00 p.m. at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. G. Van Baren will speak on the topic, "The Signs of the Times, based on Revelations."

We extend an invitation to all our ladies to meet with us for an evening of Christian fellowship.

ATTENTION OFFICE BEARERS

There will be an Office Bearers Conference, D.V., April 5, at 8:00 P.M., to be held at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. All present and former office bearers are invited to attend.

Our speaker, Rev. G. Van Baren, will answer the question, "In how far may a deacon officiate as an elder in a small congregation?"

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The congregation of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland herewith expresses its sincere sympathy with deacon M. Haveman and family in the recent passing of his Mother:

MRS. CARL HAVEMAN

May the God of all grace comfort the hearts of the bereaved.

per Consistory

Rev. G. Lanting, Pres.
B. Windemuller, Clerk

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, April 6, 1966, at 9:00 A.M. at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. Consistories will consider this an official announcement in the appointment of their delegates.

Rev. M. Schipper, S.C.

The doctrine of redemption is one of the most important doctrines of the system of faith. A mistake on this point will inevitably lead to a mistake through the entire system of our belief.

—C.H. Spurgeon

BOOK REVIEWS—

The Cross In The New Testament

Commentary On The Epistle To The Hebrews

Principles Of Conduct

THE CROSS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Leon Morris; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 454 pp.; \$6.95.

The author of this large volume takes the reader on an extended trip through the entire New Testament to examine with him the teaching found in each book concerning the cross of Christ. He begins with Matthew and examines each author individually until he arrives at John's Revelation to inquire of each one what he has to teach on this central subject.

With clarity of style and considerable completeness the author points to the teaching of the New Testament as a whole, but also to the individual contributions of each author. He makes extensive use of footnotes in which he examines at no little length the findings of many different students of Scripture, concurring with some of them, rejecting others. The book is filled with interesting and occasionally beautiful insights, rather sound exegesis in many instances and a sturdy defense of the substitutionary nature of the atonement.

For all these reasons, it is well worth reading and studying. It can be a worthwhile aid for both ministers and laymen.

There are several weaknesses in the book however. The first and most serious is the "doubletrack" approach to the work of salvation so common with evangelicals. While there is adequate and Reformed emphasis on the totally depraved character of man and the sovereignty of God, there is also the strong Arminian undercurrent which spoils so many books nowadays. One brief quotation will demonstrate this. "The emphasis in Paul's writings is always on what God has done for man's salvation, not on any human effort whatever. The cross is the means whereby sin is put away. Over and over again Paul stresses the priority of the divine, and with it man's total inability to (do) anything at all to bring about salvation. Nevertheless, and though its place must be understood carefully, Paul does not think of man's response

as lacking importance. It is not in any way meritorious and this truth must not be obscured. It is not the cause of salvation, but it is the means of receiving salvation." All this is very well said. But then the author explains this "response" further and adds: "Paul thinks of God as having done in Christ all that is necessary for dealing effectively with man's sin. But man must receive the proffered salvation, else he will not have it." This position in turn leads the author to, among other things, a universal atonement and a very weak treatment of predestination.

Secondly (and now in the opinion of this reviewer), the author would have added immeasurably to the value of the book by synthesizing the teachings of the New Testament and developing them in this synthetic manner. Treating the Bible book by book (while obviously the deliberate purpose of the author) lends itself to a disjointed discussion.

Thirdly (also in the opinion of undersigned) it is impossible to discuss the cross in the New Testament without also discussing such important subjects as the relation between election and the cross, particular atonement, the relation between the cross and the resurrection of Christ and the relation between the cross and Christ's glorification. Scripture itself establishes these relationships.

Prof. H. Hanko

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, — F. F. Bruce; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 447 pages, \$6.00

This is another in Eerdmans' series, "The New International Commentary on the New Testament," begun under the late Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse as general editor. Dr. Bruce is not only the author of this book but is also the new general editor.

As far as commentaries go, I think Dr. Bruce has done a creditable work with an epistle which is not by any means easy to interpret. For general help in the study of Hebrews this

commentary can be of assistance. My general criticism is that the interpretation is not sufficiently specific and detailed. This is especially true of those crucial passages where one often desires some very specific help and analysis of the text. Commentaries, however, are often disappointing when it comes to such crucial passages.

This book, however, as well as the entire series may well be purchased by anyone desiring a worthwhile set of commentaries on the New Testament. Incidentally, this entire set is written in popular style; references to the Greek and to any data of technical nature are kept in the footnotes. This makes these books more valuable to the general readership. H.C.H.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, — John Murray; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 272 pages, \$2.25 (paperback)

The author is Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. The ten chapters of this book were expanded from a series of lectures delivered in 1955.

There are not many books devoted specifically to the study known as Ethics. That is the general subject of this book. It does not claim to be a complete treatment; it is rather a treatment of certain important aspects of Christian conduct.

Without stating my agreement with all that Professor Murray has written here, I can certainly recommend this book. There is thorough treatment of the subjects dealt with; there is a very serious attempt at careful exegesis; in general, this is scholarly work. As an example, I point to the author's treatment of I Corinthians 7, an always difficult passage, in his chapter on "The Marriage Ordinance." I am always disappointed, however, when a work of this caliber is published in paperback form. I realize this is a reprint; but I think that even as a reprint it deserves better than a paperback treatment.

H.C.H.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

March 15, 1966

Rev. D. Engelsma, of Loveland, Colo., declined the call from Edgerton, Minn.

Hudsonville's congregation was also disappointed March 13 when it was announced that Rev. J.A. Heys of South Holland, Ill. declined their call.

* * *

According to the custom in our churches, all our ministers are preaching a series of Lenten sermons. Rev. C. Hanco, of Redlands, is treating the passion and death of our Savior from the viewpoint: "Scripture Fulfilled"; while Rev. D. Engelsma, of Loveland, chose for his point of view the "Battling King".

* * *

South Holland's consistory has appointed a committee to arrange for the dedication of their new church edifice in the near future. This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the organization of their congregation. The souvenir booklet to commemorate this anniversary is expected to contain a pictorial history of the life of the congregation with pictures of former meeting places, consistories, etc. We can soon expect to publish a picture of their new church in the series that has been started in our *Standard Bearer*.

* * *

Jamaican News: Results from the correspondence course undertaken by the Jamaican ministers have already been noted in the hearing of a taped sermon by Rev. Frame preaching the truth embodied in the Five Points of Calvinism. Rev. Frame, himself, expressed his thanks under a Feb. 24th dateline as follows: "I am very glad for this course of instruction. I have learned to know the truth. I am delighted very much in these truths, and I shall teach them to all the brethren of the Protestant Reformed Churches here in Jamaica." Rev. Heys, instructor of the course, attributes the production of this work, to a great degree, to the help he receives in the typing, mimeographing, and taping of his material by Mrs. R. Meyer, Dale Kuiper and Henry VanderWal of Grand Rapids.

* * *

The second in the series of lectures sponsored by our Mission Committee was held in First Church March 3. Prof. H.C. Hoeksema spoke to a full house when he lectured on, "The Creation Record—Literal, or Not?" Rev. M. Schipper, chairman of the lecture series, was vindicated as a prophet, having predicted "a packed house if weather conditions are favorable". Special music was furnished by the Adams St. School Choir, under the direction of Mr. Roland Petersen. The choir sang three numbers after an opening recitative of, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer." Mrs. C. Lubbers very capably filled her task at the console of the pipe organ. The speaker divided his lecture into three parts: The Issue at Stake, Various Interpretations of the Record,

and, The Proper Scriptural Interpretation. The Professor postulated the real issue to be, Creation versus Evolution; that Evolution is not a mere theory, but an entire philosophy of the world; that it should be beneath the dignity of a believer to enter into debate with an Evolutionist, whose evolution is a monstrosity of sin. The speaker affirmed that the question is *not*: what the scientist thinks, what this or that theologian thinks, what this or that church teaches, what the early church fathers maintained, what the Confessions say about it (for they are also subject to the authority of the Scriptures); but that the only Court of Appeal is the Bible. The Professor concluded with the statement that the whole question is a matter of Exegesis, and that the exegesis of Holy Writ is an exact science, unbiased except by faith—to believe, "In the beginning God....". It was certainly heartwarming to us to see such a large group of people, including Baptists, Reformed, Christian Reformed, and Protestant Reformed, who would come out for a lecture of this type. Truly, we may rejoice that God "has reserved seven thousand who have not bowed the knee" to the Baal of Evolution! The next, and last of the series, will be held March 31 in First Church's auditorium. The subject: "Genesis and Science".

* * *

Doon's Consistory and Congregation are anticipating their June guests with eagerness, and possibly with some trepidation. Doon will be host to the 1966 Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches of America. Their March 6th bulletin already asked for housing for the delegates. They are evidently proponents of the old adage, "a task well begun is a task well done".

* * *

Oak Lawn's Men's Society is announcing a public lecture they are sponsoring to be held March 25. Prof. H. Hanco will speak on, "Our Calling with Respect to Ecumenism".

* * *

Rev. G. Lanting, of Holland, Mich. was scheduled to lecture in Edgerton, Minn. on Feb. 28. His topic, "The Place of Confessions in the Church Today."

* * *

The Denver Adult Bible Class, of Loveland's congregation, has decided to merge with the class that meets in Loveland Thursday evenings. Loveland's Young People sponsored an ice-skating outing (weather permitting) for Feb. 28. They especially invited all the people of the congregation "who can skate or like to learn to skate" to join them. That was a brave challenge!

* * *

Reformed Witness Hour schedule, with Prof. H.C. Hoeksema at the microphone: Apr. 3—"The Suffering Servant and the Father's Will"; Apr. 10—"The Risen Lord and the 'Must' of God's Counsel".

... see you in church

J.M.F.